

FirstStop

WARWICKSHIRE

Advice on housing and care options for older people in Warwickshire



Warwickshire
County Council





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Advice on housing options for older people in Warwickshire

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Introduction

***FirstStop
Warwickshire is an
advice service to
help older people
maintain their
independence and
live comfortably at
home in later life.***

This guide is an introduction to services in Warwickshire that can help older people live more comfortably or independently at home, and the options available to those who decide to move in later life. It is written for older people who rent their current homes as well as those who are owner-occupiers, regardless of their income or savings.

Each section in this guide suggests some points you may like to think about before deciding what is best for you, and provides information about what is available and where to go for further advice. The 'Useful Organisations' section at the end of this guide gives contact details. You can contact FirstStop Warwickshire by calling the freephone telephone line on 0800 377 7070 Or, you can look through all the information about housing options for older people on the website www.firststopadvice.org.uk. If you prefer, you can make an appointment for one of our team of local housing advisers to visit.

FirstStop also operates nationally, so if you would like to move to another part of the UK, or want information to help an older relative who lives outside Warwickshire, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Helping you to stay put

If you are finding it difficult to manage in your home, but would really prefer not to move, there may be ways to make your life easier and safer.

If you have recently been unwell, or are coming out of hospital, you may be concerned about how you will cope in the future. There are a range of options that might be available, and a range of organisations that may be able to help you, depending on your needs and circumstances. The 'Useful Organisations' section in this guide gives contact details for the organisations, services, grants and schemes mentioned. You can contact FirstStop Warwickshire for further advice.

General

If you are finding it difficult to cope with daily tasks or think you need home care, special equipment or meals or any other type of support, contact Warwickshire Adult Social Care (or the hospital social worker if you are in hospital) and ask for an assessment of your care needs. Adult Social Care services will also be able to explain what, if anything, you might be expected to pay towards the costs of any support it agrees that you need.

Condition or layout of your home

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs):

These are not-for-profit organisations set up to help older or disabled home owners and private tenants arrange and pay for repairs, improvements and adaptations to their homes. HIAs or other local agencies sometimes also run small repairs or handy person schemes. These may vary in the range and the size of jobs they can do.

Helping you to stay put

Repairs: If your property is in poor repair and you are a tenant, you should report the repair to your landlord. If you have difficulty getting your landlord to carry out necessary repairs you should contact the Environmental Health Department of your local council or Private Sector Housing Team. If you are a home owner, or a private tenant who is responsible for certain repairs you may be able to get help from your local HIA or District/Borough Council. If you are arranging repairs yourself, you may want to use TrustMark to find a reputable builder. TrustMark is a scheme supported by the government, the building industry and consumer groups to help you find reliable, trustworthy tradespeople.

Adaptations and equipment: Equipment or adaptations to your home can sometimes make a real difference to your ability to live independently. If you are having difficulty using the bathroom or getting to the toilet, Adult Social Care services may be able to provide grab rails, bath seats or portable equipment. If these do not solve the difficulty, other changes to the bathroom, or putting in a downstairs toilet or a stair lift may be possible. A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) may be available to help with the costs if you are assessed as needing major adaptations like these. Contact Adult Social Care for an

occupational therapy assessment or your local Home Improvement Agency for advice and possible assistance.

Heating: If you are a home owner or private tenant, are 60 or over and get a means-tested or disability benefit you may be eligible for the Warm Front scheme. This can provide advice and a range of energy efficiency, insulation and heating measures, including assistance to install central heating or replace a boiler. A grant may be available, worth up to £3500 (£6000 if the central heating is oil-fired).

Alarm system: An emergency alarm could be installed which would allow you to call for help 24 hours a day if you have an accident or are unwell. Your local authority will have a service, and alarm systems are also available through charities and commercial providers (sometimes these systems are called 'telecare').

Telecare: Other telecare equipment (assistive technology) is being developed that can help people remain independent or live more safely e.g. sensors to detect intruders, or presence of gas or carbon monoxide, smoke or fire, flooding, or drops in temperature. The equipment can also monitor for movement (or lack of it), falls, doors being opened (including the fridge door), taking medication etc.

