

# Leaving hospital and choosing a care home

## What is a care home?

Residential care homes are for people unable to live independently at home where qualified staff support you with personal tasks. The care homes provide you with a bedroom, bathroom, communal areas and meals. There is a cost to live in a care home.

They offer different levels of care to suit your needs: general personal care, nursing care, dementia or specialist care.

Care homes in Newcastle are either commercial businesses, not for profit organisations or commissioned by Newcastle City Council. They are all registered and inspected by the [Care Quality Commission](#).

Newcastle City Council quality assures care homes. There are 4 quality bands that care homes can belong to in Newcastle. Band 1 is the highest. The care homes are assessed by looking at their:

- **environmental standards:** including room size, number of en suite bathrooms, width or corridors
- **quality of care:** including recruitment and training of staff, resident and relative involvement in running the home and feedback from residents and relatives

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## General care homes with personal care

Residential care homes provide some personal care and support including:

- help with things such as dressing
- supervision of medication
- companionship
- someone on call during the night

They arrange district nursing care during short periods of illness.

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## Care homes with nursing care

Registered nursing homes provide personal and nursing care 24 hours a day for people who are very frail, may need to be cared for in bed and have a medical condition that means they need

regular attention from a nurse.

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## Care homes with dementia care

Care homes with dementia care provide specialist dementia care 24 hours a day for older people living with dementia. Some also provide nursing care.

## Discuss your needs

Before leaving hospital you will have a needs assessment to find out what care and support you need and the type of care home you will need to move into. Your social or health worker will help you to decide which home you want to move into,.

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## Things to think about when choosing a care home

Here are some useful questions to ask to help you find the right care home for you:

- What type of care do I need? Is it general personal care, nursing, dementia or specialist care
- What the care fee includes. Are there any extra costs?
- The location of the home. Is it easy for visitors to get to and for you to get out and about from?
- Can a visit be arranged to meet staff and see the home?

## Making your own choices

- Will I be encouraged to be as independent as possible and make my own choices?
- Can I choose what and when I will eat? Do they cater for special diets? Can I eat privately with guests from time to time? Can I prepare any food and drinks for myself?
- Am I free to see visitors when and where I choose? Can visitors stay overnight?
- Can I get up and go to bed when I choose? If not, will I be happy with the arrangement that is in place?
- Will the managers of the home ask how I would like to handle my money or medicines?
- Can I keep my own GP? You may find that the care home works with a particular GP regularly.

## Facilities available

- Are toilets available in all parts of the home? Are they fully equipped with handrails and other helpful equipment?
- Can wheelchairs go everywhere within the home and can they get easily in and out? Is there a lift? If I need help with bathing, does the home have suitable facilities? Who will help me bathe? Can I choose how often or when I have a bath or shower?
- Is there more than one living room so that there is a quiet room as well as one with a television?
- Is there an outdoor area and garden? Does it feel safe and secure?
- How does the home store your valuable items?
- Are there regular visiting services, such as hairdressers, chiropodists or ministers?

## Home comforts

- What is the view from your room?
- Can I bring in personal possessions such as, pictures, plants and small items of furniture?
- Can I use a telephone in privacy, for incoming and outgoing calls? Can I have my own direct telephone number?
- Does the home have a nice atmosphere? Do the residents and staff seem content?
- Can I control my own heating?
- Will I be allowed to bring my pet with me to the home?

## Things to do

- Does the home arrange activities or outings? For example, to the shops, to a place of worship, or entertainment?
- What physical activities are available for residents?
- Are there books and newspapers available? Do residents visit the library, or does a mobile library come to the home?

## Getting involved

- Is there a residents committee?
- Does the home encourage residents to say how they feel about living there and provide written information about how to discuss a problem or make a complaint?
- Can I help with ordinary activities in the home, for example with cleaning, cooking or gardening?

## What about my partner, friends or relatives?

Care homes are used to supporting the partner who remains at home while their spouse goes into a care setting. When looking for the right care home, it is important to ask questions like:

- Can I join my partner for lunch every day? You may be asked to pay for your own meal but ask about the cost
- Can I stay all day or are there any restrictions?
- Can we spend time together?
- Can I join in with some of the social activities that the care home run, like day trips or games?
- How do the home let relatives or friends know if I am ill?

## Your needs

- Can the home meet my communication needs? For example, if my first language isn't English, if I use sign language, or if I need information in large print?
- What happens if I should need more or less care than I usually have? Might I have to leave?
- What arrangements are made for funerals and for payment if I die?

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## Making your choice of care home

There are a number of care homes in Newcastle that you can choose from that match your needs, depending upon availability.

If Newcastle City Council agrees that a care home is the right option for you they will try to accommodate you in the care home of your choice as long as:

- the home meets the needs identified in your needs assessment
- the home does not charge more than the price the Council would normally pay for a person with your needs
- there is a space available for you in the home
- the accommodation provider is willing to enter into a contract on the Council's usual terms

[Care Quality Commission](#) has a list of all registered care homes in Newcastle. They provide free, independent reports on the quality of homes to help you make an informed choice.

[Legal & General](#) now offer help to find and fund care

[Better Caring](#) list registered care homes and provide information and advice about finding the right care home for you.

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## How much will I have to pay to stay in a care home?

Most people will be expected to pay something towards the costs of their accommodation and personal care.

Being part of a couple can affect your eligibility for financial help owing to your joint savings. [Age UK](#) has more information on paying for care in a care home if you have a partner.

If the Council is involved in helping you find a care home, following your [needs assessment](#) they will carry out a [financial assessment](#) to work out how much you have to pay towards your care home fees and how much financial support you are eligible for. Read [Paying for care](#) on InformationNOW for more details.

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## Living in a care home

Once you move into a care home, it can take a little while for you to settle in. However, if you are worried about anything in particular, or are not sure about any aspect of life in your new home, talk to a member of staff about your concerns. Getting any sort of problem out in the open is usually the best way of solving it.

If you want a specific environment, such as en suite bathroom or a view to the garden then you may need to pay a [top up](#) if the Council are supporting your placement.

[Inside a Care Home](#) are videos produced by Age UK, which feature 3 women speaking about what it's actually like to live in a care home.

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## What if things go wrong?

If you feel something has gone wrong, you will need to make a formal complaint to the care home.

**Care Quality Commission** is the independent regulator of care homes. You can give feedback on care homes on their website. They will check to make sure the provider deals with your complaint and learns from it. You can report this anonymously to them if you prefer.

The Council has provided the Legal & General links for information purposes only. Please note that the Council neither recommends nor endorses any products or services accessed via these links. For full details, please see [their website advertising statement](#).

Last updated: July 28, 2022

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## Useful Organisations

### Adult Social CarePoint at Newcastle City Council

**Email:** [ASCP@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:ASCP@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Website:** <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/AdultSocialCare>

**Telephone:** 0191 278 7878

**Address:** Adult Social CarePoint Newcastle City Council, NE4 9LU

### Care Quality Commission (CQC)

**Email:** [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 061 6161

**Address:** CQC National Customer Service Centre, NE1 4PA

**Telephone:** 0300 061 6161

### Age UK England

**Email:** [contact@ageuk.org.uk](mailto:contact@ageuk.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0800 678 1602

**Address:** Age UK, EC3N 2LB

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## Related Articles

[Care homes in Newcastle](#)

[Needs Assessment with Adult Social Care](#)

[Financial Assessments with Adult Social Care](#)

[Paying for Adult Social Care](#)

[Housing for older people](#)