



**A Guide  
to care  
12 October 2020**

*Image: Micheile HendersonNDNA User*

## It's time to think about additional care and support

For many people over the age of 50, the need to reach decisions on care for elderly family members will be one of the key life stages you have to face, often when your loved ones are no longer capable of expressing their needs and wants.

Choosing a care home or deciding it's time for professional care at home for a parent or close relative will often be a new experience for which you are not prepared and you may find yourself confronting this situation without warning due to a sudden illness, rapid deterioration in health, dementia or a fall.



The process of looking for care can also feel overwhelming - especially if it's the first time you have had to think about it. Here we provide help so you can make an informed choice that is right for all those involved.

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## Talking about care

Care of an elderly person is not always an easy thing to talk about with the person concerned as it's a highly emotional subject that is tied up with our fears of losing our independence.

As a first step, ideally before you have reached the stage, where care is essential, you need to broach the subject. A first conversation with your parent or relative should be exploratory, to find out what support they feel they may need to cope better with day-to-day life.

It's not an easy conversation to start, but talking about what they are finding difficult and why, is the first step towards exploring the possibilities of having some external support.

## First steps

You can make a start with increasing the comfort of the person concerned, by looking at these options:

- Employing a home help to lighten the domestic load (*see section on home help*)
- Finding a voluntary befriender through a charity such as Age UK to help provide emotional support and companionship
- Requesting access to support from either local council or community groups that serve older people
- Making adaptations to the home which could include:
  - A personal alarm or emergency call button
  - Aids to sight and hearing: reading lamps and extra bright lighting, hearing aids
  - Mobility aids such as a stair lift, walking aid or wheelchair
  - Providing other home adaptation such as a widened doorways, walk-in shower, raised toilet seats, over-bed tables, commodes and more.

Read more here about [home adaptations](#) or [household gadgets or equipment](#) to make life easier.

Before taking any of the above steps, it is worth asking for a home assessment from your local authority to determine the person's needs.

You can apply for a home assessment for people in old age here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services>

If you feel you need to adapt the home due to old age or a disability, then your council could pay for adaptations up to £1,000. <https://www.gov.uk/apply-home-equipment-for-disabled>

This link provides excellent guidance on where to start with adapting the home and getting a home assessment.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/home-adaptations/>

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## Next steps – a home help, care at home or a care home

If you have already made the above adjustments and added extra support, or there has been a sudden change in the person's health or circumstances, then an important next step is to assess the type of care and support that is needed.



Again, it is important to broach the subject sensitively and after an initial conversation, you may wish to arrange a needs assessment with your local authority to decide on the level of care your relative may need. Together you may want to consider these options:

- Supported living services – which combine suitable accommodation with some form of on-site support
- Care at home from a registered agency
- A care home or nursing home.

Once you have been through some of the options above and if you have decided that the next stage has been reached, then you will need to look at local care providers and/or accommodation options.

## Employing a Home Help

This is slightly different to homecare and means day-to-day domestic tasks that you may need a helping hand with such as:

- Cleaning (including putting on clean bed sheets)
- Doing the washing up
- Doing the laundry
- Gardening.

Most councils don't provide home help. If you are concerned about affordability, then you could start by contacting a charity such as the [Royal Voluntary Service](#), the [British Red Cross](#) or your [local Age UK](#) to see whether they can help but they may charge fees.

Many local Age UKs offer a paid-for service that helps with day-to-day domestic tasks. All home helps are experienced, have passed a security check and have received full training.

Most registered care agencies provide a home help service but tend to charge the same rate as for a personal care service. The advantage of selecting a care agency is that when further care is needed, you already have a relationship in place with the company.

As well as providing support with household chores, home helps should be dedicated to the welfare of their clients and to ensure safety if a client fails to answer the door or is in difficulty. These are some of the tasks they can offer help with:

- Shopping
- Laundry
- Housework
- Preparing light meals/meal delivery
- Companionship
- Running errands, e.g. prescription collection.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/home-help/>

Home Helps do not provide personal care and typically cost around £15 per hour.

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## Care at home

Having a carer come to visit the person in their home can make a huge difference to their life, especially if they have difficulty walking or getting around. This type of care can help your loved one stay living independently in their own home without the need to move into a care home.

This type of care is known as home care or domiciliary care.

The advantage of care at home is its flexibility. From one or two hours a week to daily visits to live-in care, it will depend on the person's condition. Putting support in place early on, can help to ease the person towards full-time care, without the worry and stress of a sudden change in their life. Home care provider Home Instead have some very useful guides on how home care can work in practice: <https://www.homeinstead.co.uk/care-advice-support/>



This type of support could be put in place for just a short time – for example for a few weeks while the person recovers from an illness.

Or it can be long term.

Read more about [how to arrange home care](#).



You might want to consider care at home if:

- They are finding it difficult to cope with daily routines, such as washing, dressing and getting out and about
- They don't want to move into a [care home](#)
- They can still get about their home and it's safe for them to live in – or it [can be adapted](#) to make it safe. (See section above on home adaptations).

Care at home means your parent or relative can stay where they are happiest, without the stress of moving away from a familiar environment. Visiting carers can help them to live well at home, provide care that fits round their needs and take away some of the worries associated with a loss of independence.

