

Recommendations for healthcare worker health and safety



Liz Rushe

Comprehensive plan and aims

Outline the aims of the assignment and background details of the setting

My name is Elizabeth Rushe, I am currently doing a healthcare QQI awards course, as part of my course work and assignments, and I have to do some work experience, in a nursing home setting, for sixty hours.

I applied in Riada House in Tullamore

Before I started my work experience, I had to apply in writing, for the work experience and sent in my cv along with my guards clearance and my insurance letter, two references, when I had all the paper work in order I had to set up a meeting with the manger, to meet with them and see, when I could start doing my work experience.

I met with the manager her name was Geraldine, she was very nice and made me feel very welcome, and she asked me all about the course and asked did I like it. Geraldine said that they do have a lot of students doing work experience in the setting, we talked about when I would start and what I needed to wear, which was a black trouser and polo shirt.

I asked her about the setting, she told me that there were 35 bedded units, consisting of 6 respite care and 29 long term care beds. The care team at Riada House aim to provide high quality, person centred care within a supportive, homely and welcoming environment. The care team aim to

promote independence and residents choices. The rights and dignity of each resident will be respected at all times.

I thanked Geraldine for her taking the time for meeting me and that I look forward, to starting my work experience there and that I would see her on the date that I was starting on, as I walked up the hall to the main door, any staff members that I met, they all smile and said hello, as I met them, which tell me that this is a nice place.

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Occupational Health and Safety in the workplace

Noise and sound

HAZARDS

As a healthcare assistant, working with noise and loud can cause stress for both patients and the healthcare assistant, especially on a long shift.

Patients are not able to get a full night sleep, as they may have waked up shortly are falling asleep and too tired to get up the next day.

As someone has the radio or television up a bit too high, or a staff member letting something fall in the middle of the night that might have made a loud noise.

RISK

Loud and distracting sounds and noises can interfere with the healthcare assistant duties, as this can distract them and not concentrate on the patient that they are attending, which puts the patient at risk.

CONTROL MEASURES

Make sure that all televisions and radio are turn off or turn down low after 8pm in the evening and that all the ward doors are closed to help aid a good night sleep. That all staff are wearing low and comfortable footwear, (cushions souls).

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Stress

HAZARDS

If the healthcare assistant is under or feeling stress in the workplace, this can cause physical and mental health problems and up set to them, this can cause them to be distracted in their work and not having their minds fully on their job, this could result in putting the patient, other members of staff and them selves at risk.

This may lead to the healthcare assistant been absence for work, this can lead to more problems for the healthcare assistant, as they are out of work, they are not getting their full wages.

RISKS

The healthcare assistant can start to have problems, such as high blood pressure, skin problems (eczema, rash), the healthcare assistant can have disturbed sleep, which will affect them carry out their daily duties and this can affect their confidence in their work. The healthcare assistant can take to drugs, alcohol, or even develop an ulcer from worrying, which can also lead to hair loss or going grey. If the healthcare assistant is on any medical, or coming into work after taking drugs or alcohol, this could affect them in their work environment

CONTROL MEASURES

Taking up daily exercise, as getting out in the fresh air can help your mood; also as you are walking, they might find it can tell them to talk to another person about what is going on in their lives.

Going to their manger and having a talk with them, might the only thing that they have to do to fit the problem, that they are having and if not it might be the first steps that they take to putting it right.

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Diet, exercise and lifestyle

HAZARDS

Having a good lifestyle, might not always be a good thing, if we do not take any exercise at all, this could affect the healthcare assistant, in their daily work. Taking daily exercise is one of the key in fighting and preventing heart disease, depression and anxiety. Going for a walk can help change your

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mood, after a bad day at work or just help clear your head, if anything was worry you, if they are getting it hard to focus on their job, which can lead to bad judgment.

A well balance diet can help too, this can start feeling good on the inside, and this diet must contain, protein, carbohydrate, vitamins, mineral, salts and fibre, plus some fat.

RISKS

If something is wrong at work, this can affect the healthcare worker, judgement and choices that they made about each patient. If they are not concentrating on what they are doing, they can easily mix up medication. By not taking exercise can be the cause of back pain, other injury, high blood pressure or high cholesterol, or type two diabetes, depression.

