

CARE OPTIONS

a new future for the care home industry

A personal message from Claire Rayner



Dear Friend,

Care Options will provide the UK public with a lifeline when they most need it – a dependable and qualitative guide about care homes. For the first time you will be given the opportunity to demonstrate the setting within your care home that you have worked hard to create. As you fill in the Care Options Questionnaire you will be able to provide people with an insight into your home's relationship with the outside world, your social activities and the ethos you aim to create.

When you fill in this questionnaire you are working together with the alliance for older people making sure that they have the information they need at a transitional time in their lives and when they are facing life-changing decisions. You are taking a positive step towards a better future for us all.

Yours sincerely

Claire Rayner OBE

Caring about Big Decisions

Find out much more at
www.housingcare.org

TEAMWORK



An up-to-date ABC of care

EA new alliance between Elderly Accommodation Counsel and Help the Aged is set to push a brand new database of care homes to the forefront of care information.

EAC is a national charity that has been providing advice and information for over 16 years and the present EAC database is the most extensive listing of all accommodation in the UK designed specifically for older people.

Using an approach new to the care sector but widely used in consumer marketing, Care Options will offer unparalleled facts about each home's facilities. It will aim to provide insight on aspects directly related to quality of life within the care home setting with homes providing information never gathered before. Research amongst real people has created a new tool – a unique classification that will distinguish a number of different 'styles' of home. Further work is progressing to ensure that this classification is right for the industry and genuinely useful for consumers and when

you complete the enclosed questionnaire you will be adding to that development process as well as securing your home's place in the up-to-date listings. You will find more details about the proposed classification and how you can help on the separate sheet within this pack.

Coupling their resources to deliver information to a huge audience with EAC's data, Help the Aged will be aiming to empower many more older people than can be reached by either organisation alone.



Put simply, Care Options is a quantum leap forward in promoting a much more positive image of care homes and informing consumers, as well as professionals, about the services the industry provides.

**Care Options
aims to bring
fresh insight
to consumers
about the
different
types of care
available**



Some commonly asked questions about Care Options

Q Why has Help the Aged joined forces with EAC?

A EAC is a unique and well-respected provider of specialist housing and care information. An alliance that combines Help the Aged's resources to disperse material widely with the power of excellent practical information will ensure that Care Options is accessible to the vast majority of our older people.



Q What benefits will managers/owners like myself obtain from Care Options?

A We believe that Care Options will help care home owners understand consumers better and encourage more confidence about presenting what homes have to offer. Running a care home is, after all, a business and Care Options will be a supportive tool that helps owners market their products to the widest audience possible in what is a competitive market place. Care Options will be available in paper form and online via the EAC or Help the Aged websites. Each home will have an individual entry that will include a photograph and your personally written testimonial (if provided) A simple appraisal process, completed before users begin their search, will identify individual priorities so that homes that are particularly suited to personal wants can be easily short-listed.

Q Isn't it dangerous to suggest that people can choose a care home merely by looking through a database?

A Care Options doesn't set out to make decisions for people and there is no substitute for people visiting homes themselves to get an idea of the all important atmosphere and 'feel' of the home. What Care Options aims to do is to bring a more systematic approach to the business of choosing a home and short-listing those to visit and appraise further. At the same time Care Options will provide education and clarity for the public at a time when they feel most vulnerable and ignorant.

Q There must be costs if Care Options is going to be kept up to date? Who will pay for this database?

A As a wholly charitable alliance Help the Aged and EAC will shoulder the development costs of Care Options. Providing resources for new services is a core principle of Help the Aged's Policy for Older People. Entry onto the database is totally free to homes and the Care Options service will be free of charge for the general public. Beyond this the alliance anticipate a great deal of demand for the Care Options package from professionals, local authorities, other voluntary and commercial organisations; many companies already subscribe to EAC's existing database and related services and it is to be expected that this will grow as Care Options exposure grows.



THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please return it as soon as possible in the freepost envelope provided

A STAMP IS NOT NEEDED

Don't forget your photograph!

Putting it out and about

Research has shown that Yellow Pages is the most widely used resource amongst people looking for a care home. What an indictment! For Care Options to meet its objectives – to empower older people by providing them with unbiased information about the choices available - it will need to establish a pre-eminent position as the definitive, first stop source of information about care homes.

A sustained campaign of promotion and advertising Care Options, in a multitude of environments, for example, GP's surgeries, hospital wards, post offices, libraries, retail outlets, and through media including local newspaper features and magazines, that older people and their families are likely to see, will ensure high awareness. The Care Options information will be available, in paper form through the post, by telephoning Help the Aged's Seniorline or EAC's information line. Also, a website will provide a gateway to Care Options online, for people able to access a computer. Though not a short term possibility, the alliance will be evaluating whether a face-to-face advice service might be feasible in due course.

IF FOR ANY REASON YOU HAVE NOT FILLED IN YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE DO IT NOW! HELP US TO HELP YOU.