

We produced this guide to help you discover the options that are available to you when you or someone you know is considering care.

Do I need any care?

Please think about the following questions:

- Do you sometimes not eat hot meals daily?
- Do you sometimes struggle to prepare food?
- Do you find it hard to get out and about?
- Do you struggle to bath or wash yourself?
- Do you struggle with clothes?
- Do you sometimes feel depressed or lonely?
- Do you miss your friends and/or family?
- Do you find you don't see many people in a day?
- Do you sometimes struggle to get to the loo?
- Do you sometimes fall or trip over?
- Do you forget any medication?
- Is your eyesight very poor?
- Have you recently had an operation?
- Do your family help care for you?

If you answer yes to two or more then it is time to seriously consider care. Remember it is always your choice what care you receive. No one can force you to do something you do not want to!

There are several forms of care.

- You can live at home and access care services
- You can live in sheltered housing and access care services
- You can live in a residential or nursing home

What assistance do I want?

Different care organisations can offer different types of support. For example if you need meals provided meals on wheels can deliver cooked meals to you. Some organisations sell prepared frozen meals for you to heat up. You can also have care assistants and cleaners visit your house. You can hire a driver who will take you out. Your GP can get you equipment to help you at home.

How do I decide what services to use?

Look honestly at your situation and consider what your life used to be like and what it is like now. Think about your current lifestyle and consider what could improve it. You also need to take into account how much company you get during the week, how well you eat, and if your house is warm enough etc.

What Services Can Residential Care Homes Offer?

Most good residential homes will help you to stay living at home by offering a range of services. If you are able to get regular good food, stay as mobile as possible and have a regular social life your health will stay better, you will be stronger and manage to live at home for longer.

- **Lunch Clubs** - useful to meet new friends and socialise whilst having a nice hot nutritious meal and
- **Day Care** - many homes will offer day care and some are flexible about what day and time you have. Day care can again be a chance to meet people and eat good food but it can also be an opportunity to receive help with bathing, laundry, and other such essentials all at the same time.
- **Respite Care** – sometimes respite can help you or the person who looks after you to have a nice break and a rest whilst having any care needs attended to. It can also be helpful if you have just been poorly or in hospital, to help you get back on your feet. Some homes call this kind of respite care convalescence.

- **Holidays** – again these are similar to respite and a chance to recharge batteries and regain strength to help you once you are at home again.
- **Long Term Care** – many homes encourage you to move in whilst you are still well and mobile and treat the place like a hotel. That way you will have come to know the people if ever you become ill, plus you have the opportunity to improve your social life and do lots of different and sometimes even new things.

How Do I Find a Good Home?

You can ask for recommendations from friends, ask your GP, look in the yellow pages, ring your local council for a list of homes or look on the CSCI website. Many homes now have their own websites. Decide what you are looking for before you go. Try to visit a few different homes and compare them. It is best to turn up unannounced to get a true picture of life at the home. Often as with any move of house you will get a “feel” when you enter the place.

Questions to keep in mind as you look for a home:

- Does the home seem welcoming?
- Do the people in the home seem happy and relaxed?
- Was the person helpful and informative as they showed you around?
- Can the home offer care suitable for your needs?
- Will you still be in charge of your own life?
- Can you see complementary therapists if you want to?
- Do you like the communal areas and toilets?
- What is the location like?
- Is it clean and tidy?
- Was there a telly blaring away with no one watching it?
- Did you like the bedroom?
- Can you bring your own furniture?
- Can you take your car if you have one?
- Can you change the colour of the decorating if you want to?
- If you use internet can you have it?
- Does the food look nice and well presented?
- Have lunch at a home to test the food.
- What activities are going on?
- Did you see any sign of activities or entertainment whilst you were there?
- How often do trips out actually occur in reality?
- Do there have activities that interest you?
- Do the staff seem happy and caring?
- Are visitors allowed at any time and can they join you for meals?
- Can you have friends to stay over night?
- Did the home offer you the opportunity to visit again and stay for a meal or the day?
- Do the home produce a newsletter or have any other way of letting you know what going on?
- How much do they charge?
- Can you or your family afford it?
- Did the home seem open and kind?
- Do they offer the service you want, day care, respite, lunch club, trips out etc?
- Is there a group your family can get involved with if they want to?

As you look at homes you will begin to get a clearer idea of what you like and what you want. As you get better informed you will feel better about your decision. Remember it is your decision so visit a home as many times as you like.

We hope this helps. Good luck with your search.