



Care Homes General Information

What is a care home?

Since April 2002 in England, Scotland and Wales all homes are known as 'care homes' but are registered to provide different levels of care.

- Homes registered for '**personal care**' provide help with washing, dressing and giving medication.
- Homes registered for **nursing care** provide the same assistance but have a qualified nurse on duty twenty-four hours a day to carry out nursing tasks. These homes are for people who are physically or mentally frail or people who need regular attention from a nurse.
- Some homes, registered either for personal care or nursing care, can be registered for a specific care need, for example dementia or terminal illness.
- Dual registered homes no longer exist, but homes registered for nursing care may accept people who just have personal care needs but who may need nursing care in the future.
- In Northern Ireland care homes are still known as residential or nursing homes.
- All homes provide meals and staff on call at all times.

Who runs care homes?

Care homes may be owned and operated by private individuals, companies owning groups of homes, voluntary organisations and local authorities.

Who is responsible for regulating care homes?

- Care homes in England are registered and inspected by the National Care Standards Commission (from April 2004, this will be the responsibility of the Commission for Social Care Inspection). In Scotland this is the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care and in Wales, the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales. Local Authorities still retain responsibility for homes in Northern Ireland.
- **Inspection reports** on care homes are available from the relevant authority.
- A care home should make available a copy of the most recent inspection report on request.

Choosing a care home

- If you can afford to pay your own fees you can choose a home and make your own financial arrangements with the home. It is often advisable to ask for a Local Authority **assessment of need**, particularly if you may require help with the fees at some point in the future. If you are paying your own fees, care homes must provide a written contract/statement of terms and conditions at the time you move into the home.
- If you require help with paying your care home fees either now or in the future, then you should approach the Local Authority and request a 'Community Care' **assessment of need**. Once the assessment has been carried out, the local authority is then responsible for meeting those assessed needs by arranging and paying for a suitable care home. You should have some choice as to the home you go to, although there may be financial restrictions. If you choose to move to a home in another area then your local authority will still be responsible for paying for your care.
- If you choose a home that is more expensive than the local authority will pay, then a **third party** [such as a family member] can agree to pay the difference but relatives should not be expected to '**top-up**'. If you are unhappy with a local authority decision then you can use the local authority complaints procedure to obtain a review of the decision.
- If you can afford to pay your own fees but have no-one to help you then the local authority still has to help you find and arrange the place.
- If possible, consider arranging a trial stay in a home before making a final decision.

How can EAC help you?

Rules and regulations on the funding of care homes are extremely complex. If you would like to discuss any of the above areas further or if you would like to receive more detailed factsheets on any of these subjects please call the EAC advice line on **020 7820 1343**.