

A photograph of three people sitting on a patterned couch. On the left is an older man with glasses and a light blue shirt. In the center is an older woman with white hair, glasses, and a bright pink turtleneck. On the right is a younger woman with dark curly hair, wearing a purple top, leaning in and smiling. The photo is framed by a white circular border.

Choosing a Care Home Guide



CHOOSING A CARE HOME

Choosing a care home for yourself or a loved one is one of life's most important decisions.

We've designed this guide to support you through, what many people find, a confusing and difficult time.

Whether you're planning ahead or need to find care urgently, we hope this guide will be of help.





TYPES OF CARE HOMES

No matter which location you're looking for a care home, there are often a number of homes to choose from. It's important to understand the different care types available to ensure you're able to find a home which best suits yours or your loved one's needs.

Whilst some care homes will specialise in one type of care, others, like ours, are multi-disciplinary, meaning they are able to care for residents with a range of needs.

This often means as someone's health changes, we're able to provide the continuing care they need.



RESIDENTIAL CARE

- Includes accommodation, meals, and personal care, such as help with washing, dressing, and taking medication.
- Team members support with social opportunities, activities and entertainment.
- This type of care is suitable for people who need care and support from an expert team but don't need nursing care 24 hours a day. If the care home only provides residential care, nursing support is often provided by visiting district nurses.



NURSING CARE

- Includes 24 hours a day medical care from registered nurses, as well as accommodation, meals, and personal care, such as help with washing, dressing, and taking medication.
- Provide social opportunities, activities and entertainment.
- Suitable for people with ongoing acute medical needs or long-term/chronic health conditions.



DEMENTIA CARE

- Designed to care for individuals with a diagnosis of dementia and often you will see residential dementia (like residential care but for people living with dementia), or nursing dementia (like nursing care but for people living with dementia).
- Team members are trained in dementia care, and the environment is adapted to support residents' specific safety and wellbeing where additional risks may arise from the individual lacking the capacity to make informed and safe choices for themselves.



DAY CARE

- Provides access to expert care and companionship for the day, while caregivers take a break.
- Designed to help maintain independence while ensuring wellbeing.
- Provides nutritious meals, social activities, outings and practical help with personal care and taking medication.
- Often a flexible service that can be booked on a regular basis.
- Usually found in a community centre or care home.



RESPIRE CARE

- Can be arranged in residential, nursing or dementia care homes and involve everything each of those care types includes.
- Instead of being on a permanent basis, they are short-term placements in a care home to give regular caregivers a break or as a temporary arrangement following a hospital stay.



END-OF-LIFE CARE (PALLIATIVE CARE)

- Provides specialised care for individuals with terminal illnesses or those who are near the end of their life, focusing on comfort and dignity.
- Can be offered in residential, nursing or dementia care homes.



OVERVIEW OF FUNDING

This is understandably a key consideration when you are contemplating care options for yourself or a loved one.

Broadly, there are four streams of funding for care home placements, namely; local authority/council, NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC), self-funding or a mixture of these.

Who is responsible for paying care home fees can vary depending on someone's specific financial situation and care needs so we would always strongly recommend getting independent guidance from a Society of Later Life Advisers (SOLLA) accredited financial advisor. Often these specialist advisors, who are specifically qualified to offer guidance on paying for care fees in care homes, will give you free initial advice.

At Heathfield Court we have worked with Eldercare Group for a number of years. Nicky and her team work across the whole care home market so are not influenced by any partnership with a particular care home group and therefore they are able to give you free, impartial financial advice.

They will chat with you about your situation and options to support you to make an informed decision. To speak to one of their financial advisers, or request their free funding guide, call **0800 082 1155** or visit **www.eldercaregroup.co.uk**

For further information on funding, please click here to watch a video from Nicky at Eldercare.





SHORTLISTING CARE HOMES

It's likely you'll want to create a shortlist of potential care homes prior to arranging visits. Thankfully, there is a lot of information now available online to help you narrow your options as you start your search.

We would recommend you begin by considering the maximum distance you are able to travel to visit your loved one and the type of care and support they are likely to need. Also think about any key features you'd really like to be available for your loved one. These could include visitors being welcomed at any time, opportunities for your loved one to take part in a range of activities, nearby attractions for you to visit with them etc.

Depending on your loved one's condition and the situation, it may be appropriate for you to chat to them about what they would like which can then guide your search.

These might be things like access to nice gardens if they like being outdoors, opportunities to socialise and forge new friendships, visiting animals or access to a minibus to go on regular trips out.

Don't worry if you find it difficult to have that conversation with your loved one at the beginning of your search. The senior team in the care homes you visit should be able to guide you on how best to approach this conversation with your loved one. It might be helpful to visit with them during an activity you know they will like, for them to have their hair done in the salon or to start with day care or a respite stay initially.



ONLINE RESEARCH

Care home directories and review sites are a quick and easy way to find homes in your desired area. You can usually filter searches by location, care type and ratings, and see photos and videos along with more information about what's available. Most listings include independent reviews from residents and their family members, team biographies, award wins and press coverage as well as a link to the home's CQC rating so you can get a good idea about whether you would like to visit.

Popular directories include:

www.carehome.co.uk

www.autumna.co.uk



RECOMMENDATIONS

If you're able to, chat to your family, friends and healthcare professionals to see if they know, or have heard of, any good care homes in your area. Local support groups and organisations such as Alzheimer's Society or Age UK may also be able to signpost you.

Once you've got your shortlist, visit the homes' websites to read more about their services and download or request a brochure.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Many care homes now have a presence on social media - take a look at their profiles on places like Facebook.

They often give real insight into the day to day lives of residents and the people caring for them, as well as showcasing events and partnerships between the home and their local community.





VISITING CARE HOMES

Visiting potential care homes if you're able to, is a useful step in the decision-making process. It allows you to explore the facilities, the environment, meet the team, and ask questions.

We recommend pre-booking your visit to ensure a member of the senior team is available to meet with you, show you around and answer any questions you may have.

On our linked checklist below, we have listed some commonly asked questions and things to look out for. However, don't feel you have to ask everything during your visit, as you should be able to speak to the manager afterwards or visit again if you would like to.

Feel free to make notes during your visit, remember your shortlist and keep in mind what is most important and relevant to your loved one's needs.

Please click the link for our downloadable checklist to help support your decision.





It's perfectly natural to feel a mix of emotions during this process. Be patient with yourself and know that your dedication to finding the best care home reflects the deep care you have for your loved one.

We are committed to supporting you as much as possible through this time. Our friendly team is always happy to answer any questions you may have.
You can contact us by



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