

Recognising and Reporting People Who Are Deteriorating

Information for support workers in all health and care settings



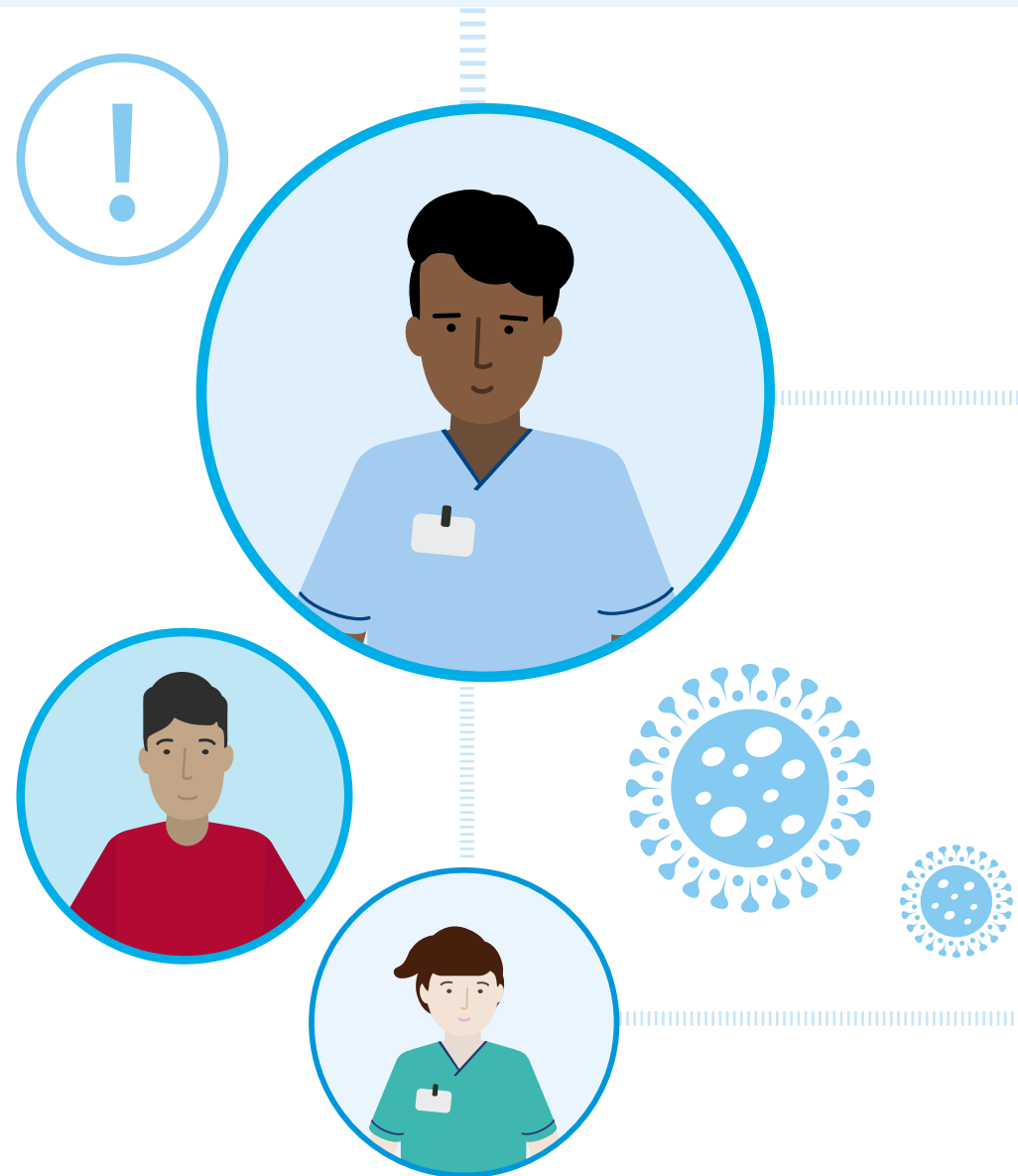
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01 | Why is it important?

You are now working as a support worker in health and care in Scotland at a time where we face our biggest challenge to date, caring for the people of Scotland during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The situation is far from ideal, you may be moving into new areas where all staff are under pressure to provide high-quality care to an increased number of people. You may be working in teams and settings which are fast-paced and where you don't know the staff, and they don't know you well.

During the COVID-19 outbreak it is very important that you can recognise when a person is becoming more unwell and what to do when this happens. This learning resource will help you to understand what to do and who to seek help from if you are working with someone who is deteriorating.



02 | What are my responsibilities?

You must make sure you understand your employer's specific processes and protocols.

