

# Your guide to nursing care

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**Moving from the family home into residential or nursing care is a huge life change and one that requires a great deal of careful thought.**



At Canford Healthcare we have many years' experience of providing high-quality nursing home care, and we understand that choosing the right home is not always easy. Often, the people making the choice are doing so on behalf of a relative, so as well as their questions, they frequently have conflicting feelings about it. Or sometimes someone is in hospital and cannot be discharged into their own home for safety reasons, so their relatives have to find nursing home care in a hurry.

This guide is intended to help you to find the best nursing care home for you or your loved one, and contains useful information about what to look for when researching and visiting nursing homes, and how to apply for the all-important assessment and funding.



**Nursing homes provide 24/7 care and support, including personal care (washing, dressing or going to the toilet) in a residential setting. You will also receive round-the-clock medical support from qualified nursing staff for ongoing illnesses, as well as treatments including injections. They will have specialist nursing equipment on hand.**

There are any number of reasons why someone might need to move into a care home offering nursing care. These include:

**Complex health needs:** Nursing homes offer support with day-to-day living as well as medical care for people with complex long-term health needs, which may include:

- progressive conditions such as dementia
- illnesses such as MS, muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's or arthritis
- a colostomy bag or the need to be fed through a tube
- a physical and/or mental disability
- one or more sensory impairments

**Lack of mobility:** Because of their illness or disability many people lack mobility or are bed restricted, unable to move around easily or at all. They need help with everyday tasks such as washing, dressing, oral care, going to the toilet and eating.

**At risk at home:** If you are suffering from any of the conditions previously listed, you could be increasingly unsafe living in your own home, especially if you live alone, and at risk from falls or accidents caused by frailty or forgetfulness.

**Subject to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards:** DoLS falls under the Mental Health Act and protects people who are under continuous supervision and control, are not free to leave and lack the capacity to consent to the arrangements.

**Convalescence:** Sometimes people need intensive and short-term convalescent care after a health event such as a stroke or heart attack, a fall or other accident, operation or illness.

**Care needs assessment:** If you are experiencing any of these health issues, you may already have had a care needs assessment which indicates that a nursing home would be the best option for you.

## Getting a care needs assessment

Unless you or your relative already has a care plan, you will need to have a care needs assessment to identify what type of help and support would best suit you.

You may already have had one to help you manage better at home, but if things have progressed and more care is required in the near

future, a needs assessment from your local council will help you and your family to make the right decision.

A social worker or occupational therapist will phone or visit you to ask questions about your health, care needs and how you are managing. They might also ask for a description or demonstration of how well you manage.



The assessment is your opportunity to have your say about the help you need, so it is vital to include everything, even if you do not consider it to be important. These details ensure that the care plan matches your needs as closely as possible.

## Preparing for a care needs assessment

It is a good idea to make a list of everything you wish to mention beforehand so that you do not forget anything. If the care needs assessment is for you, perhaps enlist the help of a relative or someone else who knows you well.

Your requirements will be measured against your local authority's needs criteria. These vary and are published on local authorities' websites, so have a look at them and try to use the same words to describe your own needs, where possible. Remember that

the person doing the assessment will only be able to consider 'presenting' needs – those that are mentioned or apparent during the assessment.

Having a friend or relative with you during the assessment is also a good idea. They can help if you find it difficult to explain the situation, take notes in case you find it hard to remember or follow what is said and mention things that you might forget.

You can find out more about the process by visiting:

**[www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/care-needs-assessment](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/care-needs-assessment)**

and apply for a care needs assessment at:

**[www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services](http://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services)**

Which? has a useful guide to preparing for a care needs assessment and this is available via:

**[www.which.co.uk/after-life-care/carers-and-caring/needs-assessment/preparing-for-the-needs-assessment-aydxs7j47udr](http://www.which.co.uk/after-life-care/carers-and-caring/needs-assessment/preparing-for-the-needs-assessment-aydxs7j47udr)**



**In a nursing home, you will enjoy the peace of mind associated with person-centred 24/7 care, and never have to worry about needing to cope alone. You will have a personal care plan built around your requirements and this will be delivered by a dedicated team of care and nursing staff.**

As well as looking after your medical needs, these trained professionals will support you with key aspects of your daily life including:

- personal hygiene
- mobility
- dressing
- eating and drinking
- taking medication
- activities and hobbies

Your comfort, freedom of choice and dignity are always at the centre of every aspect of your care. The staff will carefully monitor your health and wellbeing, making sure that you eat and drink enough as well as keeping an eye on your mental health.

