

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WHO WANDER

People wander for a variety of reasons. These include:

- Seeking a place where they feel safer
- Seeking a place that is more familiar
- Wanting to take some exercise
- Wanting to familiarise themselves with where they are

This guidance has some tips for helping you to provide safer and supportive care for people who wander.



Be aware of the person's life **biography** – there may be clues in it to allow you to engage in meaningful and reassuring conversation with them to prevent the anxiety that may cause wandering



Speak to **family** and others that know the person – they may have useful tips. Ask them to stagger their visits so that the person has company for longer periods of the day



Check the person is there on a regular basis and make this part of the care plan



Provide **signs and clues** such as through pictures or symbols that help orientate the person to their area. Use colours to provide contrast in the environment



Check for causes of **physical discomfort** (often undiagnosed for people with confusion) eg constipation, pain, thirst, desire for the toilet



Use **team meetings** to share any problems and plan a person-centred and consistent approach. Write a detailed care plan



Provide **pleasurably sensory stimulation** and **familiar objects** (eg personal possessions) in the person's area that will increase the feeling of comfort and security



Be sensitive to the **triggers** for that person – these may include factors relating to

- light
- noise
- temperature
- equipment
- the way in which members of staff team approach them



Do not negatively label the person – this encourages the whole team to have a negative view of that person



Ensure the person is wearing an **identity band**



Ensure the person has their **normal mobility aids** – this will help prevent falls



Try not to block the person's way with members of staff or equipment and furniture – this can feel very frightening and is liable to increase the desire to 'escape'. Disguise exits with pictures and screens if possible.



If possible, **accompany the person** whilst they wander/walk. Engage in meaningful conversation whilst you accompany the person – this will reassure and build trust: it may help the person feel more at home in your environment and thus less likely to leave.

Make continual efforts to
raise the person's feeling of well-being

This will help the person to develop trust in you and your colleagues, and feel more comfortable in your environment