

*Finding The Right Care Home*

# How do you find the right care home for your loved one – and you?

It can be tough to make the decision that a care home is now the right choice for your loved one, even when you know it's absolutely the best thing for them.

Doubts and worries and feeling that you didn't do enough can sometimes play on your mind. These are completely normal feelings and emotions, but there are ways to cope and handle your feelings and Friends of the Elderly will be with you every step of the way.





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***What do you need to consider? What's going to be the right care home for your loved one – and you? The list goes on and we are here to help.***

Friends of the Elderly

If you feel that you are no longer able to manage your loved one's care needs, sometimes the way forward is to find a care home to ensure they are well looked after and cared for.

At Friends of the Elderly, our care teams are skilled, qualified carers. They are caring, compassionate and attentive. Many of our staff have been with us for over ten years, and are committed to making sure the residents they care for live well in later life.

We know that when the decision to move from home into a care or nursing home has been made, you need to feel confident your loved one will be treated with dignity, will be happy and respected, and above all, well cared for in their new home. Being treated as a person and an individual – rather than an illness or condition - is paramount.

***So, where to start?...***

## **What type of care and care home does your loved one need?**

The first thing you need to identify is the type of care home your loved one needs – a residential care home, a nursing care home or a dementia care home – but what is the difference?

# What is Residential Care?

**The definition of a 'residential care home' is a dwelling or location where people live and in the context of care. This means that residents at a residential care home can treat the home as their own home, living there with easy access to a number of services and support.**

Unlike nursing and dementia care homes, residential care homes do not provide nursing care as residents do not need complex, specialist medical nursing care. However, residential care homes provide not only accommodation and 24-hour personal care, but also support to residents who may find it challenging and tough managing their daily lives at home.

Residential care homes are safe places where residents are cared for according to their needs. This could take the form of things such as help with washing and bathing, dressing, going to the bathroom, managing medication and helping with mobility. Residents may be at a residential care home for a number of reasons, for example, it could be for long or short-term stays, a respite break and even, in some cases, palliative care.

Overall, the purpose of a residential care home is to ensure that people who cannot live independently, but do not need nursing care, are well cared for, treated with dignity and respect and can continue to lead meaningful lives.

At Friends of the Elderly, all our residential care homes support independence and provide assistance with personal and hygiene care, including bathing, washing, toilet visits, skin and nail care, assistance with dressing and undressing, tasty healthy meals and snacks throughout the day plus help with mobility and medication administration.

Each home is dedicated to and supports inclusion, creating fun and meaningful interactions and positive communication. They have wide and varied activities calendars which include a range of social and physical activities such as interactive tables, exercise classes, arts and craft sessions, quizzes, film nights, musical entertainment and much more.



## What is Nursing Care?

**If your loved one has a medical condition that requires 24 hour, seven days a week care that cannot be provided at home, then a nursing home may be the perfect place for them.**

In simple terms, nursing care is care that is delivered and managed by registered general nurses who provide effective care for residents and support them through any health issues or illnesses.

Nursing care within a nursing care home is focused and tailored to residents with specialist requirements relating to their medical needs. For example, a resident may have a medical condition or illness that requires frequent and ongoing medical attention.

At Friends of the Elderly, through our registered nurses, our nursing care homes provide 24/7 support, help and assistance to our residents who have complex medical needs, alongside personal living requirements. For example, conditions including caring for residents who need intensive rehabilitative care who are recovering following a stroke or heart attack, supporting residents who need peg feeding, helping residents with physical disabilities and looking after those with long-term health conditions.

Our registered nurses are supported by health care assistants, who are trained to identify symptoms and changes to residents' conditions. Our Care Home Teams work closely with GPs, who visit our care homes and conduct weekly ward rounds to discuss the needs of our residents.

Our nurses and care staff are also trained in conditions and illnesses that effect older people. This training is continuous and is regularly updated to reflect and adhere to current best practice.



# What is Dementia Care?

**Dementia is actually a collection of symptoms which affects mental processes in a number of ways from impaired, diminished communication to memory loss.**

Dementia care refers to caring for all stages of the conditions defined as dementia. These include Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia with Lewy Bodies, Vascular Dementia, Frontotemporal Dementia, Korsakoff Syndrome, Mild Cognitive Impairment and Mixed Dementia.

People who are living with dementia may need to move into a care home for a number of reasons. Their physical and emotional needs may have increased as their dementia has advanced, it could be that they need to move into a specialist care home after being discharged from hospital or because their families or carers can no longer support them.

