



Care Home Guide: Health and Wellbeing

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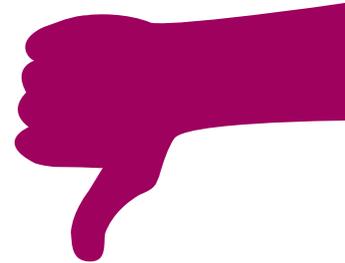
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Introduction

Moving to a care home is an option a number of us may have to consider as we get older. It may be a carefully thought out move, or it might happen more quickly because an accident or illness means you need more support. In either case, having access to all the relevant information so you know what to expect, and can play a full and active role in making decisions, is important.

Moving to a care home can bring with it a number of considerations, from how to pay for care to choosing which care home you want to live in. As well as this, it is important to think about your health and wellbeing once you move and what life will be like when you are there. This guide aims to address these issues and provide information on living in a care home and your rights as a care home resident. The difference between individual care homes in Scotland can be big and as such it would be impossible to provide information on exactly what to expect from each. Instead, this guide is structured as a good practice guide: what to expect from a good care home and where to go and what to do if things are not as they should be.

This guide is aimed at people who are considering moving to a care home or are already living there. Age Scotland produces a separate guide specifically for relatives and friends of people moving in to care: *Care Home Guide: Friends and Family*.

The information in this guide is general and does not necessarily apply to everyone. Things may be different if, for example, someone no longer has the mental capacity to make their own decisions.

Types of care home

A care home is a place where people can live in a homely setting and have their needs met by trained staff. All care homes offer help with personal care such as washing, dressing and managing medication, should you need it. As well as personal care, some care homes also provide specialist equipment and have trained nurses on duty 24 hours a day to provide skilled nursing care if required. There are also care homes that provide specialist care and support for a specific care need such as dementia.

Care homes are staffed by people who have been trained to care for people in accordance with the 'National Care Standards' – a set of delivery guidelines that care providers in Scotland are expected to achieve. The National Care Standards are currently being reviewed by the Scottish Government to ensure that people who need care are looked after.

Care homes can be owned and run by local councils, private companies or voluntary organisations. In Scotland, all care homes are required by law to register with the Care Inspectorate.

The Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate is an independent body responsible for ensuring that people receive high-quality care, and that services promote and protect their users' rights. They regulate and inspect care homes to make sure they meet the correct standards and can require care homes to make improvements where necessary. The Care Inspectorate grades the quality of care homes during their inspections and produce reports that are available for the public to view. They also investigate any complaints they receive about care services – for more information about this see page 31.



Before you move

If you think you would like to move into a care home the first step is to contact your local social work department. They can:

- Help you decide if a care home is the best option for you – it may be that a care package can be put in place that could allow you to stay in your own home if you wish to do so. This might involve people coming in to help you, adaptations to your home or specialist equipment.
- Carry out a care needs assessment and explain to you what financial help you are entitled to. This might include free personal or nursing care, depending on your age and care needs, and/or means-tested help towards your care costs if your capital and savings are below a certain limit. This is an important step even if you are paying for some, or all, of your own care, as if you drop below the capital limits the social work department will need

evidence that you need care in a care home in order to assess you for the funding. Without a social work assessment stating that you require long-term care you will receive no contribution from the local council. How care is funded is always an important issue when thinking of moving to a care home. Age Scotland produces separate information on this in the guide *Care Home Funding*.

- Help you find a suitable care home – the local council has a responsibility to find a suitable place for anyone it has assessed as needing care in a care home.

You do not have to move into a care home if the social work department suggest it. If you have the mental capacity to make your own decisions you have the right to refuse to move into a care home and the final decision is yours. However in this case it is likely you want or need extra support to live safely and comfortably, so it is a good idea to discuss your options with the social work department and family and friends to help you decide what is best. You have a right to some choice over where you live. Even if the council is arranging and paying for your care home you should not simply be told where to move.

It is a good idea to arrange to visit any care homes you are considering moving to in order to look at the accommodation, meet the staff and other residents, and generally get a feel for the place. It can be useful to take a friend or family member along with you to help you reach a decision. Age Scotland's 'Care Home Checklist' provides a range of questions that you might want to consider when you visit a care home, with space for your comments. It is a good idea to go through the checklist before you look round so you can decide what is most important to you. You do not need to inform a care home that you are coming to visit; however care home staff can be very busy, especially at certain times of the day, and will need to prioritise existing residents' care needs so may be unable to focus on showing you around and answering any questions you have. If you

would rather avoid this, you can make an appointment to look round a care home at a time when staff are available to help you decide if it would be a suitable place for you to live. You can visit a care home more than once if you feel this will give you a better impression of what it is like or you have more questions to ask. Visiting a care home should help you make a positive choice about whether or not it feels like a place you might like to live.

