

## Physical wellbeing

### What is this?

Working during the pandemic places additional physical and emotional demands on everyone working in the care sector. Taking steps to remain physically healthy is important.

### Why should I be paying attention to this?

Wearing PPE makes it more difficult to be hydrated and can cause fatigue. Work pressures can lead to eating too little, too much, or to comfort eating. Sleep can be disrupted to the extent that people are not refreshed. Exercise can seem a luxury to people who are tired after a long shift and who have other caring responsibilities. But taking care of physical health is even more important in challenging circumstances such as the pandemic. Simple routine changes can help people to cope and to maintain their energy levels.

### What should my first steps be?

- Ensure that your staff/volunteers are able to take (and actually take) regular breaks during their shifts – even a short break is good for physical wellbeing.
- Check that everyone is able to safely and regularly get a drink of water – this can be challenging when wearing PPE (and hydrating). At the very least encourage staff to take a drink before donning and after doffing their PPE.
- Think about shift patterns - how you can help staff to have enough time to recuperate from work and to spend time with their families and loved ones.
- Encourage your staff to take their holiday leave – the demands of working during the pandemic mean that holiday breaks are even more important than usual.
- If you provide meals for staff, ensure they are healthy and nourishing. Foods that are high in sugar may be comforting in the moment, but will not sustain people and can cause a range of health problems.
- Provide information on healthy eating, exercise, sleep and other healthy behaviours.
- Encourage staff to improve their sleep. Good quality sleep is vital for health and wellbeing as well as for safe working. There are free resources in the list below.
- Model healthy behaviour yourself so that your team can see that you are taking care of yourself.

### How do I find out more?

Advice from The Association of UK Dietitians on eating well during Covid-19:

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/eating-well-during-coronavirus-covid-19.html>

Links to free NHS approved sleep apps:

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/sleep/>

Physical activity during Covid-19:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/healthy-living/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-activity>

A collection of useful Covid-19 resources including advice on physical wellbeing:

[https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/toolkits/play\\_22794#resume=56](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/toolkits/play_22794#resume=56)