

# Basic Health Observations for Managers Toolkit

Produced by Hertfordshire Care Provider's Association (HCPA)

# Basic Health Observations Governance Toolkit

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Basic Health Observations Governance Toolkit for care provider managers.

This has been created as a tool to help guide the implementation of high-quality basic health observation care and governance in your care provider.

This should be used as a reference alongside your training received at Hertfordshire Care Provider's Association or other relevant provider.

If you have any questions, you can contact the HCPA team on:

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## Training requirements

Prior to engaging in any basic health observation monitoring, it is vital that both care staff and their managers have received training in how to measure basic health observations and utilise the Restore 2 tool effectively. For managers, training should also cover the principles of governance of basic health observations.

HCPA offer two training courses dependent on the level of the learner, however you may also access training through your in house or external trainers.

Below are the learning outcomes we suggest to be covered any basic health training for staff and managers,

- Basic Health Observations for care staff
  - Identify the different types of BHO (respiratory rate, temperature, oxygen saturations, blood pressure, heart rate) and their purpose.
  - Recognise when a resident may be deteriorating or at risk of physical deterioration, using Restore 2 soft signs tool
  - Explain how you would act appropriately according to the resident's care plan to protect and manage the resident, this may include Advance Care Plans (ACP) and Treatment Escalation Plans (TEP)
  - Demonstrate or describe how you would obtain a complete set of physical observations using a basic health observations kit (blood pressure, temperature, ACVPU, respiratory rate, heart rate).
  - Demonstrate how to provide a concise handover to health professionals to support their professional decision using the SBARD escalation tool.
  - Describe how to use the Hertfordshire escalation tool to identify the appropriate healthcare professional to discuss your concerns with and appropriate actions for care professionals to take with the acutely unwell person.
- Basic Health Observation governance for care governors
  - To be confident and proficient using the Restore 2 tool, including taking basic health observations, recognising soft signs, calculating a NEWS2 score, completing an SBARD report and utilising the Hertfordshire Escalation tool to provide an appropriate response to the acutely unwell person
  - To be able to cascade basic knowledge about health observations to other care professionals using the Restore 2 implementation framework

- To use the knowledge gained in this session to improve relationships with healthcare professionals, integrate care homes as part of a wider MDT and improve outcomes for service users
- To implement the governance processes of Basic Health Observations including policies, processes, auditing and staff competence checks in care providers. To utilise the basic health observations toolkit and implement the governance assurance checklist in maintaining high quality care.

These learning outcomes may be used if care providers are running training internally or using an external supplier to deliver training.

HCPA will also provide yearly refresher sessions for both sessions and it is recommended that staff attend these to remain up to date with latest developments.

The HCPA have collated all their resources in a website for your easy access and reference. Please follow this link:

[www.hcpa.info/BHO](http://www.hcpa.info/BHO)

## Safeguarding

A vital part of governance as a whole is the safeguarding of individuals in your care. Each care providers need strong policies and procedures in place to deal with safeguarding concerns in a timely manner. Managers should be aware of the processes and procedures in place should there be a concern around safeguarding so that concerns can be resolved promptly to avoid further harm. Managers also need to be open and approachable so that staff members are able to escalate their concerns and feel supported in doing so.

Managers and care staff can seek support from their safeguarding lead for the organisation, or contact Adult Care Services on 0300 123 4042 in the first instance. The HCPA team can be contacted on 01707 596020 for any queries related to the Restore 2 tool.

## Assurance checklist

The assurance checklist can be used as a tool for managers or nominated leads to ensure that actions are being taken by the care provider to provide the highest quality care around basic health observations. Managers or nominated leads can ensure that all correct procedures and practices are in place so that the care providers are safe to deliver care to the standards required by the CQC and NHS. It can also identify any actions needed to improve care being provided.

<https://www.hcpa.info/wp-content/uploads/BHO-Managers-assurance-checklist-1.pdf>

## Example policy – recognising deterioration in individuals

It is crucial that there is a policy in place in all care providers that relates to basic health observations and how to recognise a deteriorating individual. It is also important that all care staff are aware of and adhere to this policy, as non-compliance or absence of policies and procedures in the instance of an incident could lead to difficulties with insurance pay-outs and safeguarding reviews. Compliance with the policy can be checked via the means of spot checks and audits which will be covered later in this document.

Please find attached in the appendices an example policy that can be altered to suit your care provider's individual needs.