Any care home you are thinking of moving to should provide you with an introductory pack which should include information about:

- the care home's charges and what services this includes (personal care, accommodation, food and nursing care);
- what are classed as extras (hairdressing and trips out) and how much these will cost;
- the moving in process;
- the number of places the care home offers;
- arrangements that need to be made if private funding runs out (if applicable);
- any rules that the care home has such as visiting times;
- how the complaints procedure works;
- the most recent inspection report from the Care Inspectorate;
- a statement of your rights and responsibilities as a resident;
- policies and procedures for managing risk and recording and reporting accidents and incidents.

This information should be reliable, up-to-date and in a format you can easily understand.

Managing the move

Unless you have had a friend or relative who has lived in a care home recently, or you have worked in one as a professional, it may be that you know very little about them. Care homes are also often portrayed in the media as negative places to live and this might mean you are concerned about moving into one. It is important to remember that there are many examples of excellent practice in care homes, where residents are at the centre of care home life. Care homes can be a positive option, providing you with compassionate care from trained staff, as well as companionship and relief from the worries of day-to-day life. Moving home can be stressful whenever it happens, but with appropriate planning and support, the transition into living in a care home can be managed so that your quality of life is maintained and even improved.

When you move you should have a named member of staff called your 'key worker' who will help you make a personal plan (also called a care plan) and be your first point of call for any worries you may have. Your personal plan will include your needs and preferences and how these will be met. This includes what you like to be called, your dietary preferences and requirements, your social, cultural and spiritual interests, any communication needs you have as well as your individual health needs. This plan should be reviewed and updated should your health or care needs change and at least every 6 months. The home should give you a copy of your personal plan if you would like one.

Moving home can be a stressful event for anyone and it can take time to adapt to the new environment and living with new people. The staff should support you closely as you settle in and should try and make you feel as comfortable as possible. You should feel able to raise any issues you have with any staff member in confidence and you should not be judged or treated any differently for doing so.



The care home environment

It is often forgotten that care homes are people's homes and not a hospital or hotel. You should feel as comfortable and as free to exercise choice in your day-to-day life in a care home as you would do if you were living in your own home.

Rooms

The National Care Standards state that you should have a single room in a care home if you want one. This means you should not be made to share a room with another person unless you (and the other occupant) have specifically asked to do so. Bedrooms in care homes will vary in size but there must be at least 10.25 square metres (12.5 for new build care homes) of usable floor space.

You should be free to bring in personal belongings such as furniture and ornaments when you move in, although it is worth checking with the home about this before you move as some rooms may have limited space for furniture, and special arrangements may have to be made. Your room (and any toilets) should have a lock on the door that you can use, although staff will need to be able to open the door in case of an emergency. You should be able to control the heating, lighting and ventilation of your room.

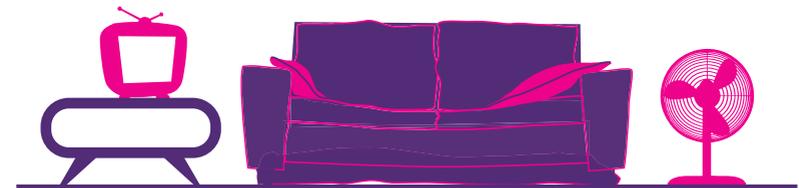
Staff should always knock or announce themselves if they are coming into your room – some care homes even attach front door knockers to residents' doors in order to remind staff and visitors that this is the resident's home, and it is polite to wait to be asked in. The staff's knowledge of individual residents will help them to decide whether they may need to vary this if someone has a hearing impairment, health issues such as epilepsy or a high risk of falls.



Communal spaces

The design and layout of the care home is important, particularly for people with sight loss or dementia. The home and all its furnishings should be well-maintained and in good decorative order with clear signs for toilets and other facilities. You should be able to move around easily in the home and any grounds or outside space it may have. The home should be well-lit and free from any tripping hazards. There should be places in addition to your own room where you can relax and look out of the window. If there is a TV in the communal lounge there should also be a space away from it where you can sit in peace.

Often care homes have locks on the external doors for the safety of residents. However it is important to remember that you can come and go from the care home as you please unless there are legal reasons which prevent this or it presents a risk to your health and safety. You should never be 'locked-in' or stopped from going outside.



Staff

At all times care homes must have the right number of staff on duty, who are trained and have the necessary skills sufficient to meet your care and support needs. Staff should always treat you with dignity and respect and should always communicate with you in ways which suit you and that you clearly understand. They should always explain any personal or medical care they are providing before starting it.