By working through this learning resource, and by linking to NES support worker resources for **Delegation** and **Keeping a record of care**, you can be confident about what is expected of you in your role.

-  Delegation
-  Keeping a Record of Care



03 | What is deterioration?

Deterioration is when a person becomes worse suddenly and they need urgent treatment from nursing and medical staff.

Your role as a health or care support worker is to recognise this and report it to the appropriate staff or the emergency services, so that the deteriorating person can get the help they need.



Learning Points

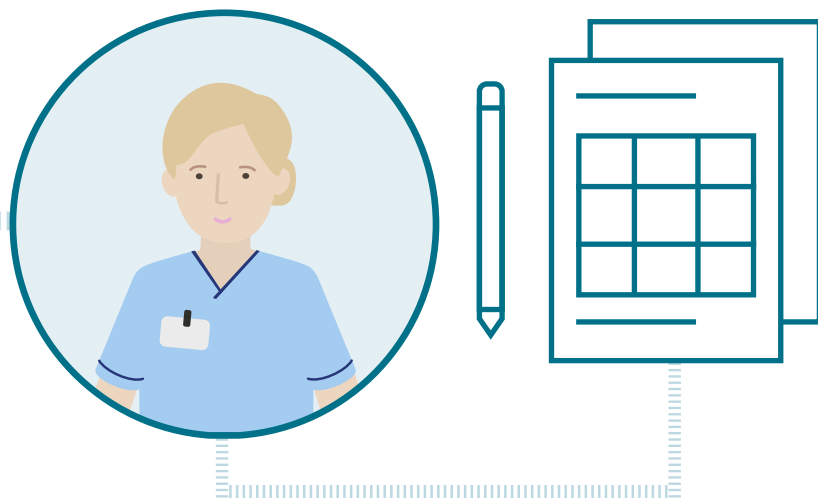
- ▶ You have a responsibility to provide safe, person centred and effective care
- ▶ Recognising when a person is deteriorating is a vital part of this
- ▶ You also have a responsibility to report any deterioration of someone's condition to an appropriate staff member without delay
- ▶ **If you are unsure or unable to assess someone who may be deteriorating, you must get help to do so as quickly as possible.**



04 | How will I know if someone is deteriorating?

There are vital signs that can alert you to someone becoming more unwell. You should be looking out for these when you are carrying out direct care or working in any area where people are being cared for.

If you are working in a care area and you have the relevant skills and are competent to carry out measurement of these vital signs, you must do so and record them in the patient's NEWS2 chart.



The following vital signs are the key things that should alert you to the fact that a person's condition may be deteriorating, and therefore you need to get help quickly.

You may see or hear these signs described using the acronym **ABCDE**.

For support workers in health and care we will focus on **ABCD...**

E is for environment and we have taken the key points from there and added to this adapted **ABCD**.

We will now take you through each of these signs and concentrate on your responsibilities.



Learning Points

- ▶ A person who is deteriorating may only display some of the following signs, not necessarily all of them.
- ▶ It is still essential that you report any concerns to the appropriate people/services.

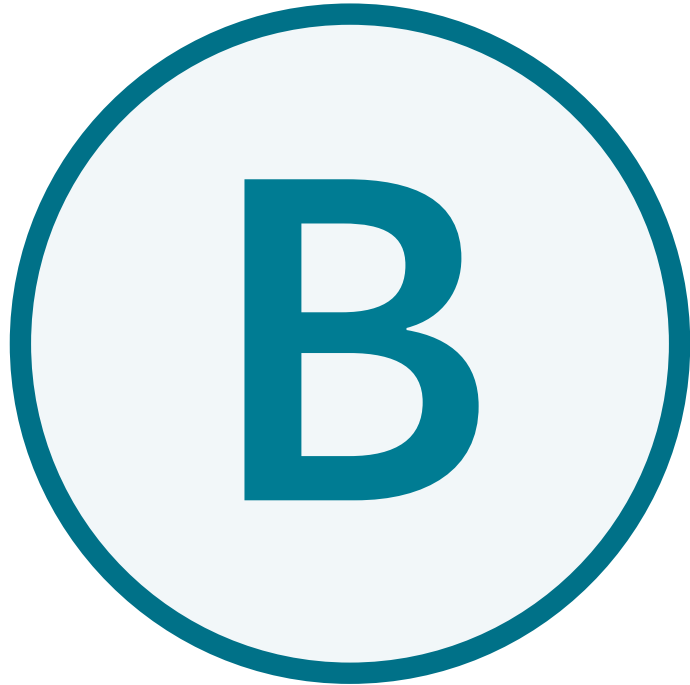
04 | How will I know if someone is deteriorating?



