

Care Home Guide: Living in a Care Home



Who we are

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 and promote their rights and interests.

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people enjoy better later lives.

We have three strategic aims:



We help older people to be as well as they can be



We promote a positive view of ageing and later life



We tackle loneliness and isolation

How we can help

We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

Our **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.



Call us free on: 0800 12 44 222
(Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm)



Visit [agescotland.org.uk](https://www.agescotland.org.uk)
to find out more.

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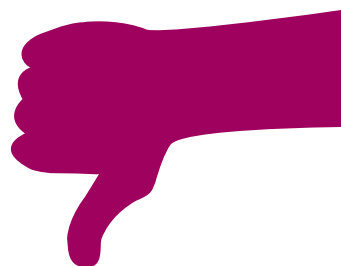
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Introduction

This guide is for anyone considering moving into a care home, or already living in one. Moving to a care home is an option some of us may need or want to consider as we get older. Your move may be carefully planned, or it might happen more quickly due to an accident or illness causing you to need more support. In either case, it is important you know what to expect, and have the information you need to play a full and active role in making decisions about your care.

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. It is also 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 provide information on living in a care home and your rights as a care home resident. Although each care home is different, it outlines what you can generally expect from a good care home, and what to do if there is a problem.

The information in this guide may not apply to everyone. For example, it may not be relevant if the person moving into a care home lacks the mental capacity to make certain decisions. If you would like advice about your particular situation, call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.

Age Scotland produces a separate guide specifically for relatives and friends of people moving into residential care: **Care Home Guide: Friends and Family**.





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. Some care homes also provide specialist equipment and have trained nurses on duty 24 hours a day to provide skilled nursing care if required. Some care homes provide specialist care and support for a specific care need, such as dementia.

Care home staff are trained to care for people in accordance with the **Health and Social Care Standards** – a set of delivery guidelines that care providers in Scotland are expected to achieve.

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. It regulates and inspects care homes to make sure they meet the correct standards.

Where necessary, it can make and enforce recommendations for improvements.

The Care Inspectorate grades the quality of care homes during its inspections and produces reports that are available for the public to view. It can also investigate complaints it receives about care services. For more information about this see page 30.

Preparing for the move



Help and advice from the council

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

- carry out a care needs assessment to see if a care home is the best option for you - this is the first step to seeing if you are entitled to financial help
- carry out a financial assessment - in Scotland, personal care and nursing care are free if you have been assessed as needing them, but you may also be entitled to means-tested help with your other care costs, either in a care home or your own home
- help you find a suitable care home if needed - the local council has a responsibility to find a suitable place for anyone it has assessed as needing care in a care home

Having a care needs assessment is important even if you will be paying for your own care to begin with. If your circumstances change, you can only receive financial help if a care needs assessment has shown that you need care. For more information, see [Age Scotland's Care Home Guide: Funding](#).



Making a decision

Even if the social work department suggests you move into a care home, you do not have to agree to this. As long as you have the mental capacity to do so, you have the right to make decisions about where you live, even if the council is arranging and paying for your care. If you have got to the point of asking for help, it is likely you will need some support to live safely and comfortably. It is a good idea to discuss your options with the social work team, and trusted family and friends.

It is also a good idea to visit any care homes you are considering. Visiting will allow you 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 questions you may like to ask when you visit a care home, with space for your comments. It may be useful to go through these questions before any visits so you can pick out the ones that are most important to you.

You do not need to let a care home know you are coming to visit. However, you may prefer to make an appointment so staff can be available to show you around and answer questions.

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 if you have more questions to ask. You may also be able to pay for a short stay at the care home as a trial period. Some homes require you to have a trial period before you move in.



Gathering information

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

- the care home's charges and the services that are included, for example, personal care, accommodation, food and nursing care
- extras such as hairdressing and trips out, and how much these will cost
- the moving-in process
- the number of rooms in the care home
- what will happen if you are self-funding and your savings run out
- the rules about visiting times
- the complaints procedure
- the most recent inspection report from the Care Inspectorate
- the rights and responsibilities of residents
- policies for managing risk and procedures for dealing with, recording and reporting accidents and incidents.