The atmosphere of a care home should be one of support and enablement. The longer you are supported to keep your independence the better. As carers, the staff in care homes have a tendency to provide 'care' and can therefore take over aspects of your daily life that you are normally comfortable doing without help. Although this is well-meaning, you should be encouraged to do anything you feel happy doing and that is safe for you to do on your own. This is the case whether the task takes you 5 minutes or 25 minutes – timing should not be an issue.

You should feel that staff take the time to get to know you as an individual and build up a picture of your life. They should see you as an individual rather than focusing on any illness you have or on any abilities that you may have lost.



Keeping in touch

Living in a care home, you should continue to be very much a part of your own community and be supported to do so.

Visitors, including children, should always be made welcome and there should be a private space where you can host them if you would like. Often care homes encourage visitors to join in meals or activities that are going on and this can be a great way to spend time with the people you are close to. Some care homes will allow visitors to come straight through to see you but you can ask staff to tell you about visitors before sending them through if you would prefer.

If you do not have a phone line in your room the care home should make sure you can make and receive phone calls elsewhere, in privacy and comfort. Some care homes have a main phone line with portable phone handsets that you can take with you into your room. For many people the internet is also an important tool for keeping connected and having a window to the world. Good care homes should have some form of access to the internet so you can read emails and use skype (or other video calling services) or social networks to keep in touch with friends and family. Skype can be particularly important for people who use sign language. You should be encouraged to use both the telephone and internet and staff should assist and support you with this. Unfortunately, not all care homes will offer internet access so if it is important for you to get online it is worth checking, when you are first thinking of moving to a home, what provisions they have. Any letters or parcels you receive should be given to you unopened and you should be able to send post when you want to.

Privacy and dignity

In care homes your privacy and dignity must be respected at all times. All your personal and medical care should be carried out respectfully, privately and in a dignified manner. Staff should never discuss any confidential information in public places and your personal records should be kept safe and away from public view. This information should only be shared with people who need to know.

You should have the choice to see your GP or any other healthcare professional in private or to bring along a friend, family member or carer if you would prefer. The same goes for any legal or financial advisors that you may be meeting; you can carry out your own financial, legal and personal business unless there are legal reasons for you not to do so such as mental incapacity. This includes having control of your money and personal belongings.

Staff should always make sure to have your consent before going into your room, or before moving any of your possessions. You should have a lockable space for your personal belongings and valuables in your room.

Independence, personal routine and identity

Many people fear losing their independence when they move in to a care home. This should not be the case. All care home residents and their families must have the opportunity to be involved in the decisions that affect them, to the extent that they wish to be involved. Everyone in a care home should be treated as an individual who has choice and control over how they live their lives and the care they receive.

Maintaining routines is important to help us feel ourselves. This extends to our likes, dislikes and choices. Being able to make decisions about how you live your life contributes to good mental wellbeing. In a care home you should have full freedom to make choices and decisions about day-to-day aspects of your life and about how you spend your time. You should feel free to

choose whether or not to join in any events, social activities and entertainment offered by the care home. You should not be made to feel isolated if, for example, you have difficulty getting out from your room or you feel worried about socialising – the staff should support you to join others if you would like to and put measures in place to help you join in anything you wish to do. You should also be free to choose when you get up and go to bed, when to have a shower or a bath and when and where you like to eat.

Clothing can be an important part of our identity. Some care homes request you bring in ‘easy-to-wear’ clothes to make it simpler for carers to help you dress and undress if you need it. This often means jogging bottoms and t-shirts but if you never normally wear these type of clothes it can make you feel out of sorts doing so when you move. You are entitled to wear whatever clothes you want to and feel most comfortable in. If you have always dressed a certain way or had your hair in a particular style, the care home should help you continue your routine and ensure your clothes are treated with respect and care. It is a good idea to label all your clothes to help prevent losses or mix-ups in the laundry. Being given another resident’s clothes to wear is not acceptable.

Care home staff should always ask how best you like personal care to be carried out. An example of this is shaving: if you have always had a wet shave let the staff know this is what you would like as, again, it is important to help you feel comfortable and familiar to yourself.

Alongside this, maintaining your personal identity in a care home is important for your quality of life. Throughout a lifetime people gain a wealth of skills and knowledge, and contributing these to care home life can help you feel valued and can benefit staff and other residents. Whether it is baking, gardening or general maintenance, the care home should support and encourage you to be involved in the daily care home life and allow for opportunities for you to continue your own interests and develop new ones. Keeping up simple habits can help you stay motivated and happy, and help you maintain your own unique identity.

