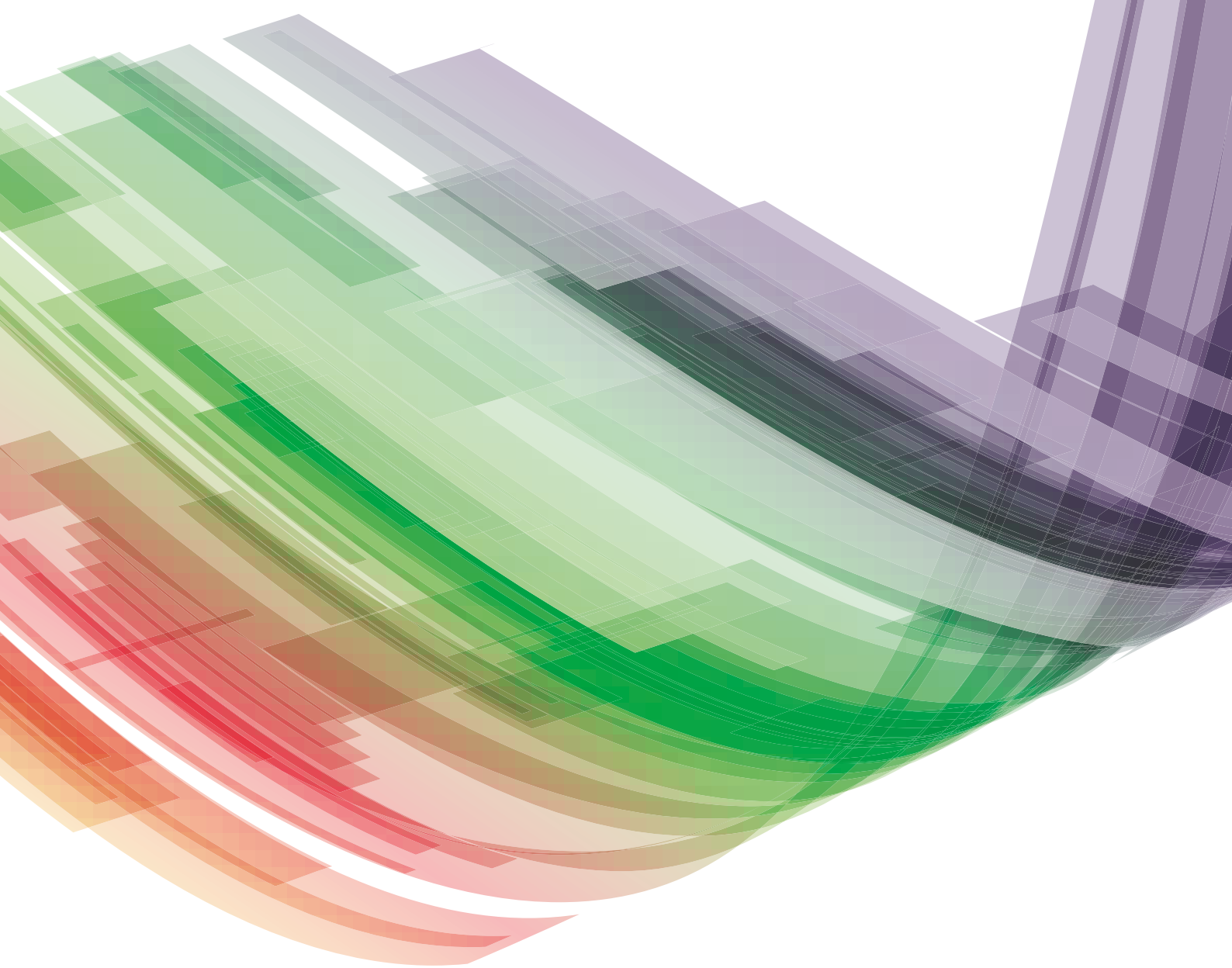




Bedfordshire, Luton  
and Milton Keynes  
Integrated Care Board

# Sleeping Problems



A self help guide

**A member of staff or a carer can support you to read this booklet. They will be able to answer any questions that you have.**

## **About this leaflet**

- This leaflet is for people who have problems getting to sleep or staying asleep.
- It will help you to understand your problem.
- It will suggest some simple ways to help you sleep better.
- It will tell you where you can go to get help.

## **What is a sleeping problem?**



Lots of people have problems getting to sleep or staying asleep.

This is sometimes called insomnia.

Having a sleeping problem can happen to anyone and it affects people in different ways.

## **How much sleep do people need?**



Some people think that we all need about eight hours sleep each night, but this isn't true. Some people need more and some people need less. It is different for everyone.