At Friends of the Elderly we are proud of the approach we have taken to support people living with dementia and have embedded a dementia-friendly culture across the whole charity.

Through our teams and Dementia Champions, we deliver bespoke, tailored care that supports each resident, regardless of their individual capabilities, to continue living independent, fulfilled and happy lives.

Through our dedicated Dementia Champions, we deliver a wide and varied range of support to people living with dementia including building all activities around each individual's preferences, likes, pastimes and hobbies. These include such things as cooking, gardening, arts and crafts, music, reminiscence sessions, Namaste Care, poetry and themed events.



Our teams also encourage people to maintain daily living tasks, for example helping with serving teas and coffees, washing up and even folding laundry. We also provide various sensory activities for those people who are living with more advanced dementia.

We also offer respite care across all our homes, from a couple of weeks to longer stays of a month and more.

# Location, Location, Location

**With our nine dedicated care homes throughout England, one of our homes could be right on your doorstep and we'd love to help you.**

However, it is worth doing a search on the care homes near to where you live to enable you to make an informed decision.

By typing in 'care homes near me' to a search engine, you'll see the closest ones in your vicinity. Secondly, visit [www.carehomes.co.uk](http://www.carehomes.co.uk) Here, you can search a wide range of care homes - including Friends of the Elderly - by location, name, group or owner and even by the Registered Manager's name.

Each care home has a rating, an explanation of its services and a list of reviews. Importantly, you'll be able to see the CQC (Care Quality Commission) rating and download the reports as well. Alternatively, you can view each care homes' CQC by visiting [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

Once you've found a selection of potential care homes that you'd like to visit and consider, remember to double check their location, the area the care home is located in, its facilities, activities and its function – residential, nursing or dementia – and ask yourself, do they have and can they deliver all the needs you're looking for? Not only now, but in the future.

It is also advisable to visit more than one – book a physical, in person visit to have a tour and meet the Care Home Manager; this way you'll get a real feel of the home, be able to see first-hand how the residents are cared for, check out the facilities, rooms and grounds. It is also a good opportunity to ask if they currently have any vacancies and, if not, how long is their waiting list.



***Don't be afraid to ask questions during your visit, every question and answer is valuable.***

Find out as much as you can about each care home you visit, as this will help you make an educated decision. When calling to make your appointment, ask to be sent or emailed a copy of their brochure.

# First Impressions Count...

**First impressions are instant and lasting – and will take a long time to change, if ever. Your first impression when visiting a potential care home for your loved one will, probably, make the decision of whether it's right – or not – for you.**

A care home should be full of life - bright, friendly and welcoming not cold, dull and unpleasant. A good care home will be full of activity, laughter and happiness and good Care Home Teams go the extra mile as they know that what they do is vitally important to their residents and families.

**From the minute you arrive for your visit, to the time you leave, ask yourself:**

- What was the surrounding area like?
- Was there adequate parking with disabled parking spaces?
- Was the care home accessible for wheelchairs and mobility devices?
- Was the care home and its grounds well maintained and tidy?
- Did the care home have outside seating areas?
- Did you receive a warm and friendly welcome when you arrived at reception?
- Was the Care Home Manager knowledgeable about their care home?
- Did the Care Home Manager interact and speak with their residents during your tour? For example, did they say hello or how are you to any residents by name as they showed you around?
- Do you think the Care Home Manager knew his / her residents well?
- What were the bedrooms and communal areas like? Welcoming, warm and comfortable?
- Were the bedrooms and communal areas well decorated?

- What were the other facilities like – dining rooms, activities room, onsite hairdressers, onsite café or tea room, TV lounge?
- Was there plenty of activity and conversations going on among staff and residents?
- Did the residents seem happy and engaged with what they were doing?
- Did you hear laughter?
- Were there enough staff on duty?
- Did any of the Care Home Team say hello?
- Did you see any other visitors?

To help, why not download our handy **Care Home Search Checklist** which covers many more questions you may find useful.

## How can Friends of the Elderly help you?

All Friends of the Elderly care staff are focused on ensuring each and every resident is happy, content, stimulated, feels safe, is listened to and is treated with respect and dignity.

Our nine care homes provide a warm, welcoming, safe and cosy environment and cater for each resident's individual needs.

We can provide respite and permanent care.

If you'd like to find out more, please call **03305 550 378** or visit us at:  
**[www.fote.org.uk](http://www.fote.org.uk)**

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