Home safety check: Your Home Improvement Agency (HIA) or other local agencies may also be able to carry out a home safety check to

Safety and Security

Social needs

Helping you to stay put

help you identify changes you could make to reduce the risk of accidents or falls.

Security: The Crime Prevention Officer (CPO) at your local police station can give advice on security if you feel unsafe in your home. There are schemes all over the UK that provide and fit home security equipment, such as locks, chains and spyholes, and the CPO should have information on what is available in your local area.

Social activities: Age Concern Warwickshire can give you information about social activities, visiting schemes or information services.

Homeshare: In a few areas there are homeshare schemes. These aim to match people who need accommodation and are willing to give some help, with older or disabled people who are willing to share their home and are looking for some support or companionship. The support cannot cover personal care, such as help with dressing. Homeshare International can give some guidance to those who want to set up a private homeshare arrangement, but there are a lot of points to consider so it is recommended to take advice on all the legal issues.

Community Transport: If you are finding it difficult to get around or get to the shops or local amenities, there may be community transport or Dial-a-Ride services in your area. Community transport services vary from area to area.

FirstStop

FirstStop Warwickshire Advice: 0800 377 7070
www.firststopadvice.org.uk

Health

Shopmobility: Shopmobility schemes hire out or lend manual wheelchairs, powered wheelchairs and powered scooters to anyone who needs help getting around. Shopmobility centres are usually located in a town centre or shopping centre, enabling people to go shopping and to visit leisure and commercial facilities. Each scheme varies, so it is important to contact the scheme you wish to use before you go. For example, in some centres you need to book in advance; some services are free, but some centres make a charge. But you do not have to be registered disabled, or hold a 'Blue Badge' to use the service, just have mobility problems.

Health: Your doctor can give advice on managing your health conditions, or arrange for you to see a community nurse, health visitor or other support such as Falls Prevention initiatives. Your health centre or doctor's surgery should have details.

Finance

Benefits: If you are finding it difficult to manage financially, the Pension Service or your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) could check that you are claiming all the benefits that you are entitled to.

Equity Release: If you own your own home, you may wish to consider releasing some of the equity to adapt your home or carry out necessary repairs. The Home

Helping you to stay put

Improvement Trust, a not-for-profit organisation, offers an equity release for repairs, improvements or adaptations. You are strongly advised to take independent financial and legal advice before buying any equity release product.

Wanting or needing to move on

You may decide that you no longer wish to remain in your present home and that you want to move on, or it may not be possible to adapt it to meet your needs, or you may need more care and support than can be provided in your present home.

Your options might be:

moving to a home that suits your needs better e.g. with no stairs or near shops, public transport or supportive relatives;

living with family;

moving to a sheltered, retirement, extra care or assisted living housing development;

moving to a care home.

When deciding on a move, there are important issues to consider to ensure it is right for you, for example:

think about your personality and the things that are important to you. Will you still be able to do the things you enjoy now?

Are there good public transport links (even if you drive now, you may not be able to in the future)?

Is there access to local amenities?

If you decide to move to a different area, would you miss your friends and neighbours?

If you move in with family, what would happen if the family circumstances changed?

If you move to sheltered or retirement housing, would you be able to take your pet with you? Would you be happy in accommodation occupied exclusively by older people?

Wanting or needing to move on

Moving if you are a tenant

If you are a local authority or housing association tenant you can approach your landlord and ask for a transfer to a more suitable property or ask for details of mutual exchange schemes. You can also use the Homeswapper service.

Moving if you are a home owner

Think about all the things that make your present home unsuitable for you now, ask local estate agents how much your current home is worth, then approach estate agents in the area you want to move to and ask them to send details of properties that match your requirements and budget.

Living with the family

You may think about moving in with family but it is worth considering the following:

will you still have access to friends and other relatives?

will you have access to local or social amenities?

will you be able to maintain your independence?

what would happen if the family relationship broke down?

what would happen if the family had to move?

what would your legal rights be to live there?

**Moving to
sheltered or
retirement
housing**

**Moving
to a care
home**

what are the financial arrangements?

If you put some of your money into the property will you be able to get your money back if the arrangement does not work, you want to move or you need to go into a care home later?