Whether you're looking for help with dressing and showering, help around the house or companionship, care at home can help with the following:

- Getting out of bed in the morning
- Washing and dressing
- Brushing your hair
- Using the toilet
- Preparing meals and drinks
- Remembering to take your medicines
- Doing your shopping
- Collecting prescriptions or your pension
- Getting out, for example to a lunch club
- Getting settled in the evening and ready for bed.

When you make contact, the care provider will usually arrange a free face-to-face visit or consultation and then put together a care plan to cover the person's needs.

Help at home from a paid carer costs around £20 to £30 per hour, but it varies according to where you live. Sometimes, the council will contribute to the cost. See Arranging and Paying for Care section.

## Thinking about a care home

If the person involved:

- Can no longer care for themselves at home
- Other options such as hiring care workers from a registered homecare agency or using supported living services have been explored or employed and are not the right solution
- A needs assessment has suggested a care home is the best option
- Suffers from a complex medical problem which requires continuous support.
- Moving into a care home is a big decision, that shouldn't be rushed.

There are two types of care home: nursing homes and residential homes.

Residential homes provide accommodation and personal care such as washing, dressing, taking medicines and going to the toilet. Nursing homes also provide personal care, but also at least one qualified nurse is on-site to provide nursing care.

Some homes provide both types of support.

If you don't qualify for funded care, then you can either ask the council to arrange and pay for your care – and then bill you the cost, or arrange and pay for the care yourself.

A typical hourly rate for a carer to come to your home is around £20, but this will vary depending on where you live.

Having a carer who lives with you costs from around £650 a week. But it can cost as much as £1,600 a week if you need a lot of care.

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## Choosing a care home

*“Home is where the heart is.”*

Home means different things to different people. It should be a haven, a place of comfort, love, safety and security.

Choosing the right care home, means finding a care home that can replace our idea of home and in time come to feel like a real home.

Leaving your home to live in a care home can be a positive experience, with benefits for the person and their family if you make the right choice.



## Choosing a home care provider or a care home

We recommend you follow the following route to choosing care:

1. Go to Gateway to Care - Calderdale Council's social care and wellbeing hub to choose from local care options  
<https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/wellbeing-hub/index.jsp>
2. Check out the Care Quality Commission ([CQC website](#)) to find out how care homes and agencies are rated. You should only shortlist those which are good or outstanding initially
3. Read the inspection reports on the CQC website to get a feel for what impressed the inspectors and any issues or problems
4. Take a look at the provider/care home websites and social media presence. What type of impression does this give? What do their customers and staff say about them?
5. Do they have favourable reviews on Google and Facebook?
6. When you have compiled a shortlist, call or email each home and ask for a visit. What is your impression of their response?

## Questions to ask of care homes/ home care agencies

- Does the level of care provided match your needs assessment?
- Do they have current vacancies? If not how long is the waiting list?
- What is their philosophy or ethos?
- How many places do they have or capacity to meet your home visit needs?
- What are their fees?
- How many carers would be involved with your family member?
- What happens if the carers aren't suitable?

Age UK have a useful list of questions to ask on your first visit and a care home checklist. These should include staff, food, visitors, day-to-day needs, activities and also the contract and complaints procedure.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/care-homes/choosing-care-home/#>

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## Arranging and paying for care

Care at home from a registered agency can cost between £20 and £30 per hour. For a daily care package, you will be paying around £200 to £350 per week, depending on the level of care needed.

The cost of a care home depends on where you live and the type of home you need or would like but the average cost is £600 per week and a nursing home is £800 per week.

Before deciding how to pay, you should ask your local authority for a needs assessment, if you haven't already done this. Contact your local social services – in Calderdale this is Gateway to Care.

If you have savings of less than £23,250 and you don't own a property then you may be eligible for help from your local authority to pay for the cost of your care.

It is important not to sell your home, until you have had your assessment. If the council are going to help towards the cost of your care, you will get a personal budget and a care and support plan. This could include a "Direct Payment" into your bank account or the council arranges and pays for your care.

If the council is arranging your care, you still have the right to decide how your personal budget is spent.

If you need to live in a care home and are receiving council support, you have the right to choose where you live and the council must include at least one affordable choice. A relative can pay a top-up fee if you choose somewhere more expensive.

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## Important links

For more advice and help speak to:

- Age UK on freephone 0800 169 6565 or visit <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>
- Independent Age on freephone 0800 319 6789 or visit <https://www.independentage.org/>
- The Money Advice Service on freephone 0800 138 7777 or visit <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en>

### Other important links:

- NHS advice on adapting your home: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/home-adaptations/>
- NHS guide to home care: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/homecare/>



- NHS guide to care homes: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/care-homes/>
- The Care Quality Commission: [CQC website](https://www.cqc.org.uk)
- CQC map of care homes: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/help-advice/help-choosing-care-services/map-service-ratings-across-england>
- Government advice on adapting your home if disabled: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-home-equipment-for-disabled>
- Applying for a home assessment: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services>
- Calderdale Gateway to Care: <https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/wellbeing-hub/index.jsp>

## About Calderdale Forum 50 Plus

Calderdale Forum 50 Plus aims to support and represent people aged 50 and over in Calderdale and to promote a collective voice on issues that matter to them. We also highlight information and issues which are useful and important to this age group.

Find out more at <https://calderdaleforum50plus.com/>



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