

Moving to a care home

Moving into long term care can be daunting for anyone and more so when there are no other suitable options. If possible, trying to be positive about a move, offering choice and weighing up the benefits can give a person more control over what is right for them.

In later stage Huntington's disease, some people will move into a care home which offers 24-hour supervision to keep them safe and provide the necessary support and care.

1. What is a care home?

A care home is a place where people can live and be looked after by trained staff day and night in homely surroundings. Care homes were previously known as either nursing or residential homes. They can also provide additional equipment and have trained nurses to give skilled nursing care when you need it. All care homes are registered and inspected by the [Care Inspectorate](#).

2. The Care Inspectorate

The [Care Inspectorate](#) is an independent scrutiny and improvement body for care services in Scotland. It makes sure that people receive high quality care. They have developed a 'scoring' system of 1-6 (6 being the best score possible) to highlight how well a home is performing. They inspect care homes, usually twice a year, and send an Inspection Report to the Care Home Manager outlining what they are doing well and making recommendations. A copy of the home's inspection report can be found on the Care Inspectorate website. Anyone can request a copy of these reports.

When choosing a care home, it is important to consider what is important to you. Think about what you need and want, and look at what is out there for you. You may have an idea of what your expectations are, however there can be big differences between care homes, including fees and opportunities offered. So take time in selecting the one that will suit your lifestyle.

There is no doubt that moving to a care home is a big change however, if planned correctly, this move can be a positive and enjoyable experience. Speaking with your family, Social Worker and HD Specialist may help you to make important decisions. Visit a few places so you are clear about the level of care that you need. There are different types of homes so making up a checklist may be a good starting point for you.

Sample checklist

- ✓ Is the home near my family and friends?
- ✓ Is it close to local amenities and public transport links?
- ✓ Does the home have a nice atmosphere?
- ✓ Is the building well maintained and cared for?
- ✓ What activities are on offer? Are regular outings arranged? Does the home have its own transport?
- ✓ What arrangements are there to safeguard money and valuables?
- ✓ Can my family and friends visit me at any time?
- ✓ What facilities are included in my weekly care costs e.g. hairdressing, entertainment etc?
- ✓ Are there extra charges for anything?
- ✓ What arrangements are there for people who smoke?
- ✓ Are staff knowledgeable about Huntington's disease?
- ✓ Will I always be assisted to attend medical appointments?
- ✓ Can I take my belongings into the home? Are there restrictions on this and what could I expect in my bedroom when I move in?
- ✓ What is in place to ensure that I have my say in the home?

3. Financial planning

One of the biggest questions when someone is moving into long term care is what will it cost. Will you have to sell your home to pay for these costs, and are there extra charges for anything? It is important to find out about all these things before making a final decision. Personal care costs are free in Scotland. For information on financial guidance, visit [CareinfoScotland.scot](https://www.careinfo.scot.nhs.uk). The local authority will carry out a full financial assessment to work out what contribution you will make towards your care. Things that will be taken in to account include any property you own, pensions, benefits and savings.

4. What will it be like living in a care home?

Although it can be difficult having to move, some people feel a sense of relief because they recognise the need for more support. Remember this will be your new home. Across Scotland, there are many people settled and enjoying life in a care home setting. Two positive examples of this are: “I love it here. Staff are brilliant” and “It is absolutely fantastic. I get out all the time, the food is good and I can lie in my bed until lunchtime if I want to. No-one rushes me to get up.”

Nowadays, most homes have single bedrooms with en-suite facilities and, usually, a few items of furniture. You will be able to furnish and decorate your room to your own taste. Bringing items from your own home will personalise your surroundings and help you feel more settled. You will have a named nurse and/or key-worker who will ensure you have everything you need and that you are happy in your new home. They should also make sure that a structured and meaningful day is planned for you. Most care homes organise activities and have an activities coordinator. Outings and social events are also planned. Many homes have their own transport.

Comfortable living areas promote socialisation, if this is what you want. Some people prefer to spend a lot of time in their room. The care home

staff will ensure that you are taken to all your health appointments, however, many of the health professionals now visit care homes, including GPs, dieticians, chiropodists and opticians. All homes have 'open visiting' so your family and friends can come and see you anytime. Often pets are allowed too.

If you are unsure about a care home, ask if you can visit several times before you make your decision. You may want to go and spend the afternoon there and, perhaps, extend this to lunch or evening meal.

5. What if I am not happy there?

If you are unhappy about anything in the care home, you or your family member should discuss this with your named nurse, key-worker or home manager in the first instance if you feel able to do so, you can also contact your care manager or HD Specialist. If you are dissatisfied with how your concern is dealt with, you, your family, or someone who can speak for you can contact the [Care Inspectorate](#).

Useful links

[Care Inspectorate](#)

[Contact a Scottish Huntington's Association HD Specialist](#)

[Scottish Huntington's Association Financial Wellbeing Service](#)

[National and Regional Care Frameworks for Huntington's Disease](#)

[Scottish Huntington's Association Youth Service](#)

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