How much you sleep depends on lots of things like:



- How old you are.
- What you do through the day.
- Whether you are stressed or worried about something.
- Sometimes taking medication can affect your sleep.

## Why do we get sleep problems?

There are lots of reasons people have problems sleeping. Some of these might be:



- Getting older – older people don't need as much sleep as young people as they aren't as busy through the day.
- A medical problem – like taking medication, being in pain or needing to go to the toilet lots.
- Worrying about things can stop you getting to sleep or stop you from sleeping well.
- If someone you know has died or is in hospital you might find it harder to sleep as you will be thinking about them lots.
- If you feel low or depressed this can affect how well you sleep.
- Where you sleep – if your bedroom is too hot or too cold, or your bed is not comfortable, it can make it more difficult for you to get a good night's sleep.

# How do I know if I have a sleep problem?



There are lots of different sleep problems. Here are some of them:

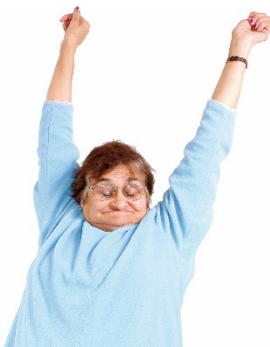
- Getting to sleep – lots of people find it hard to drift off to sleep. Some people can lie awake for hours before they ‘nod off’.



- Staying asleep – some people can get to sleep but then wake up lots through the night. They might also find it hard to get back to sleep once they are awake.



- Waking up too early – some people wake up very early in the morning and then can't get back to sleep again.



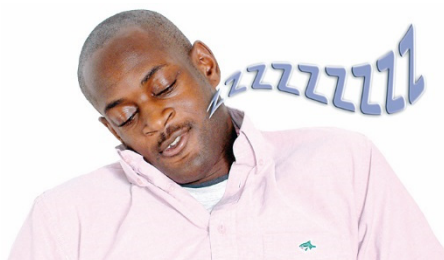
- Some people say they have restless nights and not very good sleep. They feel that they don't have a deep sleep and are disturbed easily.

## What can I do to help myself?



One of the best things to do to help yourself is think about what might be stopping you from getting a good night's sleep – are you worried about something or are you taking any tablets that might be keeping you awake?

If you can find out what the problem might be, you can start to think of ways to make it better.



Try to remember that not getting enough sleep will not hurt you, you will fall asleep after a while.



Worrying about not getting to sleep makes things worse and will keep you awake for longer.

Try to take your mind off sleep by relaxing, or having a warm drink or thinking about something nice, like going on holiday.



You should try to do the same things every night before you go to bed so that you have a pattern. You could try things like having a bath, then a warm drink while watching TV, then brush your teeth and go to bed when you feel sleepy.



Make sure where you sleep is a good place – not too noisy or light, not too hot or cold and a comfortable bed.



Use these dos and don'ts to help you get a good night's sleep:

**Do:**

- ✓ Go to bed and get up at about the same time each day.
- ✓ Make sure you relax before you go to bed so that you feel sleepy.
- ✓ Get up if you have been lying awake for half an hour – try to relax and then go back to bed.
- ✓ Remember that not getting enough sleep won't hurt you.
- ✓ Check your bed and bedroom are comfortable.
- ✓ Check your tablets to see if they might be keeping you awake.



**Don't:**

- ✗ Don't exercise close to bed time.
- ✗ Don't worry about not getting to sleep.
- ✗ Don't drink tea, coffee or energy drinks at bedtime as these can keep you awake.
- ✗ Don't drink alcohol close to bedtime.
- ✗ Don't go to bed until you are tired.
- ✗ Don't stay in bed longer to catch up on your sleep.

## Where to get more help

If you would like to get more help or information, you can get in touch with these people:



### **Sleep Matters**

Telephone advice for people having problems sleeping.

Telephone: 020 8994 9874, Monday to Friday  
6pm-8pm

[www.medicaladvisoryservice.org.uk](http://www.medicaladvisoryservice.org.uk)



### **The Sleep Council**

A helpline and information to help improve sleep.

Telephone: 0800 018 7923

Email: [info@sleepcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@sleepcouncil.org.uk)

[www.sleepcouncil.org.uk](http://www.sleepcouncil.org.uk)



You can also get help and information from your doctor or nurse.

Easy Read version developed by:

- Skills for People, Telephone: 0191 281 8737  
Skills for People is a registered charity no. 1069993



- Many thanks to service users and healthcare staff who have contributed to the development of this guide

Adapted from Sleeping Problems - A Self Help Guide  
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[www.cntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp](http://www.cntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp)

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