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



Easing the transition

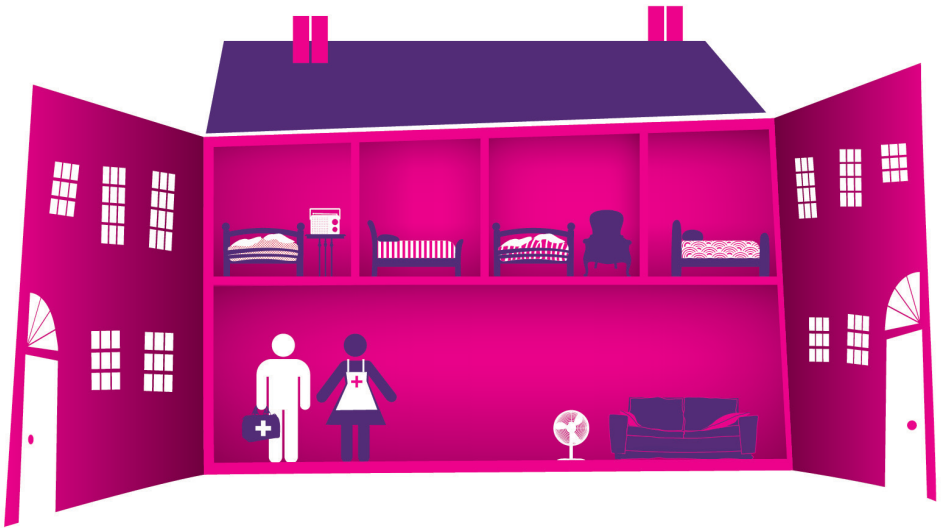
Unless a friend or relative has lived in a care home recently, or you have worked in one as a professional, you may know very little about them. Care homes are often portrayed in the media as negative places to live, and this can lead to concerns. However, it is important to remember that there are many excellent care homes.

Care homes can be a positive option, providing you with compassionate care from trained staff, as well as companionship, activities and relief from the worries of day-to-day life. Moving home can of course be stressful, but with the right planning and support, moving to a care home can help you maintain or even improve your quality of life.

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). They will be your first point of contact for any worries you may have.

Your personal plan will list out your care and health needs, including any communication needs, and details of how these will be met. It should also include what you like to be called, your dietary needs and preferences, and your social, cultural and spiritual interests. This plan should be reviewed and updated whenever your health or care needs change, and at least once every 6 months. The home should give you a copy of your personal plan if you would like one.

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 or concerns in confidence. You should not be judged or treated any differently for doing so.



The care home environment

Sometimes it is forgotten that care homes are people's homes and not hospitals or hotels. You should feel comfortable and free to exercise choice in your day-to-day life, just as you would in your own home.

There should be a warm and welcoming atmosphere and you should feel safe and well-respected. There are rules and guidelines set by the **Health and Social Care Standards** and the **Care Inspectorate** that should ensure this is the case.



Rooms

The Health and Social Care Standards say that you should have your own private bedroom 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.

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 invited in. Different arrangements may be agreed if you have a hearing impairment or a health condition that makes you more at risk from falling.





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 the grounds or outside space. 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, you will be able to come and go from the care home as you please unless there are legal reasons that prevent this or there is a risk to your health and safety. Your personal plan may say you need someone to go with you to make sure you stay safe, but you should never be 'locked in' or stopped from going outside.

Staff

Care homes must at all times have the right number of trained staff on duty, who have the necessary skills to meet the care and support needs of you and the other residents. Staff should always treat you with dignity and respect, and should always communicate with you in ways you can clearly understand. They should 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 staff should take the time to get to know you and build up a picture of your life. They should see you as an individual and focus on what you can do, not what you can't do. You should be encouraged to do anything you are safe and happy to do on your own, even if it takes much longer than it would for a carer to do it for you.