It would be advisable to take legal and financial advice before moving in with family, and to consider having a written agreement about how to address disputes, and how to end the arrangement if necessary.

You may prefer to consider moving to sheltered or retirement housing. The next section describes the types of retirement housing and support available and gives information on renting and buying.

If you feel that other options will not meet your care needs you may wish to consider moving to a care home. Or, you may have been assessed as needing a care home place. This option is discussed later in the guide.



Sheltered or retirement housing

Sheltered housing (often called retirement housing) is designed to meet the needs of older people. Most sheltered or retirement housing has a scheme manager (warden) and an emergency alarm (careline) service.

These schemes often have shared facilities that everyone can use, such as a lounge, laundry, guest flat and garden. Meals are not normally provided but a few schemes offer a restaurant or can arrange a hot meal.

There are many different types of sheltered or retirement housing schemes, both to rent and to buy. Schemes usually consist of between 15 and 60 self-contained homes which may be bedsits (studios), 1 or 2-bedroom flats, bungalows, or even luxury apartments.

There is a minimum age for residents, usually 60, sometimes 55 and very occasionally 50. This type of housing appeals to people who like living independently but want the reassurance of knowing that help is on hand if there is an emergency, or who want the possibility of socialising with people of a similar age.

Over recent years there have been many changes to the way the scheme manager service is delivered, and the role varies considerably between schemes. Generally, the scheme manager is expected to:

manage the scheme and respond to the emergency alarm when on site;

get to know the residents and make sure they know about local services;

provide some support him/herself;

encourage residents to ask for more support from statutory and voluntary organisations when it is needed.

Scheme managers generally do not provide personal care for residents, or carry out tasks like shopping or housework. Some scheme managers live on-site, but most do not. Even if they live on-site they are usually only on duty during normal weekday office hours.

The availability of an emergency alarm service though, offers reassurance that help is at hand round-the-clock if needed. By pressing a button on a pendant or pulling a cord, a message is relayed to the scheme manger (if on duty) or to a monitoring centre staffed 24 hours a day. If help is needed, the scheme manager will attend or the centre will alert relatives or friends, or contact your GP or the emergency services.

Housing with Care (Extra Care Housing)

Extra care housing is housing designed with the needs of frailer, older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support on site. It may also be known as very sheltered housing or assisted living. There are also 'close care' schemes where retirement housing is built on the same site as a care home and a range of services may be available.

Retirement villages

Choosing sheltered or retirement housing

Sheltered or retirement housing

Properties can be rented, owned or occasionally part owned/part rented. There is a limited amount of extra care housing in most areas and many rental providers set eligibility criteria, which applicants have to meet.

People who live in extra care housing have their own self contained homes. The services and facilities provided may vary a lot but typically they may include 24-hour emergency support, some personal care, domestic support, a restaurant/dining room, lounges, laundry facilities and possibly a specialist bathroom.

If you are thinking about a move to extra care housing, check what care services are available, whether they meet your needs, how they are organised, how they are paid for and whether you are eligible for financial help.

Retirement villages are larger complexes and generally offer more leisure and care facilities than ordinary sheltered or retirement housing.

Once you have decided to move to sheltered or retirement housing, you will want to consider which features are important to you.

If possible, visit several schemes and meet the scheme manager and other residents.

Location: Are there shops, banks, parks, doctors, pubs nearby? Are there hills to climb or busy roads to negotiate?

Sheltered or retirement housing

Transport: How good are public transport links? Is parking available?

What are the communal facilities?

Are social events organised?

Are pets allowed?

Facilities: Is there a lift? Are doorways and corridors wide enough for walking frames and wheelchairs? Are doors and windows easy to operate and light switches and electric sockets easy to reach? Is there space and a charging facility for mobility scooters?

How good is the insulation? Is there noise from the lift, communal lounge, laundry or neighbours?

How secure is the main entrance (if there is one) and your own front door? Are there security locks on the windows?

Is there a residents' or tenants' association?

What are the rent, service and support charges and what do they cover?

Are any furnishings or appliances provided?

What type of heating system is there and how is it controlled?

What happens if you become frail or develop dementia and begin to need more help than the scheme provides?