Social, cultural and religious beliefs and ways of life

It is against your human rights to be discriminated against in any way because of your age, gender, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation. This means that you should be able to live the way you want to live without the fear or worry of being treated differently to others. This is true wherever you live. In a care home you should be given the support you need to practice any beliefs you have and keep in touch with your community. This includes supporting you to attend places of worship or religious events outside the care home. The care home should also respect and recognise any religious or personal holidays and allow you to continue observing them however you choose to do so.

Food and diet

Eating well is one of the best ways to remain in good health and for many of us eating a good diet gives us both enjoyment and satisfaction and can help provide us with a structure to our day. When you move into a care home your diet does not need to change. However the staff may assess your diet and nutritional intake to make sure you are getting the right vitamins and nutrients in order to be as healthy as you can be.

Your meals in the care home should be varied, nutritious and appetising. The staff must take into account any dietary requirements you have and should get to know your likes and dislikes – not just in terms of food but also of when and where you like to eat. Any special diet (such as vegetarian or coeliac) should be recorded in your personal plan and your meals should reflect your dietary needs. The care home menu should vary regularly and you should be given a choice of what you would like to eat. Meals should always include fresh fruit and vegetables and snacks and drinks should be available whenever you want them.

The care home staff should allow you to eat your food in your own time if you are able to, or offer help if you have difficulty eating, so you can enjoy your food. Even if you are normally able to eat your food without help, the staff should monitor your food intake in a discreet way in order to recognise if you are struggling to eat either practically or because you have developed a health issue such as toothache. This is important as not eating enough can lead to malnutrition or dehydration which can have serious consequences for your health. As well as its importance for keeping us healthy, eating well can be key in helping us feel comfortable and happy. Because of this, making sure you can eat, and fixing anything that may be preventing you from doing so, is vital.

If care homes state they can cater for special diets such as kosher, halal and vegetarian they must observe all the requirements associated with these diets including the purchase, storage, preparation and cooking of the food. Although all care homes in Scotland should be flexible to cater for dietary requirements, Vegetarian for Life has produced a list of vegetarian ‘friendly’ care homes who follow their Code of Good Practice by providing good vegetarian (and often vegan) catering. This list can be found at: **www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk/uk-list**

Keeping active

Physical activity provides a wide range of physical and psychological benefits. Regular activity should be built in to care home life.

People often wrongly assume that older people should not exercise, perhaps because of medical conditions or simply the idea they are too old. This is not true; exercise has been proven to have a benefit to all of us, regardless of age. Regular physical activity can help in the prevention and management of many long-term conditions such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer and obesity. Although many older adults in care homes have a range of health conditions that may make it challenging to remain active, the care home should support you in whatever way it can so you can take part in any activity you want to. It is never too late to reap the benefits of an active lifestyle and age and medical conditions should not be a barrier to this.

Care homes should offer different approaches to helping residents stay active. You should have opportunities to take part in the day-to-day activities of the care home. This might include managing your daily personal care such as getting dressed or general everyday tasks like hanging up washing and clearing away dishes. Alongside this, staff should encourage you to continue doing the active things you enjoy, such as gardening or going for walks. Care homes should also offer some sort of structured exercise such as chair-based exercises or dancing if you would like a more focused way of staying active. Not everyone wants to join in on such activities so you should have the choice as to whether or not you want to take part.



Of course staying active does not necessarily mean physical exercise; ensuring you spend your time doing things that are meaningful to you is important. This should be the responsibility of all staff in the care home not just a designated ‘activities coordinator’. Care homes should offer regular activities that anyone can get involved with if they would like to such as baking or art. You should also be encouraged to keep up or develop other hobbies you might enjoy, like reading or doing crosswords. These types of activity help to keep our minds active which is really important for quality of life.



Balancing risk and choice

The challenges of providing good care for older people with complex needs in care home settings can mean staff prioritise the practical tasks of food and medication above supporting people to take part in things they would enjoy. However it is important that the care staff encourage and enable you to take part in activities if you want to as these are what help give us purpose and enjoyment to life. Some activities, particularly physical activities, may involve an element of risk, and care home staff may be concerned about health and safety regulations. Staff should take a person-centred approach to risk by identifying risky situations for individuals rather than viewing every resident as being of equal risk; not everyone who has the same health condition, such as dementia, will face the same risks. Instead of concentrating on the physical aspects of risks, such as falling, care home staff should consider the other important aspects, such as how important the activity is to you and the opportunities it provides. For example, if you have always gone for a daily walk then it is important you are supported to continue this activity if you wish even if there is an element of risk. Day-to-day life is full of risks and you should have the freedom to choose to take some risks if you want to.