Nursing homes have close relationships with local GPs and health teams and will bring in other professionals, as needed, to ensure that all your medical and psychological needs are met.

You will be safe, secure and protected from harm while being encouraged to be as independent as possible, in a comfortable and homely environment equipped with all the modern facilities required to make life easier.

The choices about when to get up, how you spend your day and when you go to bed will be yours. You can also decide how much you want to take part in the ready-made social life of the home, and your relatives will be able to visit you whenever you wish. Most homes have unlimited visiting hours.

You can enjoy pampering sessions from visiting hairdressers and manicurists, as well as activities and entertainments organised by the home. All of this will apply, whether or not you are mobile. So, even if you are in a wheelchair or bed restricted, you can still participate in all the activities on offer.

For more information about activities, see our Wellness & Wellbeing leaflet at [www.canfordhealthcare.co.uk/library](http://www.canfordhealthcare.co.uk/library)





If you are in hospital and need to move into a nursing home rather than going home – either for a short-term respite stay or permanently – the team there might recommend a local nursing home. Or you may be looking on behalf of a relative. The following resources could be useful:

- Local nursing homes that you may have heard about already
- Recommendations from family, friends and professionals such as your GP
- Listings websites such as **[www.carehome.co.uk](http://www.carehome.co.uk)**
- CQC reports to show how well individual homes are assessed – most homes publish these on their own websites, or you can find them on the CQC website at **[www.cqc.org.uk/search/services/care-homes](http://www.cqc.org.uk/search/services/care-homes)**.

You can also use our handy checklist to help you select the likely contenders and, if you can, it is a good idea to visit at least one so that you can see for yourself what they are like and whether they will meet your, or your relative's, needs. Most homes welcome both potential residents and their families to visit and have a look around.

## Key considerations

### Location and atmosphere

- Where is the home? How easy will it be for family and friends to visit?
- Does the home have a comfortable and homely feel with a warm atmosphere?
- Can you personalise your room and does it have a nice view?
- Does your room have an en-suite bathroom or wet room?

### Your needs

- Can the home safely meet your needs, especially if they are more complex?
- Does the home specialise in a particular health need, e.g. dementia, stroke or Parkinson's?
- What is the staff expertise? Are senior staff/nurses on duty 24/7?
- Does the home have good relationships with, and fast access to, professionals such as GPs, dentists and chiropodists?
- Can the home accommodate any specialist dietary needs such as allergies, or by providing textured, modified or puréed food? You may not need this now, but you might later if you have dementia or another progressive condition.
- Can staff accommodate your religious or cultural beliefs, and will they respect your wishes if these affect how you are cared for later?

- What is the home's approach to hobbies, activities and wellbeing, especially if you are bed restricted? Will staff provide 1:1 activities in your room?
- How will the home support you to retain your independence, especially if you are bed restricted?

## Facilities

- Is there an on-site hairdresser?
- Is there easy access for a wheelchair on all floors?
- Does the home have important specialist facilities, such as hoists, to get you in and out of bed, into a wheelchair or into a bath?
- Is there parking on site?



**At this point you have probably narrowed the field to a couple of favoured homes that have the right expertise to cater for your individual health needs, and have impressed you – on paper at least – with their environment and approach to care.**

Ideally, you should visit one or more homes before making a decision, or have a relative or trusted friend visit on your behalf if you are unable to do so yourself.

When you telephone to arrange a visit, the attitude of the home manager, nurse or receptionist can tell a lot about the home. Are they friendly, welcoming and interested in finding out about your needs? Before you visit, make a note of the questions you wish to ask and take this list with you.

