



TOOLKIT 16 · LONG-TERM CARE · TOOL 2 OF 6

Restraint-Free Care — Policy and Last-Resort Authorisation Form

Physical, chemical and environmental restraint: what counts, why it harms, the alternatives tried first, and the form that must be completed before any exception

Policy

Restraint is: anything that limits a person's free movement or behaviour against their will — belts, mittens, tucked sheets, bed rails used to keep someone in bed, chairs they cannot leave, locked doors and secure units, and sedative medicines given to control behaviour rather than to treat illness. Restraint increases falls, injury, pressure injuries, incontinence, distress and death. It is never used for staff convenience, for punishment, or as a substitute for supervision.

Before any restraint, try: find the cause (pain, infection, constipation, fear, boredom, need for the toilet); adjust the environment (low bed, floor mat, lighting, noise); increase activity and company; involve family; review medicines; use assistive technology (sensor mat, door alarm).

A last resort must be: the least restrictive option · for the shortest time · to prevent serious harm to the resident or others · authorised on this form by a doctor · reviewed at least every 2 hours (physical) or daily (medication, environmental) · explained to the resident and family · reported monthly to the board.

Last-resort authorisation form

Resident · date · time started	
Reason — the specific serious harm being prevented	
Alternatives tried, and result	
Type of restraint (describe exactly) · least restrictive option available? ☐	
Maximum duration · review every: ____ hours · stop criteria	
Authorised by (doctor, name, signature) · nurse in charge	
Resident informed ☐ · family / representative informed (who, when)	
Monitoring: circulation, skin, position, fluids, toileting, distress — recorded every ____ min on the chart	
Ended (date, time) · outcome · incident form completed ☐	

ASF standards: LTC Standard 4 — restraint minimisation (means of verification: policy, forms, monthly count trending down); Standard 1