

# Accommodation options for older people who have dementia

There is an increasing range of options available for the accommodation and care of people who have dementia. Some people with dementia are now being diagnosed at an early stage when they remain relatively able and can make their own decisions. Early diagnosis increases the possibility of there being a range of accommodation options available. Everyone is different and what is right for a particular person will depend on their personality, preferences, particular difficulties and circumstances, as well as those of their family and friends.

## The range of accommodation options

The available options will vary in different areas, but may include:

- Remaining at home with increasing support.
- Moving to sheltered or retirement housing, with care and support, possibly arranged through social services, or independently with private agencies.
- Moving to sheltered or retirement housing with provision of on site care and support for people who have dementia (generally called extra-care housing but sometimes also referred to as assisted living). The amount of

this type of housing is currently quite limited.

- Moving to a care home providing personal or personal and nursing care. People in intermediate or later stages of dementia moving to a care home are likely to need to be placed in a home registered for dementia care.

Providers of either form of sheltered housing are likely to want a prospective resident to have an assessment, with a view to identifying whether or not their needs are likely to be appropriately met in the scheme.

## Assistive technology

may be available to help in any of the above settings. Assistive technology can be supportive, preventive or responsive, ranging from something as simple as using a diary or reminder notices, a remote controlled clock, or more advanced, such as sensors to detect where a person is. For more information on assistive technology for people with dementia, please visit the 'atdementia' website [www.atdementia.org.uk](http://www.atdementia.org.uk)

## What accommodation options are available for people with dementia in my area?

EAC maintains the national database of sheltered and retirement housing, both

to buy and to rent, including extra-care housing providing dementia care. We also have information on residential and nursing homes and can advise you of those that provide dementia care. For details contact our Advice Line on 0800 377 7070 or visit our website at [www.firststopadvice.org.uk](http://www.firststopadvice.org.uk) The website links directly to reports by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), who inspect all care homes and domiciliary care agencies (which provide care for people in their own homes, including extra-care housing schemes).

### Issues to consider when thinking about appropriate options for a particular person

- What are the difficulties for the person living in their current home? Could these be resolved through the provision of aids, adaptations, assistive technology or with care and support being provided in their own home, arranged by social services, or independently through private agencies?
- Does the person have a good support network, family, friends or neighbours? Do they risk losing good informal support if they move?
- Does the person have strained relationships because of behaviour arising from their dementia? Is it necessary to find a way of reducing pressure on family, friends or neighbours?
- What understanding does the person have of their own situation? Are they sufficiently able to learn their way

around a new environment and to benefit from the greater degree of independence in sheltered housing, as opposed to a care home?

- Has the person's dementia reached a stage which makes the risk of moving to sheltered housing too great, because of the possibility of increased confusion and disorientation in an unfamiliar environment?
- Would the person be likely to benefit from increased support living in sheltered or retirement housing, where dementia care services are available from a care team on site?
- Is the person afraid of being alone or extremely confused and disorientated? Do they need the high level of supervision and support that could be offered in a residential care or nursing home?

### Assessment and advice

In most situations, it will be wise to seek a thorough medical and social assessment of the person's needs and the likely progress of their condition when considering their accommodation options. The person's GP will be able to advise and to refer them to a psychiatrist for Older People (psychogeriatrician) or memory clinic. Their local authority social services department can arrange to carry out a comprehensive assessment of need, taking into account both the person's medical and social needs. Everyone who may be in need of community care support is entitled to an assessment, regardless of their financial means.

## What about the future?

There can be no absolute guarantee in any care or accommodation setting that someone will be able to stay there for life. Some people may become so physically and/or mentally disabled that a move to hospital or a setting with an extremely high level of care becomes essential. Occasionally care homes close down. Particularly if a move to sheltered or extra-care housing is being considered, it is worth asking about the policy regarding residents whose health or abilities deteriorate. Is there an intention to provide a 'home for life' if this is reasonably practicable? Do the service providers have strong links with the local mental health services, both medical and social? Is it likely that the services of a community psychiatric nurse (CPN) may be available to assist in advising carers how best to manage problematic behaviours, if the person's condition deteriorates?

General advice and information is available from the helplines listed below. When a change of accommodation is being considered, you are strongly advised to talk to professionals who actually know the person and their circumstances.

## Further information

### Admiral Nursing Direct

Tel: 0845 257 9406

A charity providing Admiral Nursing – a specialist nursing intervention.

### Alzheimers Society

Helpline: 0845 300 0336

Website: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

Information on all forms of dementia and a range of factsheets. Provision of local services in many areas.

### Assistive Technology and how to obtain it

Websites: [www.atdementia.org.uk](http://www.atdementia.org.uk)  
[www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk) (a DLF website)

### Dementia<sup>UK</sup>

6 Camden High Street, London, NW1 0JH. Tel: 020 7874 7200 Fax: 020 7874 7219

E-mail: [info@dementiauk.org](mailto:info@dementiauk.org)

Website: [www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org)

Focused on meeting the needs of carers and supporters of people with dementia and Training for professionals and carers of people with dementia.

### Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)

Helpline: 0845 130 9177

Website: [www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

Information on aids and adaptations for people with disabilities, including assistive technology.

### FirstStop Advice

Advice line: 0800 377 7070

Website: [www.firststopadvice.org.uk](http://www.firststopadvice.org.uk)

Comprehensive information and advice about housing and care for older people, including care fees planning.

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