

## Factsheet

### Moving into a Care Home



The IET Benevolent Fund

IET Connect, the IET Benevolent Fund, has a long history of supporting colleagues in retirement, including the provision of financial assistance.

The information provided here is a brief overview aiming to help people who are thinking about going to live in care home accommodation. It will also be useful if someone is helping another person to find a home. For more detailed help and advice see the list of contacts at the end of this factsheet or contact IET Connect on 0845 685 0685 or email: [ietconnect@theiet.org](mailto:ietconnect@theiet.org).

There are also useful websites:

The Elderly Accommodation Counsel's website [Housing Care](#) gives details of all forms of accommodation for older people - sheltered housing for sale and rent, residential care homes, nursing homes, close care schemes and housing options abroad. It also has [care home database](#).

[Better Caring](#) lists registered accommodation and offers a wide range of other supporting information.

#### **Where is long-term care provided?**

Care homes provide different levels of care depending on personal and nursing needs.

#### **Making the decision**

Making the decision to move into a care home is never an easy one, either for the person involved in moving or the family. A high level of emotional and practical support is needed. There are so many homes to choose from, with different services and facilities, fee charges, levels of care, philosophies, rules and regulations and so on. With this information sheet we hope to make the practical decision making easier for all persons involved.

#### **The first steps to be taken.**

Contact your social services department and advise them that you are thinking about moving into long term care and ask for a care needs assessment. Someone from social services department should then visit you to discuss your personal situation and assess your needs.

Make notes on what you might like to say when being assessed. Consider where you would like to move to, for example nearer to your family or to a home that will accept your pet etc. Your wishes must be considered as part of the assessment, so don't be afraid of saying what you think. Have a note of your finances to hand.

If possible, have someone with you, such as a relative or friend, when social services are carrying out the assessment. This is particularly important if you are mentally frail.

## **The Assessment**

The person who carries out the assessment should listen to you and your carer (the person who helps to look after you - if there is someone), to find out what you feel your needs are. If you do have a carer, they must be involved in your assessment and are entitled to their own 'carer's assessment' although they have to ask for this. Following their assessment, they may receive services or you may receive extra help to take account of your carer's needs. Contact Carers UK for further information (see back).

If you or someone you know does not speak English, the local authority should provide an interpreter. (If the person is unable to express their views for any other reason, they may require an advocate to put forward their views on their behalf.) Your social services department should be able to tell you about local advocacy schemes.

The person carrying out the assessment will want to know what you can and can't do and should ask what kind of help you would like. Then a decision will be made about what kind of help, if any, the local authority feels that it can offer you. This could be help in your own home, a direct payment to enable you to purchase the services that you need, or it could be offering to arrange a place in a care home. The local authority makes these decisions by comparing your assessed needs with the eligibility criteria that it sets for its services.

If you are found to have a health or housing need, the person carrying out the assessment must contact the relevant authorities. If your needs are very complex, several people may be involved in your assessment.

## **Choosing the right care home**

Once the assessment has been carried out and the type of care home is determined, a number of steps need to be considered to ensure future comfort, happiness and wellbeing.

If you are unsure of the care homes in your area, we can provide you with tailored listings from our home finding service. We may be able to offer financial assistance and help co-ordinate funding from other charitable organisations.

Choosing a care home is a very personal matter, especially as you are not only choosing a place to live but also the people with whom you will be spending your time. Even if your stay is for a short period of time, perhaps to convalesce, it is often better to take time over making your decision on which care home you would be happy in. Difficulties in finding a home can make it very tempting to accept the first place with a vacancy. If possible consider and compare more than one home. Try to visit the home. Have a good look round. Talk to the residents, staff and person in charge.

Ask if the home publishes a brochure outlining what it provides, its philosophy, fees and any additional charges. Ensure that you ask the Home Manager about any uncertainties you may have.

Particularly for permanent stay residents, you may find it helpful to have a trial stay of several days or weeks in your chosen home before making a final decision, and many homes will offer this. Other homes may invite you to spend the day at the home, or perhaps to visit and stay for lunch or dinner. This will help you to get a feel for the atmosphere of the home and the staff and other residents. (If your local authority is helping to arrange your care, they may arrange a trial period for you. N.B: each local authority differs and you should check this with the Social Worker involved).

Try to collect the fullest possible information on a prospective home before making a decision. The home's brochure may supply you with much information; however the list of questions below may help fill in any blanks and should also prompt you as to questions you might like to ask. (Not all of these questions will be relevant to you; please choose which ones you feel are important for you and add more questions as necessary).

We suggest that when possible, you make a list of all the personal, practical or nursing tasks (perhaps with the assistance of the Social Worker), that will be needed, together with any important equipment, and ask the home if it will be able to meet these needs.