CONTROL MEASURES

Regular physical exercise is great; taking 20 - 30 minutes, three times a week will help improve our physical and mental health. Reducing the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, etc. having a well balance diet, can help us feel good, this also helps our bladder and bowl keep in working order, penalty of roughage dose help. A few drink free nights together and giving up smoking will improve the healthcare worker chance of living long and fitter as well.

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Dangerous chemicals, fumes and dust

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HAZARDS

The healthcare assistant should always read the labels on all chemicals, before use, and never mix any chemicals together. All chemicals are dangerous and need to be treated with care, as they can catch fire or cause some long term health problems for the healthcare worker. If chemicals get on the skin, this may cause skin irritation, chest problems, as the fumes can be dangerous.

RISKS

The healthcare assistant could be out of work for a long time, due to inhaling fumes that have caused chest problems, or skin irritation. If not stored properly, some chemicals can catch fire, which could lead to someone getting buried.

CONTROL MEASURES

All chemicals must be labelled clearly, that everyone knows what they are and how to use them, store away in a locked and safe area or cupboard. Good housekeeping is always top of the list, as damp dusting, will help keep down dust that can lead to health problems. Always wear PPE, gloves, mask, and apron when dealing with any chemicals. Never put any chemicals into mineral bottles at any time.

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Occupational related illness

HAZARDS

People and patients coughing or sneezing on you, passing their germs to you. It is important that healthcare assistants always follow policy and procedures, by wearing PPE, gloves, aprons etc. The healthcare worker should report anything that they see, that could cause a hazard, such as wet floor, this could cause someone to fall or slip, which could result in the person been injury.

RISKS

Bad house keeping can cause a risk, such as air borne bugs (dust), spills that occur, if not clean up straight away, can result in slipping or falling, which lead to that person been out of work (back injury). Steps could be highlighted for safety if in a dark area, also keep all hall ways clear of any equipment or boxes.

CONTROL MEASURES

If the healthcare assistant is not trained in the right control measures, they should look to be trained, and it is important that the healthcare worker, maintain a good standard of house keeping, spraying door handles, hand rails, good hand washing, and report any defects that they see, on equipment, or in the wards.

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Manual handling

HAZARDS

If the healthcare assistant is not trained probably in moving, or lifting patients in a hoist, this could result, in the healthcare assistant or patient getting hurt. Always use the slip sheet, instead of pulling the patient up the bed by hand. Not wearing the right footwear, can be a hazard, wearing non-slip soles and comfortable can help been on your feet all day and reduce back injury.

RISKS

If the task needs two people, the healthcare assistant must not attempt, to do this by themselves, as this could result in the patient or the healthcare assistant getting hurt.

Never lift by them as this could lead to the healthcare assistant been out of work, due to back injury, always using a hoist.

CONTROL MEASURES

The healthcare assistant must make sure before using any equipment, that it is in good working order and report it if needs attention and always be in the correct standing position before moving anyone. Make sure that before moving or changing the patient, that you have everything that is needed; it is too late half way through. The healthcare assistant must give themselves penalty of room in moving a patient and not wearing clothes that could restrict their movement.

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Select one occupational related illness and give a detailed description of

CAUSES

Back injury is the most common injury in the healthcare sector, along with contacts with germs, falls, trips, and slips on wet floors. As the healthcare assistant goes about their daily duties, it is important for them to follow policy and procedures, to reduce the risk of injury to themselves or patients.

By not using a hoist when lifting a patient into or out of a bed, chair or if need be into the toilet, there will be a pulling on the back. The healthcare assistant who does not take care, when picking up, putting down any such items as boxes, etc.

Not using the slip sheet, when moving a patient up in the bed and pulling them up using their own arms.

When making or changing a bed, the healthcare assistant must always raise the bed up to hip level, before starting this task, as this can reduce the risk of back injury.

When showering a patient do not lift them, with another assistant, use a hoist to lift them into the shower bed or onto a chair to wheel them into the bathroom.

When feeding a patient sit down beside them at their level and do not stand, bend down over them.

When changing a patient in the bed, bending over the patient, can lead to back discomfort and after doing this for a length of time, will cause back injury.

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Symptoms

As the healthcare assistant goes about their daily duties, they may find that not using their manual handling properly and lifting patients, with their arms and pulling them up in the beds and chairs that now they are suffering with back pain and discomfort.

They may feel tired and not able to do much around the house.

