

Housing

Having somewhere to call home is a basic need we all share. If you are living with Huntington's disease, you may be thinking about what type of house will suit you best in the longer term. This factsheet covers some of the important considerations you might want to make when thinking about where to live.

1. Location

Where you live can be just as important as the house you live in.

Friends and family

It can be helpful to live near to those you care about. If you live with others, then it's likely they will also have views about where you all live. Think about the location that would best serve you all.

Public transport

Access to good public transport is an asset for everyone. When you have Huntington's disease driving can become more difficult over time, so having other ways of getting around means you will still be able to do things that are important to you.

Amenities and activities

Think about how easy it is to access amenities such as shops, GP surgeries, parks and other facilities. Having them nearby will make it easier for you to remain independent.

2. The property

Size

How big a home do you need? If you live alone, then you may decide that having a smaller home will be easier to manage in the longer-term. Balance this up against how much space you realistically need, particularly if you live with others.

Layout and position

Opting for a property without stairs can help future-proof your house, particularly as it's not always safe to have a stair-lift. You may also want to think about the size and shape of your rooms and how easy it is to get around with aids such as a zimmer or wheelchair. You could decide to adapt your home, by installing a walk-in shower for example, so think about whether the property has the space for this. An occupational therapist (OT) can provide advice on changes to your home that could make things easier for you.

Buying/owning your home

Unfortunately, if you have or are at risk of a progressive illness such as Huntington's disease, it can sometimes be more difficult to get a mortgage. You may need to think about basing the mortgage on several peoples' salaries or taking the loan over a shorter period of time.

If you're buying your own home, think carefully about how manageable the repayments will be. Working might get more difficult over time and this could affect your income and ability to pay. Keeping repayments manageable will also make it easier to pay for any adaptations you need in the future. You may also be able to get a grant to help with costs and can contact your local social work department about this.

Renting your home

If you're renting from a housing association, speak to your housing officer early on about what your longer term needs are. If you are considering moving house it could take several months, or even longer, for a suitable property to become available. If you already live in a housing association property that you wish to adapt, you will need to get an assessment from social work before the housing association will make any changes.

If you live in a privately rented property, you may wish to consider trying to acquire a tenancy with a local housing association. It can be easier to make adaptations to these properties. If you rent privately, your landlord must still consider your request to make changes, but sometimes legal issues

mean that making larger structural changes are more difficult. If they are able to make changes, then they may be able to get help with the cost – social work will be able to give advice on this.

Useful links

Find out more about housing rights as someone with a disability at [Shelter Scotland](#).

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

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

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

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