

Choosing a care home



SOMERSET
County Council

Information sheet D1

January 2020

Introduction

You are probably reading this because you are finding it difficult to look after yourself at home. This can happen gradually, or because of a sudden illness or accident.

Sometimes people consider moving to a care home when they are in a crisis and cannot work out how to get the help they need to stay at home. Many people in this position are able to stay at home with the right care and support and help from family or friends.

However, if you need a lot of support and have night-time care needs, you may be thinking about moving to a care home.

This information sheet is about:

- Types of care homes
- Your right to choose which care home you want to live in
- Some of the questions you might want to ask to help you decide which home to choose
- Some information about paying

Other information sheets you may find useful:

- **A4: Your care and support assessment**
- **D2: Paying for residential care**
- **D3: Information for people who pay for their own care home**
- **D4: People moving into a care home who have property**
- **D7: Specialised Residential Care (SRC)**



Types of care home

Residential care homes (Care homes without nursing) provide personal care, such as washing, dressing, bathing and assistance with toilet needs, if required. They do not offer nursing care. In some homes some staff may only be 'on call' and not 'on duty' at night. Some provide specialist care for people with mental health difficulties, physical disabilities, learning disabilities or autism. If you have a health problem that needs a qualified nurse, this care will be provided by the District Nursing Service.

Specialised Residential Care homes are residential homes that specialise for people with a high level of dementia but do not have nursing needs. They are a specific type of home only available in Somerset. What makes them different is that they are provided through a joint venture between the Local Authority and Somerset Partnership NHS and Social Care Trust through specific contracts. The Trust employ Specialist Care Development Nurses (SCDNs) who support residents in these specialised care homes and provide advice and support to the care staff.

Care homes with nursing provide nursing care 24 hours a day. Usually people living in these homes will be very mentally and/or physically frail or immobile, and have health care needs that can only be met by a registered nurse. Some offer general nursing care for older people, while others specialise in mental health or physical disability. Care homes with nursing are often dual registered to provide both 'residential' and 'nursing' care. If you choose one of these homes you won't need to move to a different home if your condition changes. Also, this type of home helps couples who may have different needs to live together in the same home.

How do I know which type of home is right for me?

If you need help to decide which type of home you need, you can ask for a Social Work assessment by phoning us on 0300 123 2224, or ask the nursing staff, if you are in hospital, to arrange one.

An assessment involves talking to you about what you need and your wishes and those of family and friends who care for you. A Social Worker will carry out the assessment. Other professionals such as an Occupational Therapist, a District Nurse or your doctor will also be involved, with your permission. The assessment will help us understand you, and build up a picture of the things that you need help with and the things that you can do for yourself. They will be able to recommend the best way to meet your needs. This could be by moving to a specific type of care home, but often they will recommend things so that you can be helped to stay in your own home.

Who will pay for the care home?

Please see our information sheets:

- **C5: Help with paying for your care and support**
- **D2: Paying for residential care.**

These explain the national eligibility criteria to be able to get financial help from the local authority.

You should consider taking independent financial advice about moving to a care home. Our information sheet **D2: Paying for residential care** has more about this.

Choosing your care home

All care homes are registered and inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). All homes must meet standards set by the government, and CQC use these standards when they inspect the homes. Every time the home is inspected CQC write a report. When you are deciding on the care home for you, you should ask the home for a copy of the most recent report. You can also see the report on the CQC website (Please see link below).

Every home should produce a brochure or residents guide to tell people about the services it provides and the facilities offered to residents.

Choosing the right care home is important. If you are able to do so, visit more than one home before you make up your mind. You may be able to spend the day, have a meal and talk to people who live in the home and meet some of the staff. This will help you to make up your mind. You may be able to have a trial stay before you finally decide.

Before you make your visits, think about things that are important to you and the questions you want to ask. Here are some questions you might like to ask – you may think of others:

- Who owns and runs the home?
- How many people live there?
- What are the fees?
- Does the home accept people paid for by the County Council?
- What does the fee include?
- Are there any extra charges?
- Does the home seem well looked after and smell fresh and clean?
- Is the home near my family and friends?
- Is it convenient for shops, public transport, my doctor?
- Can I keep the doctor I have now?
- If not, what choice of doctor do I have?
- What is the area like?
- Is there a garden or outdoor space for residents to use?
- Will I have my own room?
- Will I have my own bath, shower or toilet?
- Will I be able to lock the door of my room?
- Can I stay in my room when I want to?
- Can I bring some of my furniture and other belongings with me?
- Can I bring my pet with me?
- Can I have my own phone?
- Is there a phone I can use to make and receive calls in private?
- Can I carry on collecting my own pension?
- Can I get up and go to bed when I like?
- Do the residents have a say in how the home is run?
- Is smoking allowed?
- Are there Smoking/No Smoking areas?
- Will I be able to make drinks and snacks for myself, and my visitors, when I want to?
- Can I have visitors when I want to and entertain them in private?
- Can I go out when I choose?
- Can I carry on activities I enjoy now?

