

How accurate do you need to be?

This group activity will help workers to understand the level of accuracy that's needed in different workplace scenarios, for example when dealing with weights and measurements.

Duration: 20 minutes

Resources: Activity sheet.

What core skills does this address?

- English skills

What Care Certificate standards does this address?

- 6.5 Use appropriate verbal communication

Introduce the activity

Explain that being confident in using numbers and measurement in the workplace involves understanding the level of accuracy that's required in different situations. Sometimes care workers can find this difficult, especially if they lack confidence in numeracy.

Hand out the activity sheet and explain that the amounts are written to an **inappropriate** level of accuracy.

Ask workers to rewrite the amounts using the level of accuracy that they think would be more appropriate.

Ask workers to justify their decisions during the feedback discussion.

Feedback and discussion

Ask each group to choose one of the amounts and explain the level of accuracy they thought would have been more appropriate. It might be useful to write these on a flipchart and discuss the measurements as you go along.

Be ready to highlight the phrase 'round to the nearest...' which some staff will use to describe how they might give an answer.

If some of your workers lack confidence in their numeracy skills, start with situations which they're most familiar for example the age of residents or working hours.

You could use these questions to structure the discussion:

- how do we decide how accurate we have to be in different contexts?
- how do you round up or down in your head?
- are there some units that are harder to deal with than others?

- do you have any tips on estimating amounts e.g. how much fluid someone has drunk?
- are there any areas in which we could improve the way we record information accurately on our charts?

As a result of the discussion activity you may like to capture some of the practical 'tips' about estimation and rounding up on a flip chart sheet, and then write them up as a poster for display in the staff room, a work station or as a hand out.

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

How accurate do you need to be?

Give more realistic approximations of the amounts below.

Discuss the different levels of accuracy you would use in different contexts.

Mr C is 52 years, 5 months and 24 days old.	
My hourly rate worked out to be £6.3587 per hour.	
Mrs P weighs 54.721 kg.	
Mr B had a cup of tea so I put 147.3 ml on the fluid chart.	
The fridge is 4.86°C.	
I always mix 24% of orange squash with 76% water.	
On average it takes 42 min and 15 seconds to support Mrs T to have a bath.	
I mixed a sachet of Movicol in 123.9 ml of water.	