This may start to affect the ability to do their normal work duties and affect their home life as well and if this is not look after, might lead to been out of work, for a long time.

The healthcare assistant must watch out for things left out in hall ways, as they can fall over them and hurt their backs and walking into rooms, after been cleaned, as the floors might be still wet and they can slip and fall.

As the healthcare assistant finds that the simple thing of rolling a patient over in the bed, can hurt them, as this could be the result of wear and tear over a period of time.

This can also lead to the healthcare assistant to start getting pains in their, legs, arms and neck as the injury gets worst.

The healthcare assistant may have to, leave work and go to the doctor, which could lead to been out of work for long periods of time.

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Impact on the worker

The impact on the healthcare assistant was out of work, due to wear and tear, or a fall, can have big effect on their lives. If they are out of work, they might not be able to do anything at home, such as hover, wash a floor or other basic things and this could start them feeling down in them selves.

As they sit at home the healthcare assistant, could start to eat to much as that all they can do or turn away from food, as they get more and more depressed.

Their sleep might be affect, which could lead to been up during the night and asleep all day, which could lead to the person been moody.

Along with this, their wages might be affect, which will bring other problems with it, such as doctor bills, any medication that they might have to get, plus if they have to see a physiotherapy, this can start to add up and not been on full wages , can become expensive.

This may cause the healthcare assistant to become stress and depress, as financial problems may start to arise. As the healthcare assistant is at home, they might not see anyone until their family comes home, which this can be lonely on the person.

They should try and get out for a walk every day even if they can not go very far, as they will meet someone along the way to talk to them.

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Preventative measures

It is the healthcare assistant responsibility to be trained fully in manual handling and if not go to the staff nurse or manger to request that this is done. The healthcare assistant must always follow what they have been shown, through manual handling, as this dose prevent a lot of injury.

The healthcare assistant must report any faults in the setting or any equipment that needs to be repaired.

Suitable footwear can help, as been on your feet all day can affect your back.

Put manual handling into use, by bending your knees when bending and lifting any boxes and always use correct stand, when moving a patient, use your legs to take some of the pressure.

Regular exercise can help prevent, some back injury and getting patients who are able to move, to get them to do most of the moving themselves, where possible.

Always use the hoist, when lifting or moving a patient to a chair, toilet, shower or bed and never lift anyone by yourself, always have someone with you to assess.

When moving a patient up in the bed, always use a slip sheet and never pull a patient up with your arms.

Bring the bed up to hip high, when changing the bed or a patient, as the healthcare assistant will not have to bend over, and there for reduce the pull to the assistant back area.

When feeding a patient, sit down beside them at their level, so you do not have to bend over them or reach to them.

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Recommendations

One of my recommendations would be that all healthcare staff, trained in manual handling, before the start the job, and any up date training to be done, for all staff in the setting. As lifting without a hoist can be dangerous, also that all staff that have anything to do with changing, feeding or looking after the patients.

Follow policy and procedures correctly, as this can stop injury to the patient and healthcare assistant.

I also recommendations that all staff and students shown how to steer, and walk slowly with a wheelchair, especially around corners.

I recommend that all staff wear appropriate foot wear (cushion souls), as I think that this dose helps with back problems.

All healthcare staff should wear their PPE personal protective equipment, gloves, aprons, masks, when dealing with any patients that are soiled or have any body fluids.

For all staff to use the hand gel, as many times as they can during the day, as this is better than hand washing, in killing more germs.

All nurses, healthcare assistants, cleaning staff to report anything that they find in the wards, hallways or other parts of the setting that is in need of repair, as this can cause an accident or maybe become a risk for someone.

As good communication between staff and manager, is especially to keep everything running smoothly.

Liz Rushe

Assignment evaluation

As part of my assignment, I had to go on work experience, in a nursing home setting, as I started this course and during my work experience, I have learned so much about policies and procedures, health and safety, that following them is very important.

I have learned how much care and attention the patients need on a daily basis and this is given to them, by all the staff with kindness and respect.

Staff must follow the health and safety policy and procedures, to ensure that everyone is working in a safe environment.

I have learned that all staff must do everything they can to prevent the spread of infection and that staff that are dealing with patients of high risk are

taking appropriate measures, such as hand washing, hand gel and wearing PPE at all times.

When changing a bed, to have the laundry trolley beside the bed and not to bring the dirty sheets to the trolley, in another room.