Renting sheltered or retirement housing

Renting from Local Authorities and Housing Associations

Most sheltered or retirement housing for rent is provided by your local council and by housing associations, but there are some charitable and private sector providers with places to rent.

They generally aim to offer places to people in the greatest housing need, at rents which are affordable – perhaps paid with the help of Housing Benefit. They set criteria describing who qualifies for their housing and which applicants have the highest priority (often more people apply than they can assist, so they have to decide who to accept and who to turn down). The cost of renting is made up of rent plus a charge to cover the services and support provided. Rents vary significantly between landlords and around the country.

Many landlords will consider applications from owner-occupiers, depending on their circumstances. A lower priority may be given to those who have the resources to buy a retirement flat, particularly if rented accommodation is in short supply. You will need to check your local council if you own your property and want to rent sheltered housing.

To apply for sheltered or retirement housing, contact your local district or borough council housing department who will tell you about the application procedure. Many councils and housing associations have changed the way they allocate properties, and now operate a system called 'choice based lettings'. In many areas there is a combined waiting list and all vacancies are published at the council offices and on the Internet.

Renting sheltered or retirement housing

Applicants have to express an interest in empty properties. You will need to ask for details about how the system works in the area in which you are applying. Help is available in to complete forms or express an interest in a vacancy. Some housing associations may also have a waiting list of their own, so it is a good idea to contact all the providers in the area, to see if you can apply directly to them as well.

Applicants are generally expected to show they are in housing need:

because they are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless; or

because of the physical condition or overcrowding of their present home; or

because of medical and/or social reasons for wanting to move e.g. poor health, disabilities, loneliness, fear or isolation from friends and family; or

if not local already, that they have a good reason for wanting to move to an area, e.g. wanting to be nearer family or close friends.

Other options for renting

Abbeyfield houses are run by voluntary organisations and offer supported housing for between 5 and 12 older people. Each house has a paid house manager and provides two meals a day and support from local

Renting sheltered or retirement housing

volunteers. Residents have their own rooms, often with en-suite facilities. Some Abbeyfield residents are tenants but some have licences (this means the tenure is less secure). If you are interested in an Abbeyfield house, check the tenancy arrangement and seek advice.

Almshouses are independent local charitable trusts that provide affordable housing. Most almshouses have rules as to who they can house. As an almshouse resident you will be the beneficiary of the trust rather than a tenant and will have less security. If you are offered an almshouse property it is advisable to check the requirements of the trust, and what would happen if your needs or circumstances changed.

Private renting is available for a limited amount of sheltered or retirement housing. Most of the properties are in leasehold schemes which accept tenants over the minimum age (55 or 60). You need to check what services are included in the rent and the terms of the tenancy.

Buying sheltered or retirement housing

Prices and types of property vary enormously. A small second-hand flat might be found for under £100,000 in some parts of the country. New properties usually cost more. Luxurious homes on sites with every amenity – swimming pools, golf courses, restaurants – may cost £350,000 or even more.

Once all the properties in a new sheltered or retirement housing scheme have been sold, the ongoing management of the scheme is often transferred to a management company, which may be either commercial or non-profit making. The management company employs the scheme manager and organises the maintenance and cleaning of external and shared areas.

There is usually a minimum age for people living in sheltered or retirement housing (55 or 60) but younger people can often buy properties on behalf of someone who has reached the minimum age.

The scheme manager and shared facilities are paid for through service and support charges. These can range from a few pounds a week to £100 or more a week dependent on the services and amenities provided. In addition you will have to pay ground rent, council tax, water charges, contents insurance, and telephone and fuel bills. Optional home care and meal services will normally be charged for separately.

The majority of properties are sold on a long lease. The lease sets out in a legal and binding form the duties and obligations of both the management company and residents, including any restrictions on the use of the property. It is very important that you understand the implications of all the

Other tenure and product options

Buying sheltered or retirement housing

clauses of the lease. Most management companies are members of The Association of Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM) and are bound by its Code of Practice.

Most leasehold sheltered or retirement housing is offered for sale at the full price on the open market. However, a few organisations operate special arrangements for older people with limited income and insufficient capital to buy at market prices.

