

## Activity

### *An activity for staff in care settings*

Try this simple 'noise audit'. Spend time sitting quietly, listening and observing, in the care home in which you work. Of course, prepare for the exercises with your manager and the whole care team.

1. Sit down in a corner where you won't be in the way. Listen out carefully, and then write down all the noises that you hear in the course of, say, an hour.
2. Make note of the following kinds of things going on:
  - how long the television, radio or background music is on for
  - who is making decisions about when they are on or off or volume
  - any background noise, such as noise from equipment or outside traffic
  - any repeated noises, such as doors slamming
  - any particularly loud noises, such as a particular staff member's voice.
3. Record any reactions or responses from residents to the noises around them. This may be quite specific to individuals, for example, one resident may follow a particular television show with interest. Another may be anxious each time a telephone rings.

Do the same exercise at different times of the day to see when the issues with noise are a particular problem – perhaps at change of shift or mealtimes.

Meet as a team to share with colleagues what you've experienced, seen and heard. Together try to work out if any problematic or loud noises could be lessened or stopped.

Based on what you've read in the feature, consider whether any physical changes might help reduce noise.

If this exercise proves helpful, consider having one member of the team spend a night sleeping in a bedroom at the home. It may be that more lessons can be learned from experiencing the care home over one whole night and from the position of a typical resident's bedroom. Again, meet to discuss the findings and to plan what improvements could be made as a result.

### *An activity for home care staff*

Having read this feature on noise, consider how the issues apply to a person you are working with at the moment. Think about the following questions:

- Are you able to identify any particular times of the day or night when communication is more difficult with this person?
- Could noise levels – perhaps too high or just distracting – have a part to play in these problems?
- Is the television or radio played at a helpful volume, and turned off as necessary so that you can hear one another?
- Are there any particular noises or sounds which trouble this person?

Suggesting changes to a person's private home may not be appropriate or necessary. Even so, it may be that you could suggest small practical changes based on this material or, if the person's needs are more substantial, refer the person for specialist input from an occupational therapist.