It is important to remember that it can be challenging for a care home to balance the wishes of one individual with the rights and wishes of other residents, the capacity of staff and the concerns of family and friends. In spite of this you should ultimately feel able to choose how and where you spend your time, just as you would in your own home, and be supported in doing so.

Health and care



You have the right to be involved in discussions and decisions about your health and care, including your end of life care, and to be given information to enable you to do this. This right does not change when moving into a care home; you are still entitled to play an active part in your health and care.

Care home staff should always inform whoever you would like to be informed, such as your next of kin or Power of Attorney, about any changes in your health and of any medical appointments so they know what is happening and whether and when a visit or other support might be helpful.

Physical health

The majority of older people living in care homes have some degree of physical ill health. Once you move into a care home you should receive a full assessment of all your healthcare needs so the care home staff can look after you properly. This assessment should be reviewed at least once every 6 months to ensure it is accurate, up-to-date and has taken account of any changes in your health. The staff may also ask to talk with your family and friends as the people you are closest to are likely to have a good knowledge of your general health. Understanding what is normal for you will help the care home staff recognise any new symptoms.

Physical health problems can cause discomfort and affect activities of daily living, participation in social activities and independence. It is important to try to communicate any health issues you are experiencing, so staff can take action to help improve things. If you are unable to communicate, staff should be trained to recognise symptoms through their own observations; they should closely monitor any medicines you are taking and any medical conditions you have and be aware of any changes in your symptoms so alterations to your treatment can be made if necessary. If you become ill, or your health is not improving either physically or mentally, staff should contact your doctor or other relevant healthcare professional with your agreement. Good management of existing health conditions and prompt recognition, diagnosis and treatment of new health problems is vital for wellbeing.

Healthcare in a care home should not only focus on treatment, but also on preventing ill health. Regular check-ups, advice on healthcare and having the opportunity to discuss health concerns with your GP when you want to, all contribute to maintaining good health and quality of life. This can also help prevent hospital admissions and should mean you experience less pain and discomfort.

Mental health and wellbeing

Looking after mental health is just as important as looking after physical health. This is true wherever you live. Mental health conditions can be common in older people who live in a care home; however staff should be trained to recognise these conditions, talk to anyone about any symptoms they are experiencing, and refer them for specialist help if needed. Early recognition, diagnosis and treatment can help prevent people from developing more serious and long-term mental health problems. If you are feeling low in mood it is important to try to talk to someone about how you are feeling and not just put up with it. This may be a family member or friend, your GP or a member of the care home staff.

Good mental health is important for ensuring your life is enjoyable and fulfilling. There are ways you can help protect your mental health whilst you are living in a care home. This may involve:

Talking to people – having a chat with your friends, family and care home staff can help you to deal with the stresses of life and get advice and support. Strong personal relationships are important for good mental wellbeing. This can be particularly important for people living in care homes in order to feel part of both the care home and the wider community.

Getting out and about – this can be an issue in care homes so it is important to remember that staff should support you in getting outdoors or even just for a walk around the home itself. Fresh air and a change of scenery can benefit your mood.

Doing things you enjoy – continuing doing the things you enjoy is important for keeping well and feeling like yourself. Again, staff should support and encourage you to maintain, or even develop new hobbies and interests. By learning new skills you can feel a sense of achievement and purpose both of which are important for everyone's wellbeing.



Rest and relaxation – it is important to take time to relax and rest. Getting enough sleep is key for your mental health. If you are having difficulties sleeping it is important to talk to the care staff who may either adjust things that may be preventing you getting a good night's sleep or contact your GP for help.

For more information about maintaining good mental health, common mental health problems and who can help see Age Scotland's Mental Health and Wellbeing in later life guide *Keeping well and who can help*.

NHS services in care homes

Living in a care home is still living in the community and so the NHS is still responsible for providing health services to care home residents on the same basis as to people living in their own homes. This is regardless of whether you are self-funding or if the local council is funding your care. Care homes should do all they can to ensure that residents have equal access to the health services that they need. This includes nursing services, continence aids and advice, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, podiatry services and health screening. If you have been receiving community healthcare services in your own home and still require them, you should continue to receive these in the care home.

If you feel you are not getting enough help from NHS services or are unhappy with any services you have, the **Patient Advice and Support Service** offers free, accessible and confidential information and advice to patients, their carers and families about NHS healthcare. You can call them on **0800 9172127** or see the website **www.cas.org.uk/pass**.

GP

When you move into a care home you should be involved in a decision about whether to remain registered with your current GP or transfer to a GP practice that may be linked to the home. If the care home you move to is outside the practice boundaries of your current GP you may not be able to remain on their patient list; however some GPs may continue providing medical care to a patient that they know well or who has been registered with them for a long time, despite their change of location. If this is not the case the care home staff should help you to register with a new GP as quickly as possible.