Typically these are:

Shared ownership

A small number of housing associations offer the option of buying a part share in a property and paying rent on the balance. The proportion you can buy varies. The rent element may be eligible for Housing Benefit. There will normally also be service and support charges to pay.

Leasehold Schemes for the Elderly (LSE)

These are run by a small number of housing associations and require you to buy 70% of the equity, the remaining portion being owned by the housing association. When you sell, you receive 70% of the market value.

A Lifetime Lease

This product offers an arrangement whereby you buy the right to live in a retirement property for the rest of your life (or lives in the case of a couple).

Buying sheltered or retirement housing

The price is well below the normal purchase price but once you leave the property it reverts back to the company. Lifetime leases are available to people aged 60 and over. Lifetime leases may also be available for non-retirement properties.

Part exchange

A few developers may offer part exchange deals, especially on new properties. These can be very useful but you are advised to compare the price offered with the full market value.

Ensure you are getting all the financial benefits that you are entitled to, especially any supplements to your retirement pension including Pension Credit and Council Tax Benefit. People who are renting sheltered or retirement housing and who have a low income and limited capital may be eligible for Housing Benefit (which could cover rent and some parts of the service charge) and help from the Supporting People Fund (which could cover support costs such as the scheme manager and emergency alarm). Leaseholders in receipt of Pension Credit or on a low income may also be eligible for help with the service charges. Contact the Pension Service, or the Warwickshire Supporting People Team.

Affording sheltered housing, whether buying or renting



Care Homes

Thinking about care

It is often a sudden crisis that sparks off thinking about whether a move to a care home might be necessary. Decisions may have to be made in a hurry and there can often be firm, and sometimes conflicting, advice offered by family, friends and professionals. It can be difficult for the older person as well as everyone else involved to arrive at the best decisions in these circumstances.

Is a care home right for you?

Before deciding to move to a care home, have you:

considered whether it is possible for you to stay in your own home, with care support or adaptations or whether sheltered or retirement housing or extra care housing would meet your needs?

contacted Warwickshire's Adult Social Care services and asked for a needs assessment for services such as home care, meals or respite care?

contacted your doctor to make sure a medical assessment of your needs has been carried out?

been in touch with organisations such as Age Concern Warwickshire to see if there is any way they can support you?

asked Adult Social Care services if they can provide useful equipment if you are finding using the stairs, bath or toilet difficult?

Types of Care Home

asked your local home improvement agency or local council whether repairs or adaptations would make your home more suitable, and explored whether you would be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) or other financial help?

contacted the Pensions Service, Housing Benefit section of your local council, or organisations such as Citizen's Advice Bureau to see if you are getting all the benefits to which you are entitled?

Care homes may be owned and operated by private individuals, companies, not for profit organisations and (some) social care departments. All care homes in England are registered and inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Inspection and reports are available from the home or from CQC.

Care homes providing personal care

These are often called residential homes. They vary in size and facilities. All are expected to provide a room, possibly with en-suite facilities, shared areas, meals, help with personal care such as dressing, supervision of medication, companionship and someone on call at night. Care homes providing personal care give extra support during normal short illnesses but do not provide constant nursing care.

Care Homes

Care homes providing nursing care

These are often called nursing homes. They also vary in size and facilities but all provide personal and nursing care 24 hours a day for people who are bedridden, very frail or have a medical condition or illness that means they need regular attention from a nurse. There is always a qualified nurse on duty.

Care homes for dementia

Older people with dementia may need a care home with an additional category of registration (DE). These were previously known as EMI (Elderly Mentally Infirm) homes and some people still use this term.

Respite care

A stay in a care home does not have to be permanent. You might want to stay in a care home for a short period to give your carer a break, or to build up your strength after an illness. This is called respite care. Some care homes allocate specific beds for respite care; others accept residents for respite if they have a vacancy. You may have to pay towards this cost. If you think you, or any family carer, would benefit from you having some respite care, ask Warwickshire Adult Social Care services for a needs assessment and to explain about any charges for respite care.

Paying for care yourself

Care homes vary in cost, depending on the location and services provided. Fees may range from £350 per week to more than £1,000 per week for a home providing nursing care.