<https://www.hcpa.info/wp-content/uploads/Recognising-deterioration-in-residents-policy-TEMPLATE.pdf>

Please note this policy includes the Restore 2 tool and the Restore mini tool. The mini does not include the recording of basic health observations and is instead focussed only on soft signs, HCPA recommend the use of the full Restore 2 tool over the mini where possible. Also recommended to be included in your policy is the taking of baseline observations when a new individual is admitted to a care home; this is in line with the Department of Health and Social Care's guidance "Admission and care of residents in a care home during COVID-19".

## Risk assessments

Risks assessments are a systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking. They are an essential aspect of providing high quality, safe care to the individuals under your service.

Risk assessments should identify the risk (including how likely this is to happen and what the potential impact could be), what actions could be taken to reasonably reduce the risk (including who is responsible for actioning this change and when the change needs to be completed by), and finally recording when the action is completed.

With regards to measuring basic health observations in a care setting, there are a few aspects to consider to minimise the risk that can be actioned by both staff and managers:

- Have staff members had the appropriate training to carry out the basic health observation roles?

- Have individuals had an individual risk assessment completed to identify any particular health risks for them? For example, if an individual is particularly at risk of chest infections are their oxygen levels routinely monitored?
- Are staff aware of their own professional remit and are they seeking advice and support where necessary? Is the wider health MDT involved in providing clinical support?
- Is the equipment used in full working order and PAT tested in line with manufacturer guidance?

Referring to the assurance checklist included in this document will help to guide care managers in ensuring that all risks are considered and protected against as far as reasonably possible.

## Competencies

As part of the governance process for basic health observations, care professionals must be signed as competent to take basic health observations. This is important from a patient safety standpoint but also in reducing liability for the care provider concerned. Care managers can sign off their carers as competent to take observations, and are competency checked in a classroom environment by a registered health care professional.

Please see attached an example competency checklist that could be employed with your care staff to check their competency for taking observations.

<https://www.hcpa.info/wp-content/uploads/BHO-competencies-example.doc>

## Audits and observation

Audits and observations in the form of planned observations and unplanned spot checks should be used to monitor the compliance of staff in line with your policies on monitoring the health of individuals.

Audits must be clearly documented, and any issues identified in these audits must be clearly actioned and evidenced.

Observations must be completed regularly in line with your policies (suggest quarterly to reduce the risk of poor-quality practice being adopted) and should also be clearly documented. Any issues arising from observations should be fed back promptly and clearly to the member of staff and action plans put into place to improve standards.

Please find attached an example audit from the publishers of the Restore 2 tool that can be used as a guide:

<https://www.hcpa.info/wp-content/uploads/Copy-of-RESTORE2-Measuring-Tool-2.xlsx>

## Equipment and testing

It is the care provider's responsibility to maintain basic health observation equipment to a high standard to ensure it is providing an accurate reading.

"Basic health observation equipment" is considered to include the following:

- Blood pressure machine – these can be automatic or manual using a stethoscope. It is recommended that care providers utilise automatic blood pressure machines rather than manual methods. It is also recommended that care providers have a selection of different sized blood pressure cuffs to accommodate for different body sizes as not one size fits all.

- Thermometer – there are different types of thermometers available on the market, it is recommended that care providers utilise tympanic (in ear) thermometers as opposed to infra-red forehead scanning thermometers, as they have been shown to be more accurate in temperature readings.



- Pulse oximeter – these can be sited either over the finger/toe nail or on the earlobe. All HCPA training uses a pulse oximeter that goes on the finger/toe nail and it is recommended that care providers source these rather than earlobe oximeters.

Equipment should be cleaned between each patient use to avoid cross contamination. This should be included in your policy for the care provider.

Equipment should be serviced routinely according to the manufacturer's instructions. If you are unsure how often this should be, please contact your CCG for advice.

It is recommended that one basic health observations equipment kit is sourced per 10 individuals under a care provider.

## Hertfordshire Escalation framework

Although the Restore 2 offers guidance on how to appropriately respond to varying scores on the NEWS 2, these are national recommendations and do not include information on the services local to Hertfordshire. The escalation frameworks attached also include information on how to access support out of hours as well as in normal working hours.