Seasonal flu jab

You are entitled to be immunised against seasonal flu every year if you are 65 or over, or are younger than 65 but have certain long term medical conditions. The immunisation programme generally runs from 1st October every year and your care home manager should arrange for a GP or health visitor to visit the home so everyone who needs the vaccination can receive it.

There is more information about the flu jab at **www.immunisationscotland.org.uk**.

Immunisation against pneumonia

You are also entitled to be immunised against pneumonia if you are 65 or over or have certain medical conditions. This vaccine can be given at any time of year but may be offered at the same time as the seasonal flu jab.

Podiatry

If you have problems with your feet you can only receive free podiatry (also known as chiropody) if you are referred by your doctor or other health professional such as a health visitor or district nurse. If you are experiencing pain or problems with walking or with your shoes talk to the staff and they can arrange for someone to assess you. The care home is likely to have an arrangement with a podiatry service. Provision of podiatry services varies between NHS board areas so it may be that you have to pay for the treatment you receive. Whether or not you receive free treatment will depend on how serious your condition is and how quickly it needs to be treated – everyone is assessed on an individual basis. Any personal foot care needs, such as toenail cutting, should be provided by the staff in the care home.



Screening

The NHS in Scotland offers opportunities for health screening. If you want to take part in any of the screening programmes the care home staff should support you to do so.

Breast cancer screening

Screening for breast cancer is a service offered to women aged between 50 and 70. An appointment is made for screening every 3 years. Screening is available after the age of 70 on request by calling your local breast screening centre, details of which can be found at: www.nhsinform.scot.

Cervical cancer screening

Screening for cervical cancer is a service offered to all women in Scotland from the age of 25 – 64, every 3 years. After the age of 60 it is offered by invitation only, for example, if there have been problems in the past with an abnormal result.

Bowel cancer screening

Between the ages of 50 and 74 all men and women will receive a home test kit in the post every 2 years.

If you are 75 or over you can still take a bowel screening test every two years if you want to. You will not be automatically sent a test kit though, so you, or the care home staff, will need to request one by calling the **Bowel Screening Centre Helpline** on **0800 0121 833**.



NHS eye tests

A free NHS eye test is not just to test your sight – it also checks the health of your eyes and looks for signs of other health problems which could be spotted before they become more serious.

The NHS provides a free eye test every year if you are over 60. Eye tests can be more frequent if you have a family history of eye problems such as glaucoma or ocular hypertension. Care homes are likely to have arrangements in place for optometrists to come into the home to provide eye tests. If this is not an NHS optometrist you should not be made to pay for this without having the option of a free NHS test. You will have to pay for frames and lenses unless you get help with health costs (see page 29).

Care homes should have procedures in place so that glasses do not go missing and are regularly cleaned.

For more information about problems with your vision you can contact the **Royal National Institute for the Blind** at their website: www.rnib.org.uk/scotland or on **0303 123 9999**.



Hearing tests

Problems with hearing can be hard to notice yourself. Often the people around you pick up on them first if, for example, you are listening to the radio at a louder volume than normal or having difficulties following conversation. If the care home staff or you yourself are concerned about your hearing, the first port of call is your GP. The GP can refer you for a free hearing test at an audiology department in a local NHS hospital.

An NHS hearing aid is free and if it is damaged can be repaired free of charge. You can buy hearing aids privately, however if you do so you cannot then ask the NHS to repair it for you. The care staff should arrange for regular maintenance of your hearing aid, keep an eye out for any damage and take care of getting it fixed for you. They should also monitor any existing hearing problems and arrange for further tests if necessary.

For more information about help with hearing problems you can contact **Action on Hearing Loss** at www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk or by calling **0808 808 0123**.



Dental care from the NHS

You are entitled to a free dental examination on the NHS, usually every 6 months. Dental treatments do cost but you may be entitled to help to cover this - see 'Help with Health Costs' on page 29. It is best to go to a dental clinic for these appointments; however NHS Public Dental Services (previously known as NHS Community Dental Services) provide visits to care homes if a person is especially frail or has significant medical or mental health problems that would make it particularly difficult for them to attend a clinic. It may be possible to remain on the patient list of your current dentist should you wish to do so; however you would need to discuss this with both your dentist and the care home as appointments may require the home to organise transport for you to attend.

Care staff should undertake regular reviews of your oral health and ensure that you are able to access dental care and follow advice given by dental professionals. You should be supported to maintain your oral health and if you have difficulties cleaning your teeth staff will help you with this. Toothbrushes and any dentures should be clearly marked to prevent any mix-ups of residents' dental items.