People with very high nursing or medical needs may qualify to have their care fully funded by the NHS under the Continuing Care criteria.

If you are paying your own fees you can choose a home and make your own arrangements. Before doing this, ask Warwickshire Adult Social Care services for a needs assessment, particularly if you may need help with the fees in the future. The care home must provide a written contract at the time you move into the home. If possible, try and arrange a trial stay in a home before making a final decision.

If you are paying your own fees in a care home providing nursing care, the NHS will make a financial contribution subject to assessment of your nursing needs. This sum is paid directly to the home.

If you are paying your own care home fees, you should be eligible for an Attendance Allowance, and should make an application. If you are not already receiving this, contact the Benefits Enquiry Line for a claim pack, or download a form from the Directgov website.

Care Homes

You may also want advice on the best ways of investing your capital to pay for future care. There are ways of meeting care costs using only part of your capital. An Immediate Need Care Fee Payment Plan can provide a regular increasing income for as long as you need care and potentially cap the cost of care from the outset. It is important to seek independent advice from experts with the CF8 qualification. As part of FirstStop Advice we have selected a panel of Care Fees Advisers with the CF8 qualification. These advisers specialise in care funding, can advise on your entitlements from the state and provide financial advice on care plans or other financial products that may be suitable for meeting care costs and, where possible, preserving capital.

If you would like your local care fees adviser to contact you please complete the form at the end of this guide and return it to the address given or complete a form on line at www.firststopadvice.org.uk or, please call the advice line on 0800 377 70 70 if you need help completing it.

Local authority help with the costs of a care home place

Warwickshire Adult Social Care needs assessment and financial assessment

If you need help towards the cost of a care home you should first contact Warwickshire Adult Social Care services and ask for a

needs assessment. This will provide you with information as to whether you meet the council's criteria for a care home and how much they will normally pay for someone with your assessed care needs. They then have to assess your finances (income and savings or capital) to find out how much you might have to pay towards this cost, using a system set by the government. If you are unhappy with any aspect of the assessment, call FirstStop's Advice Line.

Treatment of Capital

The capital limits for assistance with care fees are set in April each year by the government. Warwickshire Adult Social Care services or FirstStop Warwickshire will be able to tell you what the current limits are. From April 2010, the upper capital and savings limit is £23,250. Anyone with capital or savings in excess of this figure will not get any financial help toward the costs of care from Adult Social Care services. From April 2010, savings between £14,250 and £23,250 are assumed to generate a notional income, which are included in the financial assessment together with your other sources of income such as any pensions. Savings of less than £14,250 are ignored.

Care Homes

Treatment of your own home

If you own your own home, its value will be ignored for up to 12 weeks after you become a permanent resident in a care home. This means that if you have less than £23,250 in savings other than your home, Adult Social Care services will help with the fees for the first 12 weeks, but after that your home will be included in the financial assessment unless:

your husband, wife or partner still lives in the house, or

a relative over 60, or under 60 but incapacitated, lives in the house.

The council can use its discretion to disregard the value of your property in other circumstances. Once Adult Social Care services has agreed you need to live in a care home, you should have some choice as to the area and the home to which you move.

If you envisage funding your care yourself, now and into the future, you are free to choose your care home. If you need help with the fees, or envisage you might in the future, you still have a right to some choice as to which home you move to, though there will be a limit on how much the local authority is willing to pay.

Choosing a Care Home

In choosing a care home that will suit you, apart from checking the charges and the contract, you may want to think about the following:

Trial period: Most homes will be happy to accept potential residents on a trial basis, to see whether they can meet your needs, and for you to see if life in a care home is what you expected.

Level of care: Is the home able to provide the care you need?

Personal needs: Can the home cater for any cultural, spiritual or dietary needs you have? If you are a smoker, what is the smoking policy?

What about your personality: Do you like a routine and a setting where a lot of things are done for you; or would you prefer to be encouraged to be as independent as possible, and expect to be consulted about most decisions?

Location: Is the home near enough to family and friends so you will be able to have visitors?

Social activities: What activities are organised, and how often? Will you be able to keep up any hobbies you are still able to do?

Meals: What are the meals like? How much choice is there?