A is for Airway

- ▶ Is the person breathing?
- ▶ Are they breathing easily?
- ▶ Is it difficult for them to breath?
- ▶ Are they lying flat? If so, can you help them to sit up if they are able to?
- ▶ Does sitting up help their breathing?

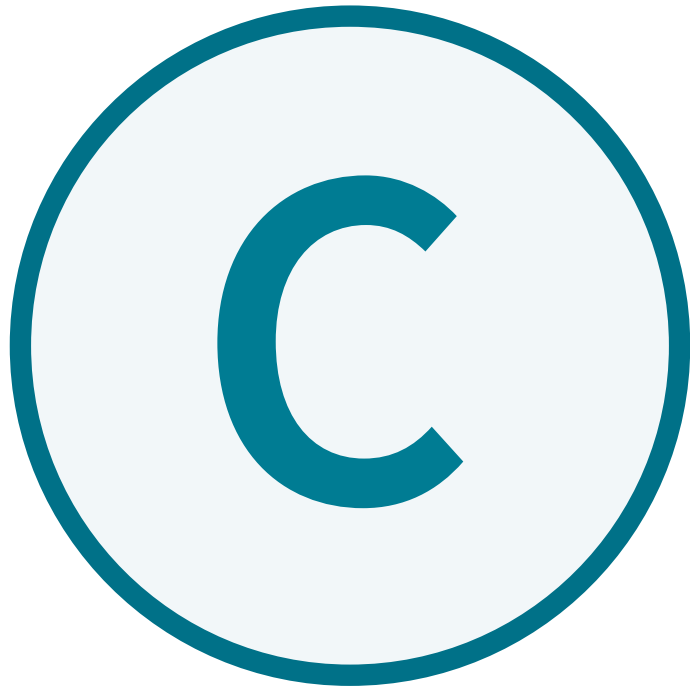
04 | How will I know if someone is deteriorating?



B is for Breathing

- ▶ Is the person on oxygen? If so, check oxygen saturations if capable/competent
- ▶ Is their breathing noisy, is it difficult to hear, can they speak?
- ▶ Does their breathing look laboured (difficult)?
- ▶ How many breaths per minute are they taking? Check respiratory rate if capable/competent
- ▶ Is their breathing regular or not?

04 | How will I know if someone is deteriorating?



C is for Circulation

- ▶ What colour are they - are they flushed, sweaty, paler than normal, or do they look cyanosed (blue), are they cold, clammy or mottled? Check capillary refill time if capable/competent
- ▶ What is their heart rate? Check pulse rate if capable/competent
- ▶ What is their blood pressure? Check BP if capable/competent
- ▶ What is their temperature? Check temperature if capable/competent

and for Conscious level

- ▶ Is the person responding to your voice and able to answer you?
- ▶ Are you able to understand what they are saying, if not, is this new?
- ▶ Are they difficult to rouse?
- ▶ Are they confused, if yes, is this new?

04 | How will I know if someone is deteriorating?



D is for Disability

- ▶ Is the person complaining of any pain?
If yes, ask where it is, and how severe it is – (on a scale of 1-10)
- ▶ Is the person known to be diabetic, are they confused? Check blood sugar if capable, even if the patient is not known to be diabetic
- ▶ Are there any obvious signs of injury, for example blood loss?

05 | How do I report someone who is deteriorating and who to?

If you have any concerns about someone, even if you feel that ‘something just isn’t right’ you must tell an appropriate member of staff without delay, so that they can be assessed as quickly as possible.

If you are working in a clinical area, an appropriate member of staff can be the nurse in charge, the team lead or any of the nursing, medical, allied health professions team, or any other professional that you can communicate with quickly and report your concerns to.

If the person is in **their own home** or in a **care home**, you should follow local procedures and processes in place for escalating concerns. If you are lone working with a person who is deteriorating in their own home, call 999 for help and advice.



Learning Points

- ▶ Make sure that you have familiarised yourself with the process which applies to your work area, and that you know who to alert.
- ▶ if you are lone working in a person’s own home, call 999 for help and advice.

06 | Final thoughts



After reading the information on recognising and reporting someone who is deteriorating, take a moment to summarise your understanding of the key learning points for you as a support worker in health or care setting.

07 | Useful links

NEWS2

[Link to resource](#)

Introducing the ABCDE Assessment

[Link to resource](#)

Resuscitation Council (UK) ABCDE Assessment Demonstration

[Link to resource](#)

Recognising and Reporting People Who Are Deteriorating

This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages.
Please contact us on **0131 656 3200** or email altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk



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NESD1244 Recognising and Reporting People Who Are Deteriorating: Information for support workers in all health and care settings | Designed by the NES Design Team