Keeping in touch

If you live in a care home, you should be supported to continue to be part of your community.

Visitors, including children, should always be made welcome and there should be a private space where you can host them if you would like. Some 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 in to see you but you can ask staff to let you know a visitor has arrived if you 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 in privacy and comfort. Some care homes have a main phone line with a portable handset that you can take with you into your room.

For many people the internet is an important tool for staying connected and having a window to the world. You may like to have some form of access to the internet so you can read emails, make video calls or use social networking sites to keep in touch with friends and family. Video calls can be particularly important for people who use sign language. Not all care homes offer internet access so if it is important for you to get online, check this before you move.

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

Your privacy and dignity should be respected at all times, particularly when personal and medical care is being carried out. Staff should never discuss 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 your consent.

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. Unless you have been assessed as not having capacity to manage your own financial affairs, you should have full control of your money and belongings.

Staff should have your consent before going into your room or moving your possessions. You should have a lockable space in your room for your personal belongings and valuables.



Independence, personal routine and identity

Many people fear losing their independence when they move into a care home. This should not be the case. All care home residents and their families must have the opportunity to be as involved in decisions that affect them as they wish. 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 like ourselves. Being able to make decisions about how you live your life contributes to good mental wellbeing. You should have freedom to decide how you spend your time and whether or not to join in any events, social activities and entertainment offered by the care home. You should be offered support if you have difficulty getting out from your room, or you feel anxious about socialising.

You should be able to decide when you get up and go to bed, when to have a shower or a bath, and when and where you eat. Care home staff should ask how you like your 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.

Clothing can be an important part of our identity. It is a good idea to label all your clothes to help prevent losses or mix-ups in the laundry. Some care homes may ask you to wear clothes that are simple to take on and off, to make dressing and undressing easier. This often means jogging bottoms and t-shirts, but you should be able to wear clothes you like and feel comfortable in. If you have always dressed a certain way or had your hair in a particular style, the care home should do their best to help you continue your routine.



Maintaining your personal identity in a care home is important for your quality of life. Throughout your life you gain a wealth of skills and knowledge, and contributing these to care home life can benefit you, the staff and other residents. Whatever your interests you should be supported to maintain them. 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, gender reassignment, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation. This means you should be able to live the way you want to, without fear 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 practise any beliefs you have and to keep in touch with your community. This includes supporting you to attend places of worship or religious events outside the care home where possible. Staff should also respect and recognise any religious or personal holidays and support you to continue observing them.



Food and diet

Eating well is one of the best ways to remain in good health. A good diet gives us both enjoyment and satisfaction, and regular meals provide structure to our day. When you move into a care home your diet does not need to change, although the staff may keep a check on your diet and nutritional intake to make sure you are getting the right vitamins and nutrients 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 your dietary requirements and should get to know your likes and dislikes. Any special diet (such as vegetarian or coeliac) should be recorded in your personal plan and your meals should reflect this. 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 on your own if you are able to, or offer help if you have difficulty. Even if you are normally able to eat your food without help, the staff should recognise if you are struggling 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, so supporting you to do this 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 cater for a range of dietary requirements, **Vegetarian for Life** has a directory of care homes and other organisations who follow their Code of Good Practice and provide vegetarian or vegan catering. You can search the list by visiting **www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk/uk-list**.



Balancing risk and choice

The challenges of providing good care for older people with complex needs mean care homes have to prioritise vital tasks, such as providing food and medication. However, it is important the care home staff encourage and enable you to take part in activities if you want to, as these are what help give us purpose and enjoyment in 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 assessing safety on an individual basis; not everyone who has the same health condition, such as dementia, will face the same risks. Risk should be balanced against the mental and physical benefits to the individual. 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.

There will be some limits on what care home staff are able to facilitate. 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. But within reason, you should 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.