Help with health costs

The NHS Low Income Scheme can help people cover the costs of NHS services including NHS dental treatment, glasses and contact lenses, and necessary costs of travel to an NHS hospital for treatment. To apply for help with health costs you need to fill in an HC1 form. People who live permanently in a care home and receive local council support can fill in a short version of this form called the HC1 (SC) form. The forms are available at any Job Centre Plus office or NHS hospital or you, or the care home staff, can request one to be sent to you by calling **0131 275 6386**. Care home staff can complete this form on your behalf if you would like them to.

The form will establish whether you qualify for full or partial exemption from NHS charges. You will be sent an HC2 certificate if you qualify for full help with health costs, or an HC3 certificate if you qualify for partial help with health costs.

You cannot get help with health costs if you or your partner (or both of you) have £16,000 in savings, investments or property (not counting the place where you live) or £23,250 in savings, investments or property if you live permanently in a care home (figures correct in 2017/2018).

For more information about all NHS charges and exemptions search for 'Help with health costs Scotland' at **www.gov.scot** or call **NHS Help with Health Costs** on **0300 330 1343**.

Medication

If you are happy managing your medication you should be allowed to continue to do so when you move into a care home. However it may be that you would rather staff helped you and in this case staff should administer your medication for you and monitor for any side-effects you may have.

Palliative and end of life care

End of life care can be a difficult topic to think about; however it is important in care homes, and there are practices that good care homes should offer. Promoting good end of life care should be integral to quality care in care homes.

You should be able to say, and have recorded in your personal plan, what you want to happen, and who should be informed about your physical, personal and spiritual care in dying, death and funeral arrangements. You should feel confident that your wishes will be carried out.

When people reach the end of their life they may experience new symptoms, or existing symptoms may become worse. These changes should not be ignored; a person at the end of their life should feel as little pain and discomfort as possible and attempts to relieve symptoms should continue. The staff will ensure that your death is as comfortable as possible and you should be able to choose whether or not you want someone with you and who that person should be. Staff should discuss with you your preferred place of death and will make every effort to achieve your wishes. There should also be somewhere for anyone you want with you to stay during your last days and hours if you wish. Staff must allow your bereaved family, friends and carers to spend as much time with you after death as they need.

Staff should always treat any death in a care home with dignity, sensitivity and discretion. It is important that staff, family and other residents receive continuing support following a death. Opportunities to discuss feelings and to say goodbye should be available and attendance at the funeral or memorial service or remembrance events should be supported.

Complaints and concerns



This guide is structured as a good practice guide to inform you of your rights with regard to health and wellbeing in a care home and what good care should be like. Unfortunately care in a care home is not always good and you may come across problems. If you are concerned about the care that you are receiving or how you are being treated it is important to address this.

In the first instance it is best to raise your concerns with the care home manager or a member of staff, as it may be that a simple and quick resolution can be achieved. You should not worry that raising your concerns will affect your care – you should never be treated differently for voicing your worries and it may be that the care home was simply unaware of the issue that is troubling you and are happy to solve it.

If speaking to the care home staff does not resolve the issue then there are ways you can escalate a complaint. Firstly you can make a formal complaint, following the care home's complaint procedures. All registered care services must have a clear complaints procedure that you can access. Secondly you can complain to the relevant regulatory body. You can do this instead of, or as well as, using the home's complaints procedure.

The Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate will consider complaints about the standard of care being provided. They take all complaints seriously and will discuss with you the best way to resolve your problem. If a complaint involves an 'Adult at risk of harm' who is vulnerable and cannot look after themselves, the Care Inspectorate work closely with Police Scotland and social services to ensure people are safe.

Anyone can complain to the Care Inspectorate about a registered care service. You should make a complaint as soon as you have a concern or are aware of an issue. They usually apply a time limit of 6 months from the time of the cause of the complaint unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Care Inspectorate should acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days. Once they have agreed with you the issues that they will investigate they then aim to inform you of their findings within 40 working days.

To raise a concern with the Care Inspectorate:

- call the national enquiries line on **0845 600 9527**
- fill in a complaints form online at **www.careinspectorate.com**
- visit any Care Inspectorate office (full list available at **www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/our-offices**)
- write to any Care Inspectorate office or to their headquarters:

Care Inspectorate
Compass House,
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee DD1 4NY



The full Care Inspectorate complaints policy is available on their website under the 'complaints' section. There is also a guide called 'Unhappy with a care service?' which takes you through the complaints process. To get paper copies of these publications call the Care Inspectorate enquiry line listed above.