- Does the home provide transport for social outings, shopping?
- Does the home offer days out, activities, entertainment, holidays?
- What facilities are there? For example TV, music, library, hairdresser.
- What arrangements are there for visiting the chiropodist, optician, or dentist?
- Is the menu varied – can I look at a menu?
- Is there a choice at each meal?
- How are likes and dislikes and individual requirements catered for?
- Can I choose when I have my meals?
- Can I eat in my room if I want to?
- Can my visitors have a meal, and is there a charge for this?
- Can I continue to look after my own medication?
- How does the home deal with complaints?

These are just some of the things you might want to think about or ask when you are deciding on which home to move to. Some other organisations have produced useful information about moving to a care home that you may like to see.

Age UK	www.ageuk.org.uk
Care Quality Commission	www.cqc.org.uk
Counsel and Care	www.counselandcare.org.uk

If I need help with funding can I still choose which home I go to?

If you are moving into a care home and you are eligible for our financial help, you have the right to choose any home you like in England or Wales, as long as we agree it meets each of these four points:

1. The home is suitable for your assessed needs

This means we must be sure the home can give you the help your assessment shows you need. For example, a residential care home will not be suitable if you require regular nursing. If we consider a home to be unsuitable we will tell you why, and ask you to choose another.

2. There is a place available

We may be able to arrange for you to move to another home while you wait for a place to become available in your chosen home. If you are in hospital we will ask you to move to another home until a place becomes available in the home of your choice. This is because once you are considered to be no longer in need of hospital care you will be asked to leave as the hospital bed will be needed by another person.

3. The home owner agrees to our usual contract conditions

If they do not, you will be asked to choose again.

4. The home does not cost more than we usually pay for the type of care that you need.

We can give you details of the homes in Somerset that will usually meet these four things, and will ask you to view these homes in the first instance.

In most cases we will leave it to you, or someone else you have asked to help you, to visit the homes and decide which one you like best. Your Social Worker can help to arrange visits to homes if you do not have anyone to take you. If you do not want to choose yourself, and you have no one else that you would like to do it, you can ask your Social Worker to arrange a move for you. Please let them know if there is anything you would like them to take into account, for example the location of the home

What if the home I like costs more than Somerset Social Care Services usually pay?

There are lots of homes in Somerset that will accept what we usually pay, but you can choose a more expensive care home as long as someone is willing and able to pay the difference between what the care home charges and what we pay.

This is called a 'top-up' fee and the person who pays it is called a "third party". The third party could be a relative or another person close to you.

The person paying your top-up fee will be entering into a financial commitment for as long as you stay in the home. It is important that they understand this, and are able to pay the fee on a long-term basis. If they stop paying the fee you are likely to be asked to move to a less expensive room within the home or another home.

Can I pay my own top-up fee?

You can only pay a top-up fee yourself if you have a home to sell, and you agree to a debt being built up. The debt is repaid to Somerset County Council when your home is sold. Somerset County Council has the right to refuse to agree to you paying your own top-up fee if the value of your home is not enough to make it likely that the debt will be repaid.

What if the fees of the home go up?

We will have to agree to any increase in fees. If a top-up fee is being paid, the person making the top-up payments may be asked to pay all or some of the increase.

What if I don't qualify for financial help from Social Care Services?

If you have savings or investments, (which may include your home, depending on who else is living in it), worth more than £23,250 you won't be able to get financial help from us. We can still carry out an assessment of your needs if you would like us to, to help you to know which type of home can provide the help you need, but you can choose whichever home you like.

You may be eligible for Attendance Allowance or a contribution from the NHS towards the cost of any nursing care you need.

You should be careful about how much you pay. If your savings fall below £23,250 and you ask us for financial help, you may have to ask someone to pay a top-up fee or move to a less expensive home if the cost of your home is more than we would normally pay.

Continuing Health Care

If you have serious health difficulties you may be entitled to Continuing Health Care which means the NHS will pay your care home fees. To find out more, please look on the NHS website

<http://www.somerset.nhs.uk/welcome/services/nhs-continuing-health-care/?locale=en>

or contact: Continuing Healthcare Team

NHS Somerset
Wynford House
Lufton Way, Lufton
Yeovil, Somerset
BA22 8HR
Phone: 01935 385231

Other organisations that provide information:

You can get independent advice about moving to a care home from:

Organisation	Phone number	Website
Age UK	0800 1696565	www.ageuk.org.uk
Citizens Advice Bureaux: South Somerset Taunton Frome Sedgemoor	01935 421167 01823 282235 01373 465496 01278 455236	www.nacab.org.uk
West Somerset Advice Bureau	01643 704624	
Independent Age	0800 319 6789	www.independentage.org/
The Relatives and Residents Association	020 7359 8136	www.relres.org
CareAware	0161 707 1107	www.careaware.co.uk

To find out more about care homes in Somerset please visit this website:

https://issuu.com/carechoices/docs/somerset_directory_l.res_2019

Or look on the Somerset Community Connect website:

<https://www.somersetcommunityconnect.org.uk/>

Other information we have available that you may find useful:

Lots of information is available on our website

www.somerset.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

Your opportunity to feedback

We welcome your comments about the services you receive. If you would like to tell us what you think, please either:

Contact us by going to our website, www.somerset.gov.uk, or

- Speak to your social care worker
- Phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224, or
- Contact the Adults and Health Customer Experience Officer
Floor B2 East
County Hall
Taunton
TA1 4DY
Email: customerexperience@somerset.gov.uk

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