

Accommodation options for older people who have dementia

Introduction

If you are concerned about dementia then it is important that you visit your GP as soon as possible. Advancements in medicine have made it easier to obtain an early diagnosis of dementia which is vital in ensuring that the person concerned can be involved in decision making and planning for their future care needs.

The range of accommodation

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

- Remaining at home with increased support, this could be done through adapting your home or carer visits to help with personal care;
- Moving to sheltered or retirement housing where care and support can be arranged through social services or 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);
- Moving to a care home providing personal and/or nursing care. People in intermediate or later stages of dementia

that move into a care home are likely to need to be placed in a home registered for dementia care.

Providers of any form of sheltered accommodation 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

Technology can be supportive, preventive or responsive, ranging from something as simple as using reminder notices or a remote controlled clock, to more advanced tools such as sensors or telehealth equipment that allows you to monitor a person's health. For more information on assistive technology for people with dementia, you may wish to visit the 'atdementia' website or contact the Disabled Living Foundation.

For contact details, please see the 'useful organisations' section of this factsheet.

Accommodation in your area

EAC maintains a national database of sheltered and retirement housing, both to buy and to rent, including extra-care housing that may provide dementia care.

We also have information on residential and nursing homes, including those registered to provide dementia care and our website allows you to view the most recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection report for each care home.

This database can be viewed online at www.housingcare.org

Issues to consider when thinking about appropriate options for someone

What are the difficulties for the person living in their current home? Could these be resolved through the provision of aids, adaptations or care and support at home arranged by social services or 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 by living in sheltered or retirement housing, where dementia care services may be 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 care home?

Assessment and advice

In most situations, it will be wise to seek a thorough 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 refer on to a psychiatrist for Older People (psychogeriatrician) or memory clinic.

The social services department of the local authority can also arrange to carry out a comprehensive assessment of need, taking into account 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; a person's needs may increase to the point where a move to a hospital or a setting with a high level of care becomes essential.

If a move to sheltered or extra-care housing is being considered, it is worth asking:

- What is the policy regarding residents whose health deteriorates?
- Is there an intention to provide a 'home for life'?
- Are there strong links with local mental health services?
- Are the services of a community psychiatric nurse (CPN) available to assist residents and their carers?

Further advice and information is available from the helplines listed at the end of this factsheet, but when a change of accommodation is being considered, you are strongly advised to talk to professionals who know the person and their circumstances.

Other things to consider

A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is a document that allows someone else to make decisions about your finances or welfare, should you be unable to do so in the future. An LPA must be set up whilst you still have capacity, although you can specify that it is not to be used whilst you can make decisions, if that is your wish.

Having an LPA set up will make it easier for your family and friends to manage your affairs and ensure that decisions are being taken in your best interests.

A Court appointed deputy can also make decisions on a person's behalf if they are no longer able to do so and have not made provision through an LPA. This is generally a more costly and lengthy.

An appointee is someone who receives benefit payments from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on behalf of someone who does not have the capacity to manage their own finances.

Appointeeship is free and can usually be set up quite quickly, this can be a good option for people who have lost capacity and whose income is made up mainly, or entirely, of state benefits.

Further information can be found in our factsheet on 'Arrangements for making decisions for other people'.

Useful organisations

Age UK

Tel: 0800 678 1602

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

A wide range of information, including a guide on caring for someone with dementia.

Alzheimer's Society

Tel: 0333 150 3456

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Information on all forms of dementia and a range of factsheets.



Alzheimers Scotland

Tel: 0808 808 3000 (24 hour)

Website: www.alzscot.org

At dementia (assistive technology)

Websites: www.atdementia.org.uk

Dementia UK

Tel: 0800 888 6678

Website: www.dementiauk.org

Focused on meeting the needs of carers and supporters of people with dementia

Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)

Tel: 0300 999 0004

Website: www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

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

Independent Age

Tel: 0800 319 6789

Website: www.independentage.org

Provides free information and advice on issues affecting older people; also publish a guide on living with dementia.

MIND

Tel: 0300 123 3393

Website: www.mind.org.uk

The leading charity in England and Wales, with expertise in all areas of mental health.

Office of the Public Guardian

Tel: 0300 456 0300

Website:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-public-guardian

Registers and monitors all powers of attorney that are set up in England or Wales.

**About EAC Information
and Advice**

Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC)

We are a national charity that aims to help older people ensure their home will meet their needs and lifestyles as they age.

Our website www.HousingCare.org contains a huge amount of useful information, whether you want to plan for 'staying put' successfully or are considering moving home.

We also offer a free information and advice service to answer questions, talk about any help or care needs, and advise on the costs of housing or services and how to meet them.

EAC Advice

Provided in partnership with Bassetlaw Action Centre and supported by the OneFamily Foundation

Tel: **0800 377 7070**

Email: enquiries@eac.org.uk

Hours: 9am - 3pm, Monday – Friday



Bassetlaw



Centre