

Wellness & wellbeing

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It goes without saying that daily care, nourishment and safety are extremely important aspects of life in a residential or nursing care home. But for real quality of life, your overall wellness and wellbeing are – or should be – vital elements of your personal care plan, too.

At Canford Healthcare we understand that wellness goes beyond the basics of someone's everyday needs, extending into every aspect of their life. Varied and meaningful activities, together with the opportunity to pursue an active social life, are integral parts of life at our homes. Our care teams and activities co-ordinators work tirelessly to ensure that each resident can pursue and fulfil their interests, whatever these may be.

This guide is intended to help you understand what we mean by wellness and wellbeing, and how we ensure that every Canford Healthcare resident is supported to live their best possible life.

What are wellness and wellbeing?

Wellness and wellbeing are terms that are widely used and often interchangeable. Wellness is all about looking after one's physical, mental and emotional health, while wellbeing takes a broader perspective. It encompasses all aspects of your life, from your physical or cognitive needs to your participation in interesting and stimulating activities while enjoying love and support from your extended family within the home.

Every Canford Healthcare home has a team of experienced activities co-ordinators, led by the head of activities. They put together a varied programme of activities a month in advance and run them each morning and afternoon. They might include music and singing, crafts and arts, baking, gardening, quizzes and yoga, for example.

These sessions are all designed to keep residents physically and mentally active, engaged and fulfilled, instilling a sense of purpose and self-worth. Joining in with daily activities is also an important part of helping you to make new friends and settle in more quickly when you first move in.

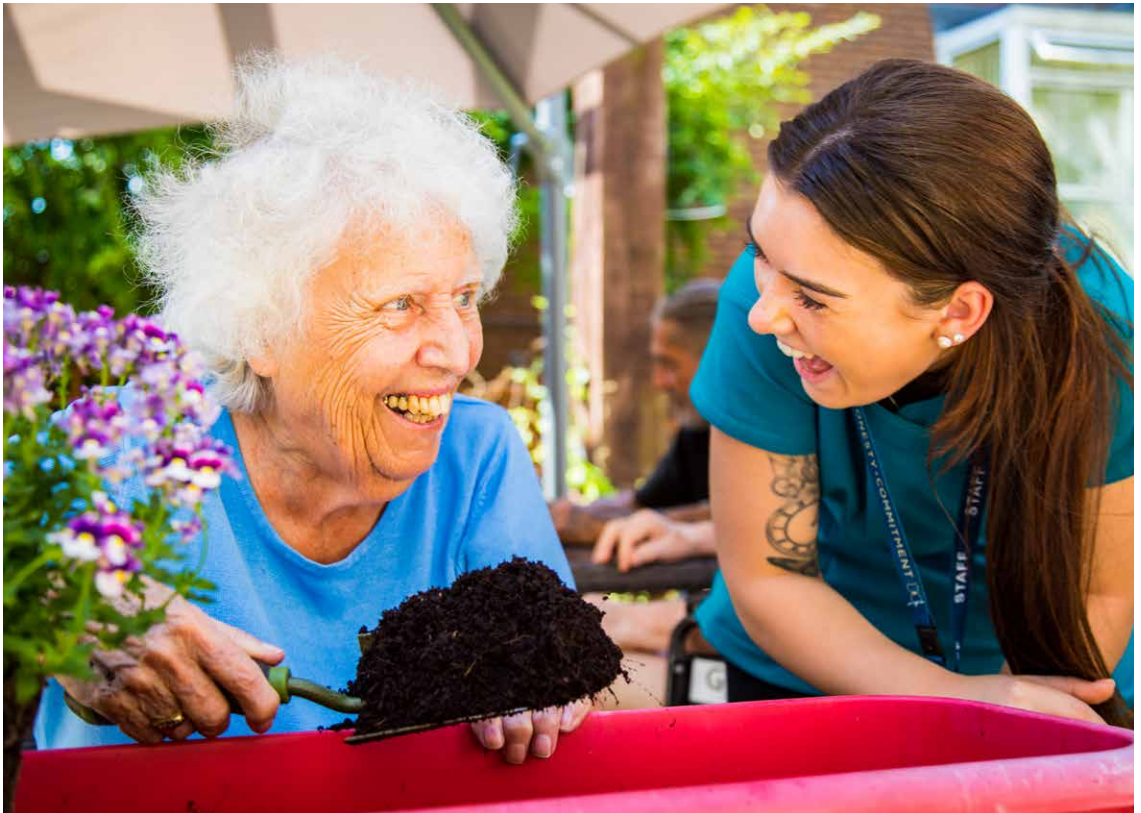
Everyone has their own likes, dislikes, hobbies and interests. We believe that every activity should be meaningful to the person taking part. So there is plenty of choice, and people can also opt out of group activities, in favour of quieter or 1:1 sessions, if they prefer. As well as seasonal events and birthdays, where we encourage participation from our residents' families, we also organise 1:1 or group trips out to shops, garden centres, gardens, place of interest or the seaside.

