A safe night-shift continuity conversation

Talk through one safe paper scenario.

This is a **tabletop exercise**, not a live switch-off test. It can be discussed during a short management or shift-handover meeting. Do not disconnect live alarms, communications equipment or mains electricity.

Scenario: At 3 am, the team discovers that an important communication or alarm service is unavailable. The cause is not yet known.

Ask one question at a time.

1. How would we discover the problem? An alert, a system indication, a resident, a call from the monitoring centre or a routine check?

2. Who has authority to respond? Name the shift lead and the relevant supplier or ARC.

3. What keeps people safe while the problem is investigated? Refer to the provider's approved individual care arrangements, staffing and emergency plans.

4. How does the team communicate without relying on the affected system? Where are the alternative contacts held securely?

5. Who needs to be told? Residents, families, the receiving centre, housing or estates lead and other agencies as appropriate to the event.

6. Who confirms safe return to normal operation, and where is that confirmation recorded?

Stop and seek competent advice if: the scenario highlights a current unmitigated safety concern, an unknown alarm dependency, or uncertainty about the fire or emergency response arrangements.

Your exercise record:

• Date and participating roles:

• System or route discussed:

• Existing fallback we confirmed:

• Question or gap identified:

• One change agreed:

• Owner and review date:

What a future live test needs

If a supplier proposes a controlled power, connectivity or alarm test, ask for an agreed scope, competent participants, advance notifications, temporary safeguards, resident considerations, rollback trigger, evidence record and acceptance criteria. A care service should not improvise an outage as a training activity.

Access to records during an outage

Confirm the approved arrangement for accessing information needed to deliver care. Do not assume an offline record function exists, and do not introduce a blanket daily printout containing personal data. Offline or paper access, if used, needs appropriate security, currency, authorisation and disposal arrangements.