



# Night Worker Wellbeing and Safety Guide

A Practical Guide  
to Safe Night  
Working in  
Complex Care

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**Superior  
Healthcare**

## Introduction to Night Shifts in Complex Care

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In one-to-one community care, you may be the only person awake and responsible for noticing changes, responding quickly and keeping the client safe through the night.

For families, your presence brings reassurance as well as care. Night shifts are safety-critical, and good preparation is essential for both client safety and your own wellbeing.



**Night workers  
keep clients  
safe when it  
matters most**

## **Before Shift Preparation is essential**

### **Come to work well rested**

Try to get extra sleep before your first night shift. A longer lie-in or an afternoon nap of at least 2 hours before your shift can help.

### **Plan your sleep like part of the job**

Night work affects your body clock, so preparation matters. Keep your sleep space cool, dark and quiet, and protect your rest from noise, interruptions and screens.

### **Eat, drink and plan ahead**

Have a balanced meal before your shift and bring water plus light, easy-to-digest snacks such as yoghurt, fruit, nuts or wholegrain options. Small amounts eaten across the night are better tolerated than a heavy meal, which can worsen sleepiness and digestion. Limit sugary foods and avoid large meals in the early hours, when the body is biologically less ready to process them.

**Do not accept  
a last-minute  
night shift  
if you know  
you have not  
slept enough**



## During Shift

### Stay active, alert and engaged

#### Keep yourself alert

On a lone-working night shift, it is part of your duty to actively manage your own alertness. Use checks, note-writing, hydration and brief safe movement to stay mentally engaged, especially during quiet periods. Reduced stimulation at night can make fatigue harder to notice until concentration is already affected.

#### Look after the basics

Drink water regularly, eat light snacks and move when the care package allows. Hunger, dehydration and sitting still for long periods can make tiredness worse.

#### Notice warning signs early

Heavy eyelids, repeated yawning, zoning out and slower thinking are signs that alertness is dropping. Act early rather than trying to push through and escalate to the On-Call Team where needed.



**Good hydration  
supports  
concentration  
and sustained  
attention**

## **After Shift**

### **Recover well and get home safely**

#### **Get home safely**

The journey home after a night shift can be one of the riskiest parts of the day. If you do not feel safe to drive, stop and rest or make another plan.

#### **Sleep as soon as you can**

Once home, try to sleep as soon as possible. The longer you stay awake, the harder it can be to settle and recover properly.

#### **Create the right sleep environment**

A cool, dark and quiet room can make daytime sleep much easier. Blackout curtains, reduced interruptions and less screen time can all help improve sleep quality.

#### **Reset gently after your last night**

After your final night shift, a short sleep followed by returning to normal daytime activity can help you move back into your usual routine more comfortably.

**A cool, dark  
and quiet  
room can  
make daytime  
sleep much  
easier**

# Client Safety is in your hands

## Be honest about your readiness


Do not come to work already tired, and do not accept a shift if you know or even suspect you have not had enough sleep to work safely. Speaking up early is always safer than risking harm later.

## Raise concerns early

If fatigue is becoming unsafe, tell the office or On-Call team member straight away. Do not hide it and do not try to push through if you are no longer confident you can provide safe care.

## Falling asleep on duty is a serious matter

If a colleague is found asleep, or concerns are substantiated, this may lead to removal from shift, investigation, suspension, dismissal and, where thresholds are met, external referrals including DBS and NMC. Please remember that many clients and families use CCTV in the home. Closing your eyes, resting with your eyes shut or appearing unresponsive will be treated seriously, as this may be indistinguishable from sleeping.



**Closing your  
eyes, even  
briefly, may be  
interpreted as  
sleeping**

## Support and Guidance

### Ask for help early

If you are struggling with sleep, tiredness, stress, low mood, health issues affecting alertness, or concerns about working nights safely, support is available and we encourage you to ask for help early.

#### On-Call Team

T: 01227 771133

#### Wellbeing Team

T: 01227 640500

E: [wellbeing@superiorhealthcare.co.uk](mailto:wellbeing@superiorhealthcare.co.uk)

#### Employee Assistance Programme

T: 0800 028 0199

A: Health Assured / Wisdom App  
code: **MHA229542**

#### People Team

T: 01227 771133

E: [hr@superiorhealthcare.co.uk](mailto:hr@superiorhealthcare.co.uk)

Save support  
numbers in  
your phone





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