

GMB

GMB@WORK

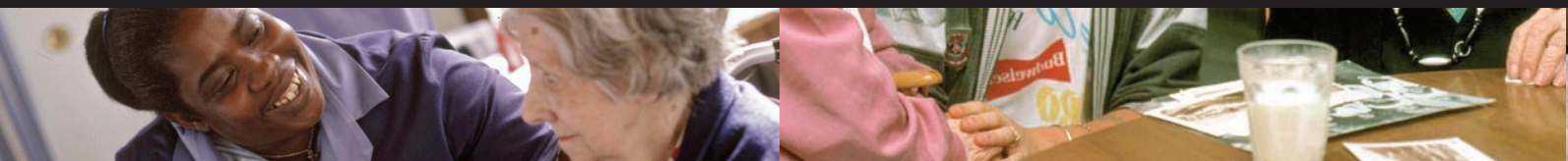


GMB campaigning for better health & safety

Care home staff

Working in the care home sector is a challenging job. While the basic needs of the client remain fundamentally the same, the pressure from legislators, regulators and varying partnerships can all impact on the ability of staff to carry out their tasks both safely and effectively.

Join GMB, the union for all care home staff, and ensure you receive the same protection and advice as thousands of your colleagues.



MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Management and employers have responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act which includes their general “Duty of Care”. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations they have more specific duties including the carrying out of risk assessments, appointing competent persons and co-operation and co-ordination where there is more than one employer, such as when using agency workers. Competent persons are defined as having sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them to assist in assessments. This means that anyone not sufficiently competent in carrying out risk assessments, or health and safety training, should request appropriate or further training.

Management also have a responsibility to ensure that any health and safety training or instruction is given in a clear and comprehensive way. This could mean literature available in different languages or training with pictorial signs.

WORKING HOURS

Care home staff are covered by the Working Time Directive. This includes the right to proper breaks at work between daily shifts and on a weekly basis. Where breaks are interrupted by work it is important that this lost time is taken as a break as soon as possible. However there may be occasions when staff, due to shortages or the lack of qualified staff need to extend their shift, which can lead to tiredness and exhaustion which in turn can contribute to accidents at work. There should be adequate arrangements in place so that shifts and shift patterns are conducive to safe working practices.

STRESS

Stress can be a major factor in staff absence within the care home sector. Stress can arise for any number of reasons from work related factors.

These can include too heavy a workload, lack of supervisory support or inadequate staffing levels. The HSE has produced guidance on Management Standards for tackling work related stress. These encourage best practice and include workers having a greater say in how jobs should be carried out.

BULLYING & HARASSMENT

Bullying can lead to stress related illnesses including headaches, depression and lack of concentration. Bullying isn’t just verbal or physical intimidation and can include isolation, lack of support, work changes without consultation and refusing holiday requests.

As the majority of staff in the care home sector are female, harassment, including sexual harassment, by clients can become a major concern if not dealt with properly. There should be a clear policy in place which can be used for effective solutions to deal with harassment by either a client or other member of staff.

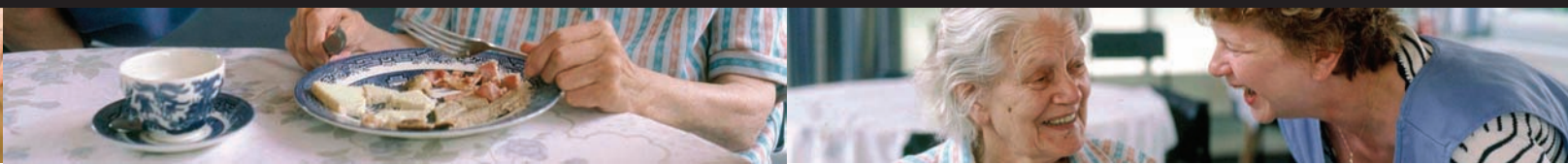
ASSAULTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Unfortunately anyone involved in the care of vulnerable clients is open to allegations of assault and violence. While the quality of care delivered should always be top quality, the position of staff and their rights should not be overlooked in the delivery of the service. Staff have the right to be treated fairly and to be involved in an open and fair investigation into any allegations. GMB offers free legal advice to members who have been assaulted at work and can offer representation and guidance in the event of a disciplinary or grievance hearing.