Keeping active

Staying as active as possible benefits both our physical and mental health. Regular activity should be built into care home life.

People often wrongly assume that older people should not exercise, perhaps because of medical conditions or simply because 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 people in care homes have health conditions that make it challenging to remain active, the care home should support you to 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.

Staff should encourage you to continue doing the physical activities you enjoy, such as gardening or going for walks. Care homes should also offer some structured activity such as chair-based exercises or dancing. Not everyone wants to join in with such activities, so you should be able to choose whether or not to take part.

Keeping active does not just 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 music, baking or art. You should also be encouraged to keep up or develop other hobbies, like reading or doing crosswords. These types of activity help to keep our minds active, which is really important for quality of life.



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.

Care home staff should keep anyone you choose informed about changes to your health, and any medical appointments you have, so they can arrange visits or other support. However, care home staff should not discuss your health or medical conditions with anyone without your consent.



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. 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 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 contribute to maintaining good health.



Mental health and wellbeing

Looking after your mental health is just as important as looking after your physical health. This is true wherever you live. Mental health conditions can be common in older people who live in a care home. Staff should be trained to recognise these conditions, talk to you about any symptoms you are experiencing and refer you 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 and not just put up with it. This could 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, such as:

- 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.
- getting out and about - fresh air and a change of scenery can benefit your mood
- doing things you enjoy – maintaining skills and developing new hobbies can give you a sense of achievement and purpose
- rest and relaxation – getting enough sleep is important for your mental health. If you are having difficulty sleeping it is important to talk to the care staff, who can make adjustments to your routine to help you sleep, or contact your GP for advice.

For information about maintaining good mental health, common mental health problems and who can help, see **Age Scotland's Keeping well and who can help** guide.



NHS services in care homes

The NHS is responsible for providing health services to care home residents, just the same as for people living in their own homes. This is regardless of whether you are self-funding or the local council is funding your care. Care homes should do all they can to ensure that residents have access to the health services that they need, including 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 about NHS healthcare to patients, their carers and families. You can call them on **0800 917 2127** or visit **www.pass-scotland.org.uk**.

GP

When you move into a care home you should be involved in any decision about whether to remain registered with your current GP or transfer to a GP practice 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, care home staff should help you to register with a new GP as quickly as possible.

Vaccinations

Seasonal flu vaccine

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 wants the vaccination can receive it.

There is more information about the flu vaccine at www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation.

Immunisation against pneumonia

You are 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 vaccine.

Coronavirus vaccine

All residents of adult care homes will be offered the coronavirus vaccine through their care home.

You can find more information about the coronavirus vaccine at www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine.



Podiatry

Podiatry (also known as chiropody) treats problems with the feet. It may be free if you are referred by a health professional. Talk to care home staff if you are experiencing foot pain, difficulty walking or problems with your shoes 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 you may 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. Personal foot care, such as toenail cutting, may be provided by staff in the care home.





Screening

The NHS in Scotland offers opportunities for health screening. Care home staff should support you if you want to take part in any of the screening programmes.

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 on request for women aged 71 – 74 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 5 years. You may be invited more frequently if, for example, you have had an abnormal result in the past.

Bowel cancer screening

Between the ages of 50 and 74 you will receive a bowel cancer screening home test kit in the post every 2 years.

If you are 75 or over you can still take a bowel screening test every 2 years if you want to. You will not be automatically sent a test kit, 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 that could be spotted before they become more serious.

The NHS provides a free eye test every year if you are 60 or over. 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 27).

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

For more information about problems with your vision you can contact **RNIB** 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. For example, you may be listening to the radio at a louder volume than normal or having difficulties following conversation. If you or the care home staff are concerned about your hearing, your GP is the first person to speak to. They can refer you for a free hearing test at an audiology department in a local NHS hospital.

An NHS hearing aid is free and can be repaired free of charge if it gets damaged. You can also buy hearing aids privately, but you will need to pay for any repairs yourself. The care home 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 if it breaks.