Person-centred care

Your own needs and preferences are important. We build a person-centred plan of exercise and activities for each resident, recording your daily activities on your care plan which is reviewed and updated regularly. Residents with dementia or those who are in bed have as much need for, and access to, enjoyable and

meaningful activities as other residents and we ensure that they are also fully catered for.

There are regulatory requirements around the provision of activities within a care home and we work with our activities team, as well as visiting musicians, exercise and wellbeing specialists, to ensure that we do not just meet these, but exceed them comfortably, creating a whole-home wellbeing culture.



Older adults aged 65 and over are the most sedentary age group – spending an average of 10 hours each day sitting or lying down (source: NHS).

This level of inactivity is associated with higher rates of obesity, heart disease, falls and early death. Inactive people tend to suffer from more aches and pains, find that they have less energy to go out, and become more vulnerable to falling. The less active you are, the more you may struggle to pursue simple pleasures, such as playing with the grandchildren, walking to the shops, pursuing leisure activities and meeting up with friends.

The good news is that being physically active can help you stay healthy, energetic and independent as you get older. The fitter you are, the more able you are to look after yourself – and the longer you can stay independent.

Active people also have a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, depression and dementia. Exercise also helps to reduce the risk of mental illness, boosting your levels of self-esteem and energy. It also helps you to sleep better, further improving your energy levels and mood.

Shared activity in your residential or nursing home also helps you to make friends, and having a full social life also boosts your confidence and self-esteem.

What kind of physical activity is best?

Physical activity is anything that gets your body moving, and everyone over 65 should aim for some movement every day. What you do will depend on your own likes and dislikes, as well as your ability. Some of the most popular activities in our homes include:

- Chair-based exercises
- Activities in the garden
- Walking
- Music and dancing
- Trips out
- Gardening

If you have any concerns about exercising, you should speak to your GP. If you are a resident, your care team can arrange this for you.



Cognitive and mental wellness relates to your brain health. While diet can help to protect this – for example, eating plenty of foods rich in omega oils may boost your memory and ward off depression (Source: British Dietetic Association) – it is as important to exercise your brain as it is your body.

Keeping your brain healthy and active helps increase overall mental wellbeing, improving confidence and self-esteem while reducing the impact of stress, anxiety and depression. As we age changes in our brain mean that we are less able to process information as quickly as before. And for people living with dementia, these are far more wide-reaching.

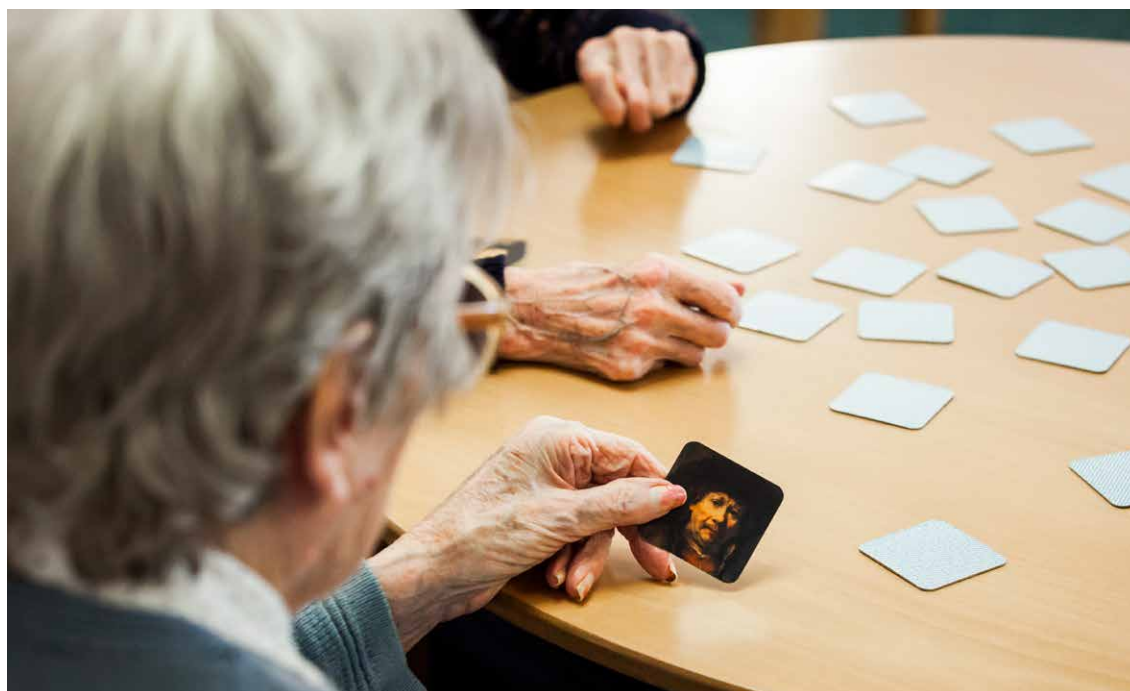
As a result, our activities co-ordinators regularly organise a wide range of activities designed to stimulate your brain and ensure that you have fun at the same time! These include:

Creative arts and crafts: Whether you have always enjoyed being creative or haven't picked up a paintbrush since childhood, getting involved in arts and crafts is an excellent way to stimulate your brain and boost your self-confidence. Many residents rediscover old hobbies and talents, while learning new arts and crafts skills can be a big confidence booster, too.

Problem-solving puzzles: From crosswords to jigsaws and sudoku, these are an interesting and stimulating way to keep your brain active.

Games: Bingo, cards and board games fire up the brain cells and have a strong social element. If you have a strong competitive streak, you can enjoy indulging this while doing something good for your brain.

Memory games and reminiscing: Many older people find the recent past harder to remember than their more distant youth. Our reminiscing sessions – often supported with memory-prompting props – are always popular and, of course, sharing memories is a great way to find out more about your fellow residents and make new friends.



We all like to have fun! Participating in activities that are amusing and entertaining makes us feel good about ourselves and about life in general. Even better, though, doing things we love contributes towards our therapeutic and sensory wellbeing – that is, it helps to keep our mind and body active.

It doesn't matter whether these are social activities or a chance to take some time for yourself – pursuing interests, hobbies and pastimes is good for you.

At our Canford Healthcare homes our activities organisers incorporate a range of therapeutic and sensory wellbeing activities in their monthly programmes, including:

- Music and singing, done in-house or with visiting musicians and singers
- TV and regular film screenings
- Hairdressing, with visiting hairdressers in our own on-site hairdressing salons
- Chiropody, booked by appointment with visiting chiropodists
- Baking and cake/biscuit decorating
- Animal therapy, including regular visits from friendly dogs, ponies or other animals

If your favourite hobby is not on the list above, you only have to ask; your activities co-ordinator will look for a way to support you with it.

Social interaction is an important element of wellbeing. Friendships are an excellent source of support and companionship, helping to ward off loneliness or isolation. An active social life also boosts self-confidence, self-esteem and can even help to alleviate symptoms of depression.

If you are used to seeing friends and family regularly, encourage them to visit you in your new home, if they are not already doing so. There are no restrictions on visiting hours, so they can come whenever is convenient to them, and you. Many homes are happy to welcome visitors for lunch, though you will have to let the catering staff know in advance, and there may be a small charge.

Many of our activities, such as games, quizzes and bingo, provide regular opportunities for fun and social interaction, while coffee mornings, afternoon tea and other sociable events are regular features. We will also happily host family celebrations, including your birthday and important anniversaries.

Seasonal and national celebrations are important at the homes, too, and we all get together to make the most of them. Your relatives are welcome to join in, while members of staff often bring their own families.

We will encourage you to join in with our activities and get to know people, but this is entirely up to you. If you need quiet time reading in the lounge or in your own room, that is fine too, and we will do our best to facilitate your choices.

Regular exercise is important and people with dementia often enjoy gardening, walking or gentle activity such as tai chi. Singing and dancing, especially in groups, can also be beneficial and help boost self-confidence and improve wellbeing.

Many activities are designed to help people with dementia to express their feelings. This is important as they can feel distanced from others and confused by what is happening around them. And because dementia can affect someone's ability to communicate, sufferers often struggle to make themselves understood, leading to feelings of isolation and frustration.

Other activities tap into memories, recalling past skills, experiences and interests. Reminiscence activities, where residents are encouraged to handle familiar objects old and new, help to comfort and reassure them as well as trigger emotions and memories. Music, in particular, can be very powerful in reliving memories. Many of our homes also feature a sensory room which is relaxing and entertaining at the same time. The stimulation from the objects in a sensory room – lights, objects on the walls, different textures and aromas – increases their awareness of their surroundings.

Residents with dementia also regularly participate in our trips to shops, gardens and places of interest.

This leaflet explores the meaning of the increasingly widespread terms 'wellness and wellbeing', and the importance of meaningful and enjoyable activities to someone's quality of life. At Canford Healthcare, we see activities promoting physical, cognitive, emotional and social wellbeing as vital elements of our residents' care which help support them to live their best possible life.

Visit our resource library for our other leaflets:
www.canfordhealthcare.co.uk/library

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