



Care Decisions Guide

About Home care

Home care refers to a wide range of supportive services provided to individuals who need assistance with daily activities, medical care, or emotional support in their own homes. This type of care is designed to help people maintain their independence and quality of life while living in a familiar and comfortable environment. Home care services can vary widely based on the individual's needs and may include:

1. **Personal Care:** Assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, toileting, and mobility.
2. **Health Care:** Medical services provided by professionals, including nursing care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy.
3. **Household Assistance:** Help with household chores such as cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, shopping, and running errands.
4. **Companionship:** Social interaction and emotional support to combat loneliness and isolation, including conversation, playing games, and accompanying the individual on outings.
5. **Specialised Care:** Tailored care for individuals with specific needs, such as dementia care, hospice care, or care for individuals with disabilities.

Home care can be provided by professional carers, including nurses and community care assistants, as well as family members or friends who receive training and support. The frequency and duration of home care services can vary depending on the individual's needs, ranging from a few hours a week to around-the-clock care.

Benefits of home care include:

- Allowing individuals to remain in a familiar and comfortable environment, which can improve well-being and quality of life.
- Providing personalised care tailored to the individual's needs and preferences.
- Offering a cost-effective alternative to institutional care, such as nursing homes or assisted living facilities.
- Promoting independence by enabling individuals to participate in decision-making and daily activities.

Home care services are typically arranged through a healthcare provider, home care agency, or directly with individual carers. They will have regulations and standards in place to ensure the quality and safety of home care services, including registration for agencies and certification for carers.

Overall, home care plays a crucial role in supporting individuals who need assistance to live independently and comfortably in their own homes, promoting dignity, autonomy, and quality of life. By following these steps and conducting thorough research, you can make an informed decision and select a home care provider in England that offers high-quality, compassionate care for your loved one.

Simple self-assessment

To help guide you through creating a simple self-assessment to determine the level of care needed for your loved one. Here are some questions you can ask yourself:

1. **Mobility:** Can your loved one move around the house independently, or do they require assistance with walking, getting in and out of bed, or using mobility aids like wheelchairs or walkers?
2. **Personal Care:** Can your loved one manage personal hygiene tasks like bathing, dressing and using the toilet on their own, or do they need assistance with these activities?
3. **Medication Management:** Is your loved one able to manage their medications independently, including remembering to take them on time and in the correct doses, or do they need someone to assist them with medication administration?
4. **Meal Preparation and Nutrition:** Can your loved one prepare meals for themselves and maintain a balanced diet, or do they need help with meal planning, grocery shopping, cooking, and feeding?
5. **Household Tasks:** Can your loved one manage household chores like cleaning, laundry, and managing finances, or do they need assistance with these tasks?
6. **Health Monitoring:** Does your loved one have any ongoing medical conditions that require regular monitoring, such as blood pressure checks, glucose monitoring, or wound care?
7. **Social Engagement:** Is your loved one able to maintain social connections and engage in activities that bring them joy and fulfilment, or do they need support to participate in social activities and prevent loneliness or isolation?
8. **Safety Concerns:** Are there any safety hazards in the home that need to be addressed, such as slippery floors, inadequate lighting, or obstacles that could cause falls?
9. **Emotional Well-being:** How is your loved one's emotional well-being? Do they seem happy and content, or do they show signs of depression, anxiety, or emotional distress?
10. **Overall Independence:** Based on the answers to the above questions, how would you rate your loved one's overall level of independence? Are they able to live safely and comfortably on their own, or do they require significant assistance with daily activities?

Once you've answered these questions, you'll have a better understanding of the level of care needed for your loved one. This assessment can help guide your decisions about arranging for home care services, whether it's contacting a care company, exploring community resources, or considering other care options.

Arranging and choosing the right home care provider

Making decisions about home care involves navigating a mix of public and private options, and there are specific resources and systems to consider. Choosing the right home care provider requires careful consideration to ensure that your loved one receives high-quality, reliable care that meets their specific needs. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you understand and organise care at home for a loved one:

1. **Assessing Needs:** The first step is to arrange for a care needs assessment with a care company of your choice or your local council. This assessment is free and will help you understand the type of care needed. They can evaluate needs like personal care, mobility, and day-to-day tasks.
2. **Understanding Funding:** You may wish to source and fund private care from a care company of your choice. Care companies will provide you with their cost of the care they provide. This will allow you to tailor your care as required. Alternatively, if the council determines there is a need for care, they will also carry out a financial assessment to decide if your loved one qualifies for funding. The amount of financial support available can vary; some people will qualify for full funding, while others may need to contribute towards the cost of their care.
3. **Choosing the Type of Care:** Home care can range from a few hours a week of professional help to full-time care. Care can include personal care (such as bathing and dressing), medication management, cooking, and housekeeping.
4. **Researching Providers:** If you go through an agency, check that they are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which regulates and inspects health and social care services in England. Reading the CQC's reports on providers can help you choose a reliable service.
5. **Consider Recommendations:** Seek recommendations from healthcare professionals, friends, family members, or local support groups who have experience with home care providers. Personal recommendations can provide valuable insights into the quality of care and customer satisfaction.
6. **Planning Care:** Once you choose a provider, work with them to create a detailed care plan that fits the assessed needs. This plan should outline all tasks and responsibilities, and it should be reviewed and updated regularly.
7. **Considering Technology:** Think about whether any assistive technology or adaptations to the home might be necessary to support independence. Local councils can often provide advice and financial assistance for home modifications.
8. **Legal Considerations:** Ensure all necessary legal arrangements, like a Lasting Power of Attorney for health and welfare and/or property and financial affairs, are in place. This legal documentation allows someone to make decisions on behalf of your loved one if they are unable to do so themselves.

9. **Ongoing Monitoring:** Regularly review the care provided to ensure it continues to meet your loved one's needs. Be prepared to adjust the level of care as required.
10. **Support for Carers:** If you or another family member are providing care, look into what support is available for carers in England. This can include respite care, emotional support, and practical advice. Organisations such as Carers UK offer valuable resources and support networks.
11. **Explore Local Resources:** Finally, tap into local resources for additional support. Your GP, local carers' groups, and community health services can provide assistance and guidance.
12. **Trust Your Instincts:** Ultimately, trust your instincts when choosing a home care provider. Consider factors such as professionalism, empathy, and compatibility with your loved one's personality and preferences.

By following these steps, you can more effectively manage home care for a loved one in England, ensuring they receive the necessary support in their own home.