For more information about help with hearing problems you can visit the **RNID** website at **www.rnid.org.uk** or call **0808 808 0123**. You can also text them on **07360 268 988**. Other ways to get in touch are listed on the website.





Dental care

In Scotland, NHS dental check ups are free for everyone. Most adults have to pay for dental treatments but you may be entitled to help - see 'Help with health costs' on page 27.

It is best to go to a dental clinic for check ups and treatment 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 physical or mental health problems that would make it difficult for them to attend a clinic. It may be possible to remain on the patient list of your current dentist if you want to. You would need to discuss this with both your dentist and the care home, as the home may be required to organise transport for you to attend appointments.

Care home staff should check your oral health regularly and support you to follow advice given by dental professionals. They should help you to clean your teeth if you have difficulties with this. They should also make sure you have regular access to dental care and appointments.





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.

You will need to fill in the HC1 form to apply for help with health costs. People who live permanently in a care home and receive local council support can fill in a short version called the HC1 (SC) form. Care home staff can complete this on your behalf if you would like them to.

The forms should be available at any Job Centre Plus office, NHS hospital, GP practice or community pharmacy, or by calling **0131 275 6386**. 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.

You cannot get help with health costs if you or your partner (together or separately) have more than £16,000 in savings, investments or property (not counting the place where you live) or more than £23,250 in savings, investments, or property if you live permanently in a care home.

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 able to manage your medication independently you should be allowed to continue to do so when you move into a care home. If you would prefer this to be done for you, or if you require help, staff should administer your medication 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 an important aspect of the care provided by a care home.

You should be able to say what you would like to happen at the end of your life, who should be informed and how your physical, personal and spiritual care should be managed. You should feel confident that your wishes will be carried out.

The care you receive at the end of your life should aim to keep you as comfortable and reassured as possible. You should be able to choose who will be with you and where you would like to be. There should be somewhere for people to stay, so they can remain with you during your last hours or days if you would like them to. Staff must allow your bereaved family, friends and carers to spend as much time with you after your death as they need.

Staff should treat any death in a care home with dignity, sensitivity and discretion. It is important that staff, family and other residents receive support following a death. There should be opportunities to discuss feelings and say goodbye, and support should be given to attend funerals, memorial services and remembrance events.

Complaints and concerns



Although most care homes provide high-quality, person-centred care, you may sometimes come across problems. It is important to know what you can do if you are concerned about your treatment or care, or about the care home as a whole.

There are a number of ways you can make a complaint about a problem in a care home.

You can speak to the care home manager or other staff member informally. If the care home was simply unaware of the problem, they may be able to correct it straight away.

You can make a formal complaint using the care home's complaint procedure, which should be available to all residents. You should not be treated differently because you have made a complaint.

If you prefer not to complain to the care home, or you do not see changes after speaking with care home staff, you can contact the Care Inspectorate and make your complaint to them directly.

The Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate is the independent organisation that regulates care services in Scotland. They can investigate complaints about standards and safety of care, staff or staffing issues and the rights of service users, family members and carers.

If the complaint is something they don't deal with, they may be able to put you in touch with the best organisation to handle it. If the complaint is about the protection of a vulnerable adult, or a criminal offence, they will make referrals to the social work department or police as appropriate.

You should raise a complaint within 6 months of the issue arising unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevented you from doing so.

The Care Inspectorate will acknowledge your complaint within three working days. If they carry out an investigation, they aim to complete this within 40 working days. They will let you know if they think it will take longer and will explain why.

To raise a concern with the Care Inspectorate you can:

- call the national enquiries line on **0345 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: **0345 600 9527**.

Concerns about social care workers

If you have concerns about the behaviour of a care home worker you should let someone know. If you are not happy with the care they are providing, tell the care home or contact the Care Inspectorate. If you feel an individual care worker has behaved inappropriately, contact the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) or ask the care home manager to do this for you.