Care Homes

Facilities: If the shared lounge has a TV how and by whom are the programmes chosen? Is there a separate room where there is no television, for those who want to be quiet, or to be able to have conversation with visitors?

Pets: Can you bring your pet if you have one? Does the home have a pet?

Is there a residents' or relatives' association or committee?

What happens if you become more frail or your needs change?

National variations

This information relates primarily to the situation in England. For further advice on choosing and funding care, including the regulations in the other parts of the UK, contact the national FirstStop Advice Line (0800 377 7070).

Your Rights

Sometimes you may be concerned about the quality of a service you or a friend or relative is receiving or things do not go as you would wish, and you may want to challenge a decision made by a council or health authority or make a complaint.

Most organisations have a formal complaints procedure, but it may be possible to resolve things informally by initially raising your concerns with the relevant department or member of staff. You can do this in person, by telephone or in writing. You should keep a note of the person you speak to or make a copy of your letter, and ask that they write to you confirming that your complaint has been received and detailing who is dealing with it.

If you are still not satisfied you can make a formal complaint using the official complaints procedure of the organisation.

If you would like to talk it over with an advisor at any stage contact FirstStop Warwickshire's Advice Line.



Useful Organisations

PLEASE NOTE:

Although 0800 numbers are free from a land line, they may attract a premium from mobiles.

Age UK Warwickshire

Tel: 01926 458 100

Website: www.ageukwarwickshire.org.uk

Association of Retirement Housing Managers

020 7463 0660 www.arhm.org

Benefits Enquiry Line

(for Attendance Allowance Claim Pack)

0800 882 200

Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB) in Warwickshire

0844 855 2322

www.adviceguide.org.uk or

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

0845 015 0120 www.cqc.org.uk

Directgov

www.directgov.co.uk

Disabled Living Foundation

0845 130 9177 www.dlf.org.uk

Foundation for Assistive Technology

020 7253 3303 www.fastuk.org

Home Improvement Agencies

Nuneaton, Bedworth & North Warwickshire

02476 376 342

Rugby 01788 533 867

Warwick & Stratford Districts 01926 458 125

Home Improvement Trust

0800 783 7569 www.houseproud.org.uk

Useful Organisations

Homeshare

Bristol 0117 908 3045 London 020 7376 4558
www.homesharelondon.com
Oxfordshire 01235 469 547
West Sussex 01243 752 026
Wiltshire 01225 785 964
www.naaps.org.uk & www.homeshare.org

HomeSwapper

www.homeswapper.co.uk

Independent Financial Advisors (IFAs)

IFA PROMOTION www.unbiased.co.uk

Lifetime Leases

HOMEWISE
0800 043 4488 www.homewise.co.uk

National Federation of Shopmobility

0845 644 2446 www.shopmobilityuk.org

Pension Service

0845 606 0265 www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

Private renting

GIRLINGS RETIREMENT OPTIONS
0800 525 184 www.girlings.co.uk

TrustMark

01344 630 804 www.trustmark.org.uk

Warm Front

0800 3162 805 www.warmfront.co.uk

Warwickshire County Council

Adult Social Care service
01926 410 410 www.warwickshire.gov.uk
Supporting People Team 01926 742 965



FirstStop Warwickshire provides housing and care advice to older people, their families and carers. It is a joint initiative by Warwickshire County Council, the county's five District and Borough Councils and a group of national advice services.

This service is primarily provided by FirstStop Advice, led by Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC), an external partnership to Warwickshire County Council. Please contact their advice line or see their website for details of their Privacy Policy.

We aim to provide high quality, independent information and advice to help people maintain their independence and live comfortably at home in later life. We provide guidance on the services available to help you manage better at home, including care services, as well as support to help you move home if you prefer.

Our service is available free to all older people and, where appropriate, people with disabilities in Warwickshire. This includes tenants as well as those who own their own home, regardless of their income or savings. It is also free to their families and carers and to professionals.

A visiting housing options service is available for those who would prefer this.

Visit us online at:

www.firststopadvice.org.uk

Call the advice line: 0800 377 7070

Open Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm

Calls may be monitored or recorded.

Our service is supported financially by the **Department of Communities and Local Government.**