### **List of questions to consider asking**

You may find that some of these questions are not relevant to your situation; you may also find that you have some more questions to add to the list. Here are some questions you might ask about fees:

- Make sure your contract from the home clearly states what the fees include and make sure you know how much any 'extras' may cost.
- Is a deposit required, and if so, is this returnable?
- What is the deposit for?
- What is the weekly fee, and exactly what does this provide?
- What services are charged for as 'extras'? How much is charged for the 'extras'?
- Would the NHS provide any of these 'extras'?  
'Extras' might include: dry cleaning; hairdressing; chiropody; possibly incontinence supplies; newspapers; physiotherapy; telephone, there may be more (You will be expected to pay for your own personal items, such as toiletries, clothes, etc.).
- How much notice will the home give if it has to raise the fees?
- Who is required to sign the contract? (If relatives are asked to sign, they should seek legal advice about what they are committing themselves to).
- Is there a reduction in fees if you are away for a short time, say on holiday, or in hospital?
- How much notice do you need to give the home if you wish to move away?
- How much notice would you be entitled to if the home closed?
- Finally, although this may be distressing, if you are a relative or friend of someone who is moving to live in a home, you may want to ask the home whether it expects payment following a resident's death, and what this would be. Some homes do ask for some fees to be paid for a short while after the resident's death in order not to have to insist that relatives make the room immediately available by removing all the personal effects on the day of death. However, relatives who have not been aware in advance that an additional payment would be required are often very distressed to discover this subsequently.

**Here are some questions you might consider asking about resident issues:**

- Does the home encourage residents to do as much as possible themselves, and to make choices about as many aspects of their daily lives as they can?
- Do the residents have a choice of shared or single rooms?
- If they share, do they have a choice about which resident they share with?

- Can residents bring personal possessions – pictures, plants, furniture, pets etc?
- Can the home meet the resident's communication needs - for example, through a language other than English, or non-verbal method such as sign language or large print?
- Do residents choose what, where and when they want to eat?
- How are special diets catered for?
- Can residents eat privately with guests from time to time?
- Can residents prepare food and drinks for themselves?
- Are residents free to see visitors when and where they choose?
- Can visitors stay overnight at the home, if they have travelled long distances?
- Can residents use a telephone in privacy, for incoming and outgoing calls?
- Is it possible to have your own telephone installed in your room?
- Do residents rise and go to bed when they choose? (If not, do you consider the arrangements to be reasonable)?
- What transport provision, if any, does the home make for residents - on outings, to the shops, to the theatre, place of worship, or entertainment?
- What physical activities are available for residents?
- Is there more than one living room, so that there is a quiet room as well as one with a television?
- Are there books and newspapers available for residents?
- Do residents visit the library, or does a mobile library come?
- Do the managers of the home ask about how the resident would like to handle money or medicines?
- Do residents have their own GPs?
- How will the home let relatives or friends know if a resident is taken ill?
- Is there a resident's committee?
- Does the home encourage residents to say how they feel about living there, and provide written information to residents and/or their families about how to discuss a problem or make a complaint?

- Are toilets available in all parts of the home, fully equipped with handrails and other helpful equipment?
- Can wheelchairs go everywhere within the home, and easily in and out?
- Is there a lift?
- If the resident needs help bathing, does the home have suitable facilities?
- Who will help with bathing?
- Can the resident choose how often they have a bath or shower?
- Are there separate areas for smoking and non-smoking?
- What happens if residents require more or less care than they currently have?
- Why/under what circumstances might a resident be asked to leave?
- What arrangements are made for funerals and for payment if the resident dies?
- Can residents help in ordinary activities of the home - cleaning, cooking, gardening, looking after pets, etc?

**Here are some questions you might consider asking some of the residents:**

- Are they involved in activities and the running of the home?
- Is there a homely, warm and busy environment?
- Are the staff interested and caring towards the residents?

**Organisations offering information and support**

**Carers UK,**

20/25 Glasshouse Yard,  
London EC1A 4JT.

tel: Carers Line 0808 808 7777 (free call), weekdays 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 4pm. fax: 020 7490 8824. email: [info@ukcarers.org.uk](mailto:info@ukcarers.org.uk) website: [www.carersonline.org.uk](http://www.carersonline.org.uk).

General help and advice for all carers.

**Association of Independent Care Advisers**

(AICA) - Orchard House,

Albury, Guildford GU5 9AG.  
tel: 01483 203066. fax: 01483 202535.  
website: [www.aica.org.uk](http://www.aica.org.uk).

An association with a code of practice where agency members offer advice about staying at home or about entering a care home. Individual member agencies may charge for this service. Details of the member agencies are available free from AICA.

### **Better Caring**

Cairns House  
Station Road, 10 Station Road, Teddington TW11 9AA  
0845 644 1701  
<http://www.bettercaring.co.uk>

Bettercaring is dedicated to helping care professionals and consumers find care homes in the UK. It was established to serve the needs of the care sector and offers a searchable database of all registered care homes in the UK with more than four beds. The database contains more than 20,000 care homes.

