

This leaflet aims to provide helpful information for people who are considering moving to a care home. It is particularly for inpatients at St Christopher's Hospice and their families, or for people being helped by St Christopher's or Harris HospisCare home care teams.

It is really important for your care that the information you give us is as full and accurate as possible.

How can I find out more?

You can ask your nurse or social worker for specific information that is relevant to your situation. You might also find it useful to look at more detailed information about choosing and paying for a care home provided by the following independent organisations:

Age UK

www.ageuk.org.uk/publications/

Independent Age

www.independentage.org/advice/guides-and-factsheets/guide-and-factsheet-topics/care-homes.aspx

If you or your family have access to the internet, you can search for registered homes on the Care Quality Commission website. You put in your postcode to find homes in your area, or you can search for care homes by name. Most local councils also publish a list of registered homes in their area on their websites with links to the care home website, if it has one.

Care Quality Commission

www.cqc.org.uk



51-59 Lawrie Park Road, London SE26 6DZ
Telephone 020 8768 4500 Fax 020 8659 8680
www.stchristophers.org.uk



Caritas House, Tregony Road, Orpington BR6 9XA
Telephone 01689 825755 Fax 01689 892999
www.harrishospiscare.org.uk

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INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Choosing and moving to a care home



1 Why do I need to move to a care home?

You may be thinking about moving to a care home because you think this could be right for you, or because your doctor, nurse or social worker, a friend or someone in your family has suggested it.

If you are an inpatient at St Christopher's Hospice, the team caring for you will explain their reasons for suggesting a move to a care home. The hospice is mainly a place for short periods of care and it is unsuitable for people who may need care for several weeks or months. The hospice focuses on getting to the point where your symptoms can be well-managed in your own home. After this, many people return home, but this may not be possible for you because your symptoms cannot be managed in your home or there are other practical problems that mean you will be safer in a care home.

If you have been living at home with support from the home care nurse and other visiting staff, you may have got to the point where you feel unsafe during the time that they are not in your home; you may need equipment to help you that does not fit into your home, or staff may feel that you need more care than they can give during their visits.

2 Will I have to pay? Can I afford it?

Your nurse or social worker will explain the arrangements in detail as they affect you; this is a brief summary of the arrangements for paying for care homes.

The cost of care homes is covered by a weekly or monthly charge and how much it is will depend on the services you require and the facilities at the care home.

If you go to a care home as an NHS continuing care patient, the NHS pays for everything, just as it would if you were in hospital. Most patients fall into this category, and our staff will make the application for NHS continuing care for you. A nurse or other member

of staff from the primary care trust that is responsible for your family doctor will then decide whether you can receive NHS continuing care.

If you do not receive NHS continuing care, you can apply for help from your local adult social services department, under the arrangements for community care. A social worker from your local council will visit you to make an assessment, and will then produce a care plan. This sets out their assessment of your needs, the services that they can provide and the charges that they make for them. The charges depend on your income. Some people will pay nothing; this covers most people who rely on the state pension. Some people will make a contribution; this covers people who have an income from a private pension or some savings. People who have sufficient income or larger savings or property pay the whole cost. You will always keep some of your weekly income to pay for everyday needs.

3 Will I have to give up my own home?

Most people keep their own home for a while after they move to a care home, until they are sure it is right for them. Some also hope that things will get better and allow them to move back to their own home.

If you own your own home, you will probably have to pay the whole cost of your place in a care home and this will be taken from the sale of your home. But you do not have to sell your house at once. You can ask the local council to pay the whole cost of your place in a care home for you. When you decide it is time to sell your home you can pay the council back or after your death this can be paid from your estate.

4 How do I choose a care home?

There are lists of care homes and their facilities and charges, and each care home publishes a brochure with information about their services and facilities. Care homes are registered by the Care Quality Commission, which publishes reports about the standards of each home. You can ask the care home to show you the latest report.

You will probably want to visit the care home before you decide to try it out. If you cannot do this, someone that you trust from your family can visit the care home for you and report back. Usually the manager of the care home will visit you to decide if they have the facilities to care for you properly, so you can get to know them a little before you decide.

5 Can you recommend a care home?

Your local council or primary care trust may have a list of care homes that they have approved, although this may simply be the list of care homes in their area whose charges they will normally meet. Your needs may mean that you require more care or different facilities that are not on this list – if so, they can be asked to decide on a larger budget to meet your special needs. This is part of the process of deciding on your application for continuing care or community care services.

Hospice staff can tell you about care homes that other patients have lived in, but everyone's needs and preferences are different and so they will not be able to say which is best for you – you or your family need to decide that.

6 Moving to a care home

When you have decided to try out a care home and the finance for your place has been organised, a member of your family will usually transport you there. If this is not possible and you are an inpatient, the hospice may be able to make arrangements for you. People usually try out a care home for a few weeks before making a final decision to live there.

When you move to a care home, you will need to take clothes and some personal belongings. Most people also take pictures, personal mementoes or useful items from their own home. This helps to make your room more homely, because you have your own things around you, such as your radio or television.

See the back cover for further useful information.