For East and North Hertfordshire:

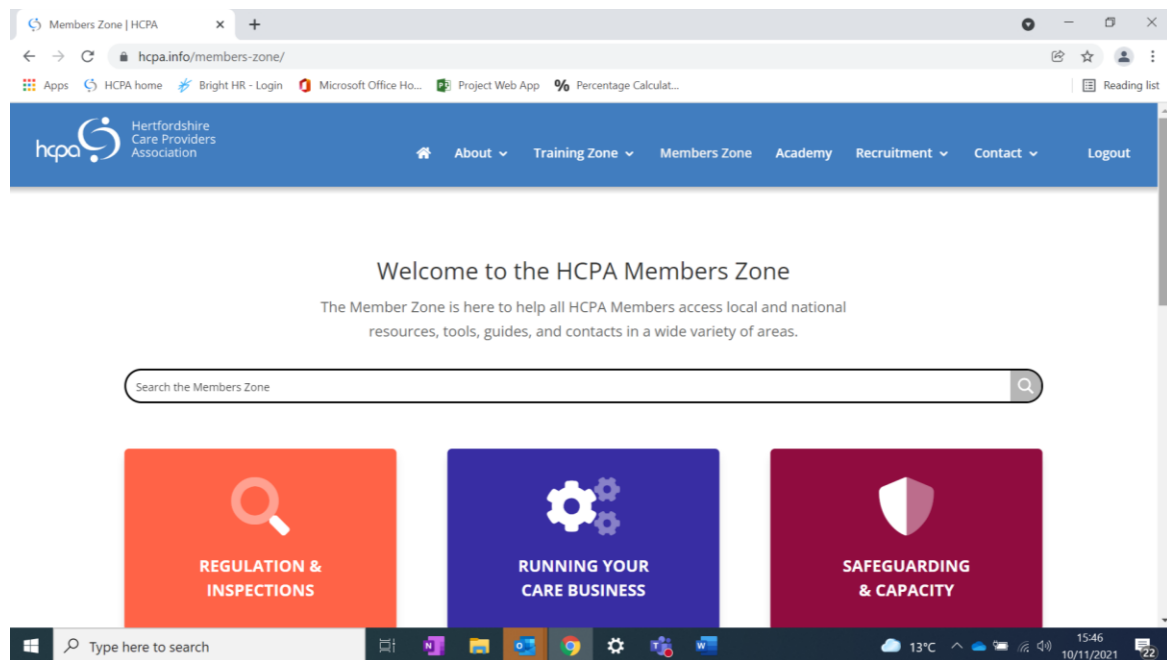
<https://www.hcpa.info/wp-content/uploads/Escalation-pathway-Restore-2-Hertfordshire.docx>

For Herts Valleys:

<https://www.hcpa.info/wp-content/uploads/Escalation-pathway-Restore-2-Oxygen-Herts-Valleys-240921.docx>

## Referring to local professionals

The HCPA Members Zone has additional resources to make sure that all care providers have the information they need. Information related specifically to basic health observations can be found under the health and wellbeing section.



In addition to the above resources, there are also details on the HCPA Member's Zone about how to contact local health services according to where your care provider is based. They are also linked here:

- [Lower Lea Valley Care Homes- Service access information](#)
- [North Herts Care Homes Service access information](#)
- [Stevenage Care Homes- Service access information](#)
- [Stort Valley & Villages Care Homes- Service access information](#)
- [Upper Lea Valley Care Homes- Service access information](#)
- [Welwyn / Hatfield Care Homes- Service access information](#)
- [West Herts Care Homes – Service access information](#)



## Signposting

### Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight CCG

The official website for the Restore 2 tool can be found here:

<https://www.hampshiresouthamptonandisleofwightccg.nhs.uk/your-health/restore-official>

The Restore 2 tool in its entirety can also be downloaded and printed from this website.

### Department of Health and Social Care

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have produced guidance that supports the admission and care of people in care homes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. A key recommendation in this guidance is that people admitted to care homes have their observations taken on admission and monitored regularly. This guidance can be found by following the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-admission-and-care-of-people-in-care-homes>

### British Geriatric Society

The British Geriatric Society have also published supportive guidelines around the management of the COVID 19 pandemic in care homes. This guidance recommends the use of Restore 2 in care home settings and also advises that care professionals should be trained in taking basic health observations. This guidance can be found by following the link below:

<https://www.bgs.org.uk/resources/covid-19-managing-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-care-homes>

### Social Care Institute for Excellence

The Social Care Institute for Excellence is an organisation committed to improving the lives of people of all ages but sharing the best available knowledge and evidence about what works in social care and social work. Their website includes specific guidance and resources around COVID-19 and safeguarding as well as a number of other topics.

<https://www.scie.org.uk/>