There are some matters which the Care Inspectorate do not have the authority to investigate including the cause of an accident or death, complaints about doctors and nurses and the care home's charging services. If the complaint lies outside their responsibilities they will inform you of another organisation that can deal with the nature of your complaint.

Concerns about social care workers

If you have concerns about the way in which an individual care home worker has behaved there are several options to consider. It may be that their actions relate to poor service delivery in which case you should complain to the care home or contact the Care Inspectorate as described above. If the concern relates more to their conduct and behaviour rather than service delivery you can either ask the care home manager to contact the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) or you can contact them directly. The SSSC is the regulatory body for social care workers in Scotland, and is there to raise the standards of care in various care settings, as well as protecting those who use care services. If there are concerns about social care workers, the SSSC can investigate and take action if necessary. They can also deal with anonymous complaints.

To raise a concern with the SSSC:

- write to: Scottish Social Services Council
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee DD1 4NY
- go to the SSSC website – **www.sssc.uk.com**
- phone **0345 60 30 891** or **01382 207101**

If you are not clear who to call, contact the Care Inspectorate for advice.



Concerns about healthcare workers

If you have a concern or complaint about a healthcare worker, you can contact the **Patient Advice and Support Service** on **0800 9172127** or see their website **www.cas.org.uk/pass**.

Concerns about harmful behaviour or abuse

If you are worried about the way someone is treating you, it is very important to tell someone. This might be a staff member, another resident or even a family member or friend who is visiting you. There are laws in Scotland to protect you. Contact the Age Scotland helpline, Care Inspectorate or action on Elder Abuse for information and advice.

Useful Contacts



Age Scotland helpline 0800 12 44 222

The Age Scotland helpline provides information, friendship and advice to older people, their relatives and carers.

If you need an interpreter call **0800 12 44 222** and simply state the language you need e.g. Polish or Urdu. Stay on the line for a few minutes and the Age Scotland helpline will do the rest.

You can call us on **0800 12 44 222** for a copy of our publications list or download copies from our website at **www.agescotland.org.uk**.

Action on Elder Abuse

Action on Elder Abuse provides information, advice and support to older people and others through its helpline.

If you phone its number it will not appear on your telephone bill.

Action on Elder Abuse
PO Box 60001
Streatham SW16 9BY

Helpline: **0808 808 8141**

The helpline operates MON to FRI 9am-5pm
and is confidential and free to phone.

www.elderabuse.org.uk

Alzheimer Scotland

Alzheimer Scotland campaigns for the rights of people with dementia and their families and provides an extensive range of innovative and personalised support services.

Freephone 24 Hour Dementia Helpline: **0808 808 3000**

www.alzscot.org

Care Information Scotland

Care Information Scotland is a helpline and website that provides information about specific local services and support groups and how to access them.

Advice line: **0800 011 3200** (8am-10pm seven days per week)

www.careinfoscotland.scot

The Elderly Accommodation Counsel

The Elderly Accommodation Counsel provides lists of care homes in different areas of the country and offers free housing advice.

EAC FirstStop Advice
89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TP

Advice line: **0800 377 7070**

Email: **info@firststopadvice.org.uk**

www.eac.org.uk

Patient Advice and Support Service

The Patient Advice and Support Service provides information, advice and support for those wishing to give feedback or comments, raise concerns or make complaints about health care delivered by the NHS in Scotland. The service also provides information and advice on how to access health and community services that offer additional support with health care needs.

Phone: **0800 9172127**

www.cas.org.uk/pass

Relatives and Residents Association

The Relatives and Residents Association supports care home residents and their relatives. It also operates a helpline and produces leaflets and factsheets of useful information about care home life.

1 The Ivories
6-18 Northampton Street
London N1 2HY

Helpline: **020 7359 8136** (MON to FRI 9:30am-4:30pm)

Email: **info@relres.org**

www.relres.org



Thanks and Acknowledgements

Age Scotland Helpline Advisors

Age Scotland Allied Health Professionals

Age Scotland Community Development Officers

Clackmannanshire Older Adults Forum

Highland Senior Citizens Network

Age Scotland Network Meeting Groups

PASS

Carers Scotland

My Home Life

Care Inspectorate

Action on Elder Abuse

Scottish Government

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www.agescotland.org.uk

Age Scotland helpline
0800 12 44 222

Age Scotland Enterprises
0800 456 1137 (Edinburgh)
0800 500 3159 (Glasgow)



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www.twitter.com/agescotland



www.youtube.com/agescotland

Age Scotland, part of the Age Network, is an independent charity dedicated to improving the later lives of everyone on the ageing journey, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland. Registration Number 153343. Charity Number SC010100.