

Activity

This activity consists of two scenarios, both based in care settings. Read each one through, and reflect on answers to the questions that follow.

Scenario 1: a school visit

The local primary school has approached the Brookwood Care Home about visiting with a group of ten eight year olds on a Wednesday morning. The manager is keen for there to be more links with young people and welcomes the idea. However, the manager is not able to be there on Wednesday morning as she has an important meeting outside the home. She tells members of the staff team who will be on shift that the children are coming and that they are to be 'given a warm welcome'.

When the children arrive, many of the residents appear delighted to see the young faces and some of the children are relaxed and confident. However, a number of the children look awkward and unsure what to do. Their teacher suggests that the children sing a few songs for the residents in the main lounge. Care workers group the chairs in rows so that the children can 'perform' and then many of them leave the room to go and catch up with care tasks. Only one member of staff stays with the 12 residents in the lounge. One of the residents starts to join in one of the songs, but is not encouraged in any way. The children leave after a short visit having not been introduced to any of the residents individually.

Consider the following questions:

- What preparation might have helped make this visit more of a success?
- What might be the ways of 'breaking the ice' between the children and the older people? What staff support is needed to help make this happen?
- Are there ways of making the link between the home and the school a more regular arrangement?

Scenario 2: a visit from the local vicar

Sue Leyton, an activity organiser at Long Acre Residential and Nursing Home has approached the local Anglican Church about the possibility of regular visits to the care home as she feels that some of the residents who previously went to church are missing the contact.

The local vicar Reverend Tom Darwin suggests Tuesday afternoons on a fortnightly basis might be possible and Sue arranges for him to come the following week for an introductory visit. When he arrives 10 minutes early, she is in another part of the building and the member of staff who answers the door is in a rush and is unclear about

why he is there. When Sue comes down to find him, the vicar is polite but seems slightly thrown by the frailty of residents when she takes him into the main lounge. One resident with dementia is speaking in a very muddled way about her mother and appears quite agitated. Staff on duty are pleasant, but they are busy serving afternoon teas to the residents. Reverend Darwin appears to find the whole experience quite difficult and at the end of the visit, says he is unsure of what he can offer. He says he would be happy to provide communion to those residents who 'were still able to understand and appreciate this'.

Consider the following questions:

- What kind of preparations might have helped make this first visit less daunting for the vicar?
- Is it clear what is being asked and expected of the local church in this scenario?
- What kinds of things would help develop the relationship between the home and the church?
- What is the role of the activity organiser and the manager of the home in this situation?