

# Finding a Care Home

CCH37a - January 2017

## What to look for in a Care Home

If you have been finding it difficult to manage at home, you might be considering moving into a care home. However it is important to remember that there are other options available. We may be able to help you to continue to live in your own home or advise you on housing that would better suit your needs, such as sheltered accommodation or extra care housing. There are also a range of providers who can support you at home, please see our factsheet on Care and Support Providers. Equipment and adaptations at home can also help you to stay well at home for longer.

There are a number of ways you might want to arrange a place in a care home:

- You may wish to arrange this yourself and pay for it yourself, in which case this factsheet will help you know where to start.
- You may wish to be assessed by the council to see if you are eligible for council support. If you are eligible for support, the council may offer you its Promoting Independence Service, for up to 6 weeks, to help you do as much for yourself as possible, which may mean that you are able to continue living in your own home. Our Care Act: Frequently Asked Questions document gives you more information on how we work out if you are eligible. Our pages on support at home gives you details of other services to help you stay well. Further information on what you would contribute financially is available from the documents 'Care and support in residential homes: information on charges' and 'Care and support to help you stay in your own home: information on charges'.
- If you are eligible to receive support from the council, the council can arrange a place in a care home for you.

Please contact the adult care member of staff who is working with you or Customer Services on [csodesk@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:csodesk@southglos.gov.uk) or **01454 868007** if you would like to discuss your options further. Advice and information from the council is free to everyone, and we can help you to get information and advice whatever your circumstances.

## **There are two main types of care home:**

- a. **Residential care homes** provide support in a group home setting. Residential care homes offer help with personal care such as getting up, washing, dressing and going to the toilet and help with meals and support with mobility. They also provide social opportunities.
- b. **Nursing care homes** provide care for people with complex needs who need the skills of a qualified nurse. Nursing homes must have a qualified nurse on duty 24 hours a day.

Some care homes provide both residential and nursing care. You may choose a home like this so that you do not need to move if your needs change. It is important to check with the homes whether they are able to meet your specific care needs e.g. you may have dementia or particular physical issues such as problems with continence. It is important to ask how a care home can help you manage as your needs become greater and you need more support. Most care homes will have a brochure that will give you detailed information about what they provide.

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## **Other Sources of Information**

### **Care Quality Commission**

All care homes have to be registered with and inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

You can contact them on 03000 616161 or email [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk). It is useful to find out when the home was last inspected and you can ask the home or CQC to provide you with a copy of the inspection report.

The CQC also provides a more comprehensive list of homes than the one provided in this factsheet.

### **CareHome.co.uk**

A guide to over 21000 care homes, nursing homes and residential homes providing care in the United Kingdom.

Website: <http://www.carehome.co.uk/>

### **Well Aware**

A useful website called [www.wellaware.org.uk](http://www.wellaware.org.uk) is available to everyone in South Gloucestershire and the surrounding area, and lists a wealth of providers, organisations and groups who can help people who need some support at home.

You can also phone Well Aware on 0808 808 5252 (Freephone)

## Independent Advice Agencies

These organisations can provide further information about moving into a care home:

- **Age UK** [www.ageuk.org](http://www.ageuk.org)  
Tel: 0800 1696565
- **Independent Age** [www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)  
Tel: 0845 2621863 or e-mail: [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org)
- **Alzheimer's Society** [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)  
Tel: 0300 221122 or e-mail [enquires@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:enquires@alzheimers.org.uk)
- **Relatives and Residents Association** [www.relres.org](http://www.relres.org)  
Tel: 020 7359 8136 or e-mail: [info@relres.org](mailto:info@relres.org)
- **First stop**  
Tel: 0800 3777070 - advice on care, housing and financial options for older people and their carers.
- **Care Selector**  
Tel: 0117 325 1155 or e-mail [info@careselector.com](mailto:info@careselector.com)  
Care Selector is a free service that helps you find a care home.

## Finding a vacancy

Each care home will have information about suitable vacancies. Some care homes use [www.carehome.co.uk](http://www.carehome.co.uk) to advertise vacancies, and you can log onto this website to look at availability. If you do not have access to the internet, ask your local library about using a library computer to view the website.

## General questions to ask when you are choosing a care home

### 1. Can I visit the home before I decide?

Most care homes prefer people to visit before making a decision. It is good to visit more than one home so you can make comparisons. First impressions are often an important clue to how a home is run.

### 2. Can I go for a trial period?

Generally the first four weeks of your stay will be a trial period as it is never possible to be completely sure that you will like the home. The trial period gives you time to get used to the home and see if it meets your needs. You may feel that an alternative home would be more suitable, or you may wish to return to your own home.

### 3. How does the home support its staff?

It is important to understand what sort of training the home provides for its staff and how often it takes place. You can also ask how many agency staff are usually called upon each week, and how many staff have left in the last year. Volunteers are involved in some homes, and you can ask if this is a feature of the home you are enquiring about.

#### **4. Will I have my own room?**

You will usually be given a single room, but shared rooms are available dependent on your circumstances. You can ask the home if they are able to accommodate couples.

#### **5. What personal possessions can I take with me?**

You will need to ask the home what personal possessions you can take with you and whether you can take some of your own furniture, pictures and plants. Most homes do encourage this.

#### **6. Does the home have comfortable and accessible communal areas?**

You will usually spend quite a lot of time in the communal areas so make sure they are suitable for your needs.

#### **7. Does the home provide varied meals to meet my needs?**

You should be able to have some choices in your meals and where you eat them. In many homes your visitors can eat with you for a small charge. Check if you are able to have snacks and drinks when you need them. Find out if the home is licensed to serve alcoholic drinks.

#### **8. What facilities and entertainment does the home provide?**

Ask about the range of activities and entertainment provided on a weekly basis and what is available locally. Find out about the location of the nearest library, shops and post office and what transport is available to get to them. Some homes may operate a locked door system for security. Ask for information about this.

#### **9. Where can I make telephone calls?**

Ask if you can make calls in your own room and check the home has a quiet place available for calls.

#### **10. Can I keep my own doctor?**

Check with the home what the arrangements are and if there is any choice of GP or if the home is contracted to a specific surgery or GP.

#### **11. Can I take my pet?**

Some homes may let you bring a small pet to live with you. Check this with the individual home first.

#### **All care homes should provide you with information about:**

1. Religious worship
2. Voting
3. Privacy, dignity, choice, fulfilment and independence
4. Hairdressing, chiropody and visiting services
5. Making your wishes known
6. Your views on the care home.

#### **What if I am unhappy with the service provided?**

The Complaints Team will support people to complain about a care home if the council is funding the place. If you are arranging a private placement, you may wish to discuss any concerns with the Care Quality Commission on 03000 616161. You may also access advocacy support to help you resolve your issue.

For further information about making a complaint ask for Factsheet CCH82 – Your Experience Counts. Or, you may wish to contact the Complaints and Freedom of Information Team:

**Freepost RTCT-JXLE-EETT**

South Gloucestershire Council  
Children, Adults and Health - Complaints and FOI Team  
Civic Centre, High Street  
Kingswood  
BRISTOL  
BS15 9TR  
Phone: 01454 865924  
Fax: 01454 865940  
E-mail: [CAHfeedback@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:CAHfeedback@southglos.gov.uk)

We also have a document called **Care and support in residential homes: information on charges** which you may be interested in.

If you need any more information please contact: Customer Services on 01454 868007 or visit our website [www.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.southglos.gov.uk)