

## Being part of the wider community

Connecting with the world beyond the care home, whether through going out or 'bringing the outside in', is important for wellbeing and identity.

- Mapping the local area helps identify opportunities and build networks of resources.
- Opportunities for people to engage in activities which benefit the wider community or the care home community promote inclusion and mutual benefit.
- Intergenerational contact has numerous benefits, particularly when it is regular and sustained.
- Supporting people to engage with the natural environment, either through going outside or 'bringing the outside in'.
- Remember 'community' can mean different things to different people – it's not necessarily restricted to a geographical area.

## Supporting positive staff relationships

The quality of relationships with staff is fundamental to high-quality care, and has a huge influence on how people experience their day-to-day lives.

- People value staff being patient, friendly, approachable and genuine, treating them with respect and dignity, recognising their uniqueness, and sharing fun and laughter.
- Continuity of staff and the opportunity to get to know each other is highly valued and supports person-centred care.
- Sharing activities and events, and carrying out tasks together fosters relationships and mutual respect.
- Staff induction and training should include the importance of positive and supportive relationships with people.

## Using technology to support connection

Technology can enhance connection when it is used in a meaningful and person-centred way, and access to digital connection is increasingly regarded as a human right.

- People's needs, preferences and aspirations relating to technology should be identified in personal plans and implemented in practice.
- Video calling can be a positive experience for some people, but can cause distress and anxiety for others, particularly those with sensory and/or cognitive difficulties.
- Train staff to be confident in supporting people with technology.
- Technology can enable engagement with the wider community, such as by attending 'virtual' family or community events, classes or religious services.

## Useful resources

[Meaningful connection page](#)

[Self-evaluation form](#)

[Technology good practice guide](#)

[Personal planning guidance](#)

[Open Badges](#)

[Come On In leaflet](#)



## Why is it so important to connect with others?

- Essential to emotional, mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Reduces loneliness and isolation.
- Supports identity and personhood.
- Enriches daily life and improves over-all quality of life.
- Part of our human right to a private and family life.

**65%**

of people living in adult and older people's care homes experience feelings of moderate to severe loneliness

## A culture for connection

Is person- and relationship-centred, valuing people's social and emotional needs. It supports them to maintain and develop new and existing relationships in the right ways for them.

- It is supported by policies and procedures, including staff training.
- Personal planning which finds out what matters to people, how they prefer to communicate and addresses any barriers and challenges they experience, helps ensure everyone gets the best out of life.
- An environment providing a range of indoor and outdoor spaces for socialisation helps foster connection.
- 'Connection champions' can promote good practice and ensure connection remains a priority.
- Self-evaluation helps identify your service's strengths and areas for improvement.

## Including family carers

Families and friends play many roles, going beyond 'just being a visitor'. Positive family inclusion has numerous benefits, both for individuals and the care home.

- Ensuring people feel welcome (such as providing door codes to regular visitors) and have information to support visits, such as a choice of places to spend time.
- Being invited to stay for a meal or join in activities.
- Being meaningfully included in personal planning and decision-making.
- Open and transparent communication, both about their loved one and the care home.
- Being able to visit freely and without restriction.
- Consider how social interaction and engagement can be supported for people who don't have regular visitors.

## Building peer relationships

For many, friendships with others who live in the service can enrich daily life and contribute to a sense of belonging.

- Personal planning can identify things in common, enabling staff to foster friendships by introducing people to each other.
- Sociable mealtimes provide a great opportunity to encourage interaction.
- Group activities, such as participatory arts activities can help encourage connection.
- A buddy system can help new people settle in and feel welcome.
- An environment with large and small social spaces can help foster friendships. Some services have café/pub areas where people can gather.
- People may need support to maintain friendships if needs change, or with loss and grief if they lose a friend.

Read more about supporting meaningful connections



**Meaningful  
Connection**