MANUAL HANDLING

Manual handling injuries can be caused by a number of different acts including pushing, pulling, lifting and carrying while moving people or other loads. The employer has a legal duty to

If you are not yet a member of GMB JOIN TODAY



GMB has a wide experience in dealing with the issues relevant to care home staff. By raising your concerns with management we can offer practical advice about measures that could and should be taken to address work related problems.

avoid manual handling as far as reasonably practicable. This could involve the use of equipment or doubling up staff on certain jobs. This will be determined by a manual handling assessment, from which the measures to minimise the risk of injury from manual handling should be assessed.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Care home workers can be exposed to a number of infections either through contact with an infected client or from cleaning up potentially infected body fluids, such as blood or vomit. Clear procedures, which may include the offer of inoculations where appropriate, need to be established. This would also include the safe disposal of any contaminated waste and the provision of personal protective equipment such as gloves or aprons.

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Uneven surfaces, wet floors, worn carpets and unmarked steps in badly lit areas could all be responsible for slips and trips. Other demands of the job may require climbing onto inadequate equipment (such as chairs), which may result in over stretching and falling. A full risk assessment of any task is necessary and the provision of the proper equipment should be identified from this.

OTHER HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

From 1 October 2006 new arrangements should be in place to deal with the threat of fire in

premises. Instead of a fire certificate for buildings there will be a requirement for a fire risk assessment. This should detail sources of possible ignition, the presence of flammable materials, structural layout, emergency evacuation procedures and how any vulnerable people will be looked after.

The new Care Quality Commission focuses on, among other things, the quality and safety of health care services. If a care provider fails to meet the National Minimum Standards there is a danger in their registration being cancelled. The registration for all health care providers will require them to meet a series of registration requirements covering such areas as the state of the premises, providing information, keeping records and the management and training of staff. Therefore it is important that health, safety and welfare standards are maintained.

In addition any arrangements for first aid provision will have to be considered, including during any night work.

THE ROLE OF GMB SAFETY REPS

GMB safety reps have the benefit of union training and of access to materials which might not be available to management. A GMB safety rep can approach management on behalf of all the workforce or individuals, with problems such as bullying, working hours or work-related stress. Safety reps are covered by particular legislation which gives them greater rights than the remainder of the workforce. This includes being involved in the Risk Assessment process.

Join online today at www.gmb.org.uk



SAFETY REP'S CHECKLIST

	YES	NO
Have adequate risk assessments been carried out in your workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were they carried out by a competent person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the GMB Safety Reps been involved in the Risk Assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do management follow the HSE guidelines on tackling stress?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a bullying and harassment policy in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a policy of a clear and transparent investigation after unproven allegations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have manual handling assessments been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a clear policy on dealing with infectious diseases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the proper equipment available for access to work above head height?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you able to take uninterrupted rest breaks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This list is not exhaustive and there may be a need to raise other health and safety issues with your safety rep, organiser or RHSO.

**JOIN GMB NOW
CARE HOME STAFF
ARE SAFER IN GMB**

General Secretary: Paul Kenny
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 Fax 020 8944 6552
info@gmb.org.uk
www.gmb.org.uk

HOW DO I JOIN? JOIN ONLINE AT WWW.GMB.ORG.UK

Or just fill in parts 1, 2 and 3 or 4 below and hand the form to your local GMB representative or post it to GMB, FREEPOST (WC2268), London SW19 4YY (you do not need a stamp). If you have any questions call GMB on 020 8947 3131, email info@gmb.org.uk or visit our website www.gmb.org.uk

FOR UNION USE ONLY Section Branch No Membership No Date of joining

GMB membership application form PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

1 TELL US ABOUT YOU

Surname First name Title Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr Date of birth

Home address Home Tel Email

Postcode Mobile I agree to abide by GMB rules Signature

We ask for your ethnic origins as part of our equal opportunities policy of improving services to all members
 Bangladeshi Black African Black Caribbean Black British
 Chinese Indian Irish Pakistani White
 Other:

2 TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB

Employer Your job Pay No

Address where you work How many hours a week do you work? Work Tel Pay Date

Postcode

3 CHOOSE EITHER AUTHORISATION OF DEDUCTION OF YOUR TRADE UNION CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUR PAY

Section 68, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidated) Act 1992 as amended

I authorise my employer to deduct from my pay each week/month the sum of £ or other amounts as may be fixed by the GMB from time to time.

Please start the deductions immediately and pay the amounts to the GMB.
 I note that this agreement may be cancelled by one month's notice in writing.
 I give permission to my employer to notify the GMB of any future change of address.

Signed Cash
 Date

4 OR INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

Please fill in the form and send to GMB, 22-24 Worpole Road, London SW19 4DD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch

To the Manager of Bank/Building Society
 Address
 Postcode

Originator's Identification Number 9 7 4 3 3 0

For GMB official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/Building Society. If your A/C number is not available fill in your address below.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.
 Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with GMB and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)
 Date

Banks or Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Bank/Building Society Account Number

Bank/Building Society Sort Code

Reference number (Office use only)