### **British Federation of Care Providers –**

44 Harpur Street,  
Bedford MK40 2QT.  
tel: 01234 271275. fax: 01234 271284.  
email: [bfchp@martex.co.uk](mailto:bfchp@martex.co.uk).

Standards of care in all member homes are independently monitored in accordance with national guidelines and associated code of practice as a precondition of membership. Can provide lists of member homes nationwide together with advice and guidance.

### **Care Choices Ltd –**

Valley Court, Croydon,  
Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 0HF.  
tel: 01223 207770. helpline: 0800 389 2077 (free call).  
fax: 01223 207108.  
email: [caresselect@carechoices.co.uk](mailto:caresselect@carechoices.co.uk). website: [www.carechoices.co.uk](http://www.carechoices.co.uk).

Database of all care homes and useful organisations throughout the country. Access to the database is through the care select matching service, which will match client's needs to suitable provision nationwide. This is a free service to members of the public.

### **Counsel and Care –**

Twyman House,  
16 Bonny Street,  
London NW1 9PG.

tel: advice line: 0845 300 7585 (local call rate), Monday to Friday 10am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 4pm. fax: 020 7267 6877.  
email: [advice@counselandcare.org.uk](mailto:advice@counselandcare.org.uk).  
website: [www.counselandcare.org.uk](http://www.counselandcare.org.uk).

A charity which provides general advice for older people, their families and professionals on community care and other issues.

**Elderly Accommodation Counsel –**

3rd Floor, 89 Albert Embankment,  
London SE1 7TP.

tel: 020 7820 1343. Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm,  
fax: 020 7820 3970. email: [info@e.a.c.demon.co.uk](mailto:info@e.a.c.demon.co.uk).  
website: [www.housingcare.org](http://www.housingcare.org)

A registered charity, which maintains a nationwide database of all forms of accommodation for older people - sheltered housing for sale and rent, residential care homes, nursing homes and close care schemes. It also gives guidance, advice and detailed information to help enquirers choose the accommodation most suited to their needs.

**National Association for Providers of Activities for Older People**

(NAPA), Unit 211, Black Bull Yard,  
24/28 Hatton Wall, London EC1N 8JH.

tel: 020 7831 3320.  
website: [www.napa-web.co.uk](http://www.napa-web.co.uk).

A membership organisation to relieve the elderly by the provision of information and advice, support and education for those responsible for the provision of activities for older persons in establishments which provide services or care. NAPA holds regular themed 'Sharing Days', has a newsletter, and organises appropriate training opportunities.

**National Care Homes Association,**

45-49 Leather Lane, London EC1N 7TJ.

tel: 020 7831 7090. fax: 020 7831 7040.  
email: [info@ncha.gb.com](mailto:info@ncha.gb.com). website: [www.ncha.gb.com](http://www.ncha.gb.com).

A trade association providing support for care home proprietors.

**Registered Nursing Home Association,**

15 Highfield Road, Edgbaston,  
Birmingham B15 3DU.

tel: 0121 454 2511. fax: 0121 454 0932. freephone: 0800 0740 194. email: [info@rnha.co.uk](mailto:info@rnha.co.uk). website: [www.rnha.co.uk](http://www.rnha.co.uk).

A trade association for nursing home owners, offering advice and support to members on all aspects of their business. Also offers advice to patients and their relatives on all nursing home matters including lists of recommended homes.

**The Cinnamon Trust,**

Foundry House, Foundry Square,  
Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4HE.

tel: 01736 757900. fax: 01736 757010. email: [admin@cinnamon.org.uk](mailto:admin@cinnamon.org.uk).

website: [www.cinnamon.org.uk](http://www.cinnamon.org.uk).

A charity with a register of sheltered housing schemes, and care homes, which accept pets. Provides help with dog-walking and fostering pets on a short-term basis e.g. for those going into hospital. If advance notice is given, it can accept animals on their owner's death and provide lifelong care. Details of the 'Pet Friendly Homes List' available in different local authority areas will be sent on receipt of a sae, stating your chosen local authority area.

**The Relatives and Residents Association,**

24 The Ivories, 6-18 Northampton  
Street, London N1 2HY.

tel: 020 7359 8148. Advice line: 020 7359 8136,

Monday to Friday. fax: 020 7226 6603.

email: [relres@totalise.co.uk](mailto:relres@totalise.co.uk).

The Relatives and Residents Association gives advice and help to older people in homes, their relatives and friends. The Association is committed to improving standards of residential care through the active involvement of relatives. Its aim is to promote a common understanding between relatives, residents, home providers and staff. Local groups exist throughout the country; contact the Relatives and Residents Association for more details.

Updated June 2007