

# understand potential hazards in health and social care assignment essay sample

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## Introduction

In this unit I will explain six potential hazards in a Health and Social Care setting. These hazards in the Health and Social Care setting can all affect the people working in that environment; there are a lot of hazards which can be found in every surface of the setting. In a residential or day care setting, much is done to ensure that service users, and therefore staff as well, are protected from harm. The group of users I have chosen are elderly people with Dementia and the environment I will be assessing is a Care Home. The hazards that I have chosen to write about are very different as some hazards are safety hazards and security hazards etc. I will write about the risks that the service user could come across and the possible causes as to why it may occur. Some hazards could potentially occur in the bathroom. One hazard that could arise is that because an elderly person may have dementia, they may have forgotten what the words CAUTION HOT WATER means, therefore they may scald and burn themselves.

This is a hazard to elderly people because when you get older you tend to forget things a lot more often. This hazard could also arise if the Care Home fails to maintain a thermostatic mixing valve which controls the temperature the water can reach; most Care Homes have this valve to prevent any of the elderly getting burned or scalded. Also if someone with dementia is getting in a bath, they may use their hands to test the temperature instead of a carer using a thermometer. To prevent the risk of an elderly person getting burnt or scalded, then there should be a carer with the service user at all times to ensure that the elderly person is safe. The Care Home should also invest in a thermostatic mixing valve and have maintenance checks on it

regularly; which could decrease the risk of a patient getting burnt significantly.

A second hazard that could potentially occur is a chemical hazard. A cleaner may leave out a cleaning product; such as bleach which contains ammonia. This could be a hazard for elderly people with dementia because they will not understand the meaning of bleach and the harm that can arise from the substance. They may potentially want to experiment with it as they will not know what it is; therefore just like a child, they might drink it because it's 'new' to them. If an elderly person drinks bleach or even breathes in the fumes then they could risk burning their insides, such as their throat and lungs, which could result in them having respiratory problems in the future. To prevent the risk of this happening, the cleaners should always double check that they have locked the cupboards that they keep their products in. If the Care Home does not have locks on their cupboards then they should invest in some or else the risk of this occurring could potentially increase.

Also to ensure this doesn't happen, the cleaners should make sure that all of their cleaning products have safety caps on them. A third hazard that could be a very high risk is an equipment hazard. The equipment could consist of wheelchairs, hoists, electrical equipment or even a bed. If something were to happen; for example, a carer not using a hoist correctly, then the service user could be at risk of developing bruises and minor or major cuts, in some extensive cases the patient could even end up being crushed by the hoist. Sometimes, it will not always be the carers fault, the hoist could be used without a carer knowing it is broken. The possible causes of a service user

being hurt by a hoist could be because of the lack of maintenance and thorough examination or the patient could get caught between two different moving parts.

This is a hazard for elderly people because when you get older, your bones become fragile and even the slightest fall could result in a major injury. To prevent this from happening, the Care Home should ensure that all equipment (even the least important) should have maintenance checks to make sure all equipment is fully working and even the slightest error with equipment should be checked over and fixed IMMEDIATELY. If their equipment is likely to break and get damaged then the Care Home should invest in some better quality hoists from somewhere that is a well known brand. If a service user is at risk with the equipment then the Care Home could therefore risk being sued by the family of that service user because the patient could get seriously hurt. A fourth hazard could be that the service user may either slip, trip or fall over. The possible causes of this happening could be that the floor is wet where the cleaners have washed the floor and not put anything there, such as a sign to show it is wet.

However, if an elderly person has dementia, then they will not understand why there may be a sign on the floor, therefore the Care Home must think of a different way to show that the floor is wet; for example, a carer could assist the patient at all times when walking around in places that have washed floors and tell them that the floors are wet. Another possible cause could be electrical cables being left lying around on the floor which could then result in the cable wrapping itself around a patient which will give them a high risk

of tripping over. This is a hazard to elderly people because as I said in my third hazard, an elderly person's bones become fragile and can break easily, therefore the carers must ensure that all equipment, even the smallest should be tidied away and kept clear from ALL patients. To prevent a slip, trip or fall from happening then the carers should continuously tidy up any equipment that could become a hazard.

Also to prevent an elderly person with dementia from slipping on a wet floor then the cleaners in the Care Home could clean the floors when all of the patients are having their lunch or even in bed because this will then allow them to have enough time to clean the floors and the rooms that they need to clean. The fifth hazard that I am going to write about is a security hazard. All Care Homes have a gate or door that visitors have to go in and out from to see their relatives that are staying in the care home. However, this gate/door has a camera so carers or receptionists can see who's coming in and out, however there could be a risk of an elderly person escaping. This is a hazard to elderly people because they are very vulnerable and if they escape then they could be in danger of getting hypothermia or in some serious cases they could die because if it's someone with dementia then they will not know where they are going and they will potentially get lost and therefore they could miss out on their medication and they won't have eaten any food and the deprivation from medication and food could lead to death.

The possible causes of this happening could be that the receptionist may have been distracted and may not have seen the service user leave the care home, or even if they have lack of maintenance and have a faulty camera

then they could have escaped. To prevent this from happening, they could use a door/gate that requires a code to get inside the Care Home and they should only give the code to the families of the service user. This is good for people with dementia because they will never remember the code therefore will never be able to escape. Finally, the last hazard that I am going to write about is an environmental hazard. The possible causes of environmental hazards could be because an elderly person is sat outside in the sun without wearing any sun protection which can make them be at risk of getting skin cancer and mild burns.

Another possible cause could be not wearing enough layers when they're in the cold weather such as rain which could leave them at risk of developing hypothermia. This is a hazard to elderly people because they are very vulnerable and get cold easily and without any protection, they could be at risk of getting seriously ill. Also when you get older you get slightly weaker, therefore if they get ill, it will take longer for them to get rid of the illness. To prevent this from happening, the Care Home should NOT let the elderly people outside if it is cold weather or raining. Also they should always be given sun protection when going outside, even if it's cloudy because this will prevent any kind of skin cancer that they could possibly develop.