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. Your complaint can be anonymous if you prefer.

To raise a concern with the SSSC you can:

- 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**

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 an NHS healthcare worker, you can contact the **Patient Advice and Support Service** on **0800 917 2127** or see their website **www.pass-scotland.org.uk**.

Concerns about harmful behaviour or abuse

If you are worried about the way someone is treating you, it is very important to tell someone. The person you are concerned about might be a staff member, another resident or even a family member or friend who is visiting you. Whoever it is, there are laws in Scotland to protect you. Contact the **Age Scotland helpline**, **Care Inspectorate** or **Hourglass** for information and advice.

The **Hourglass** confidential helpline provides information and support to anyone concerned about the harm, abuse or exploitation of an older person. This might include physical, financial, psychological or sexual abuse, or neglect. Call them on **0808 808 8141**. Their telephone number will not appear on your phone bill.

If you would like a copy of our publications **Staying safe from abuse** or **Worried an older person is being abused**, call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.

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**.

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

Hourglass

Hourglass provides information and support to older people who may be experiencing abuse, and to anyone concerned about the abuse of an older person. If you call them, their number will not appear on your telephone bill.

Helpline: **0808 808 8141** (free and confidential, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

www.wearehourglass.org

Elderly Accommodation Counsel

The Elderly Accommodation Counsel **HousingCare** website provides lists of care homes in different areas of the country.

www.housingcare.org

Patient Advice and Support Service

The Patient Advice and Support Service provides information, advice and support for those wishing to give feedback, raise concerns or make complaints about 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 healthcare needs.

Tel: **0800 917 2127**

www.pass-scotland.org.uk

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
Care Inspectorate
Hourglass
Scottish Government

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Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, websites, companies, products, services or publications in this information guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age Scotland or any of its subsidiary companies or charities.

How you can help

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

All the information we provide is free and impartial. It helps older people access their rights and entitlements and can be life changing.

We are also a lifeline for older people who are feeling lonely and isolated. You can help us to support older people who need us most.

Together, we can make a difference.



Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- Call **03330 15 14 60**
- Visit **age.scot/donate**
- Text **AGESCOTGIVE** to **70085** to donate £5*
- Complete the **donation form** and return by Freepost



Fundraise

Whether it's having a bake sale or running a marathon, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help us to continue being there for older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

*Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

Please donate today



Complete the form and return to RSBS-KEHC-GBBC, Age Scotland, Edinburgh, EH9 1PR

Your details

Title:	Forename:	Surname:
Address:		
	City:	
Postcode:	Date of birth:	

By providing us with your telephone number and email address you are consenting to us contacting you via phone, text and email.

Email:	
Home tel:	Mobile tel:

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE

£75 £50 £25 Other (£)

I wish to pay by (please tick):

MasterCard Visa CAF

CharityCard Cheque (payable to Age Scotland)

Signature

Name on Card

Card No.

Expiry date Security code

Date

I prefer not to receive a thank you acknowledgement for this donation

I would like information about leaving a gift in my Will

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE MY DONATION WORTH 25% MORE

I want Age Scotland** and its partner charities to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

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I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Yes, I want Age Scotland** to claim Gift Aid on my donations

I do not wish you to claim Gift Aid on my donations

Date

Keeping in touch

We will stay in contact by post unless you ask us not to. We will never sell your data and we promise to keep your details safe and secure. You can change your mind at any time by emailing us on contact@agescotland.org.uk or calling us on 0333 323 2400.

You can read Age Scotland's privacy policy at [age.scot/privacypolicy](https://www.agescotland.org.uk/age.scot/privacypolicy).

**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. Registered Office: Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

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Let's keep in touch

Contact us:

Head office

0333 323 2400

Age Scotland helpline

0800 12 44 222

Email

info@agescotland.org.uk

Visit our website

www.agescotland.org.uk



Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work.

Sign up today at [agescot/roundup](https://www.agescotland.org.uk/agescot/roundup)



Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.



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