## When you visit

- What are the staff like? Are you made to feel welcome? How do they interact with each other and with residents? A happy home, full of smiles and laughter is a good indicator of their approach to care.
- How clean does the home appear? Does it smell of fresh air or are unpleasant smells masked by air fresheners?
- Are there activities in progress?
- Are communal areas set out in a way that encourages people to socialise?
- Do the residents look engaged, relaxed and happy?

## The practicalities

The next stage is to find out more about the moving-in process.

- How quickly can you move in? If you are in hospital and due to be discharged but cannot go home, many homes will be able to move you in very quickly if they have a room available.
- What is the timeframe for getting your personal care plan ready? This should ideally be in place before you move in but, if you have had to move quickly, may have to be completed later.
- What are the fees, what do these include and how/when are they paid?

For a more detailed checklist on choosing and before visiting a care home, visit:

**[www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/care-homes/choosing-care-home/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/care-homes/choosing-care-home/)**

Which? also has excellent in-depth guidance for visiting and choosing a care home at:

**[www.which.co.uk/late-life-care/housing-options/care-homes/visiting-a-care-home-as1up0q5slxj](http://www.which.co.uk/late-life-care/housing-options/care-homes/visiting-a-care-home-as1up0q5slxj)**



**There are a number of different ways in which nursing care is paid for, and these will depend on your needs and personal circumstances.**

To help you to understand more about the various possibilities, we have put together a comprehensive guide to finance, which you can download at [www.canfordhealthcare.co.uk/library](http://www.canfordhealthcare.co.uk/library).

## Who will pay?

Some elements of your care may be paid for by your local authority. One of the first steps towards determining this will be your care needs assessment.

Local authority support is means tested. So if your assessment shows that you need care services, your local authority will look at your finances to determine whether you should pay some, or all, of the cost of your care. If your local authority has assessed you as needing care, they will carry out the financial assessment.

Most people, even those eligible for some help from the NHS or their local authority, will need to cover some of the cost of their care.

Currently, if you have savings or property worth more than £23,250 you are likely to have to pay at least some of your care home costs from your own income or by re-mortgaging or selling any property

that you may own. If you have assets worth between £14,250 and £23,250 then the local council will fund some of your care with you contributing the rest.

If you have savings of less than £23,250 and a property, your local authority must disregard the value of your property for the first 12 weeks of your moving into the care home on a permanent basis.

In these circumstances the local authority will pay your care home fees for 12 weeks or until your property sells, if sooner. How you choose to fund your care is very much based on your own personal situation, so we advise you to get independent financial advice from a qualified source.

## **NHS continuing healthcare**

You may also be eligible for care funded by the NHS, which can pay for some or all of your care if your needs are specifically health related. Your needs will be assessed and your own views about what support you need will be considered. Talk to a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional, who will carry out an initial assessment.

If you are not assessed as eligible for NHS continuing healthcare, you may still be eligible for NHS-funded nursing



care. This pays a flat-rate contribution towards the cost of your care directly to the nursing home.

To find out more about getting a care needs assessment you can call the social services team at your local council or go to **[www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services](http://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services)**

The Money Advice Service offers free and impartial advice at: **[www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/means-tests-for-help-with-care-costs-how-they-work](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/means-tests-for-help-with-care-costs-how-they-work)**

For more detailed information about NHS continuing healthcare go to:

**[www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/nhs-continuing-healthcare](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/nhs-continuing-healthcare)**

and

**[www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-continuing-healthcare-and-nhs-funded-nursing-care-public-information-leaflet/public-information-leaflet-nhs-continuing-healthcare-and-nhs-funded-nursing-care--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-continuing-healthcare-and-nhs-funded-nursing-care-public-information-leaflet/public-information-leaflet-nhs-continuing-healthcare-and-nhs-funded-nursing-care--2)**



This leaflet is part of a series designed to help people understand more about making safe and informed decisions about nursing care, how to find the best nursing care home for you or a loved one and also deal with the practicalities around being assessed for care and funding your care.

Visit our resource library for our other leaflets:  
[www.canfordhealthcare.co.uk/library](http://www.canfordhealthcare.co.uk/library)

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