

Weights and measures in care work

Discuss the different units that are used in care work, and reflect on experiences

Duration: 20 minutes

Resources: Set of task cards (blue) and set of answer cards (red).

What core skills does this address?

- Number skills

What Care Certificate standards does this address?

- 6.5 Use effective verbal communication

Introduce the activity

Explain that the task cards (blue) ask staff to estimate a measurement of weight, length, volume or temperature within a workplace scenario.

The other set of cards (red) contains the answers.

Ask workers match the task card with the correct answer. Suggest that they start with the type of measurements they use most often, before tackling any of estimation tasks that involve less familiar units.

Ask workers to justify their decisions during the feedback discussion.

Feedback and discussion

Ask each group to choose two of the task cards and explain how they worked out what the estimated answers were likely to be.

You could use these questions to structure the discussion:

- which units are you most confident with?
- what has helped you become more confident with using those units?
- are there any tips on estimation that might be useful to others?
- which of the units do you use most often in record keeping?
- how accurate do we need to be when using some of these measurements?
- do you need to be able to do any conversions in your head when talking with residents?

As a result of the discussion you could capture some of the practical 'tips' about using metric units on a flip chart sheet and then write them up as a poster for display in the staff room or a work station or as personal reference guide.

Sharing informal calculation strategies in this way can build the confidence in those who lack confidence using maths at work.

Task cards

A single dose of cough medicine	Standard strength of paracetamol tablets
Average weight of a female adult	Safe temperature for a fridge
Average height on an adult	Safe temperature for a freezer
Resting pulse rate per minute for an adult	Resting breath rate per for an adult
Comfortable room temperature	Normal body temperature
Average size of a car petrol tank	Safe bath water temperature
The size of a cleaning bucket	Capacity of a glass tumbler

Answer cards

5 ml	500 mg
22°C	16 – 20
37°C	45 litres
46°C	60 - 80
150 ml	9 litres
60 kg	5°C
- 18°C	1.75 m

