



**Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru**  
**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

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# Care Homes in Wales

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**Your questions answered**



**An independent voice and champion  
for older people**

# The Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales is an independent voice and champion for older people across Wales. The Commissioner and her team work to ensure that older people have a voice that is heard, that they have choice and control, that they don't feel isolated or discriminated against and that they receive the support and services that they need.

The Commissioner wants Wales to be the best place in the world to grow older.

## How to contact the Commissioner:

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# Introduction

Care homes provide accommodation and care for people who need additional support in their daily lives. This includes a room, a shared living environment, meals and personal care, such as washing and dressing. Some care homes are also able to provide nursing care for people with more complex health-related needs.

People can worry about moving into a care home, so we have produced this booklet to give simple answers to common questions that you, or your loved ones, might have if you are looking for, moving into or living in a care home.

Whilst moving into a care home can be an emotional time, there are many positive benefits such as a sense of community, companionship and good quality care.

If you feel you need care, you have a right to an assessment of your care and support needs from your local authority. This is not affected by the level of financial resources you have. An assessment may be a useful way to understand your needs and identify that a care home is the best option.

If you need further information on any of the topics raised, there is a list of useful contacts at the back of this booklet.

# How do I find a care home?

Choosing a care home can be difficult, but it is important to remember that you have a right to choose which care home you live in regardless of who is paying for your care.

The first step is to request a list of care homes from your local authority, which they must give you. If you want to move to another local authority area, information must still be provided to you.

To help you make a decision, you can also read inspection reports, which are published by Care Inspectorate Wales. These reports provide a summary of the quality and safety of a care home.

You can ask your local authority to arrange your care home placement for you even if you have not been assessed by your local authority or if you are fully funding living in a care home.

However, they may require an assessment before arranging your care home placement for you. Your local authority may charge for making arrangements on your behalf.

Alongside the type of care provided by a care home, you may want to think about whether the care home is close to family and friends and what facilities and activities are on offer. Factsheets, checklists and advice lines, provided by charities such as Age Cymru, could also help you to identify

suitable care homes. You might also want to consider visiting a shortlist of care homes and asking the questions that matter to you to help make your decision.

Each care home must produce a written guide in accessible language which provides information on areas such as key staff, fees and costs, terms and conditions, family/carer involvement, making a complaint, advocacy support and accessing healthcare.

Before moving into your care home, an assessment must be carried out to ensure that your chosen care home can meet your needs and you can ask your chosen care home about a trial period before you make a final decision.

There may be situations where your preferred care home is not available, or the urgency of a situation prevents you from planning your move in the ways outlined above. If you are unable to move into your preferred care home and the arrangements are being made through your local authority, they must provide you with a written statement setting out the specific reasons why.

Some care homes may have a waiting list and it is worth bearing this in mind when planning your move to your preferred care home.

In most cases, a person will decide to move into a care home because they need a certain level of care. If you have a partner, you may want to speak to the care home and your local authority about any options for remaining together.

You may need to move to a different care home if your care and support needs change and the care home is unable to meet your needs.

You may therefore also want to ask your care home whether they can accommodate your care needs if they change in the future.

# How will living in a care home be paid for?

Depending on your financial circumstances, you may be asked to pay the full or partial costs of living in a care home or be fully funded by your local authority.

Your local authority will only contribute to the cost of your care home if it has been assessed as the best way to meet your needs. To determine your needs, you can request a care and support assessment from your local authority.

To determine how much you will need to pay, you will need to have a financial assessment. This will be undertaken by your local authority, who must then provide you with a statement setting out the amount you are being asked to pay.

If you own your own home and/or have savings that add up to more than £50,000 (from 1 April 2019)<sup>1</sup>, and you do not have a dependent or spouse living in your house, then you may need to sell your home, or use your savings to fund living in a care home. If you are paying for your own care home, you should be able to continue receiving benefits such as Attendance Allowance.

If you have health needs, you may also be eligible for part funding through 'Funded Nursing Care' or full funding

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<sup>1</sup> £40,000 until 1 April 2019



through 'Continuing NHS Healthcare'. More information about these kinds of funding will be available from your health board.

After you have contributed towards the cost of living in a care home, local authorities must ensure that you are left with a minimum amount of £29.50<sup>2</sup> each week to spend as you wish.

If you are recovering from illness or injury, you will not be charged for up to six weeks of a period of reablement.

If you choose a care home that is more expensive than your local authority would usually pay, and they have offered suitable alternatives, you will need to arrange for the difference to be paid, usually through a family member or friend.

If, however, you have been accommodated in a more expensive care home because your local authority has been unable to find a care home at its usual cost, it is your local authority that must pay the additional cost. The care home contract must specify the fees payable for standard services and any additional services they charge for.

It is important to remember that if there are any changes to your financial situation, or that of the person who is contributing to the cost of your care home, you may need to move to a different care home.

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<sup>2</sup> From April 1 2019

# What information should I receive?

If your local authority has carried out a care and support assessment and/or a financial assessment, they must provide you with a written copy of these. Following an assessment, you must also be involved in the development of your care and support plan, and your local authority must provide you with a copy of this.

Your care home must then work with you to create a plan to outline how you will be supported on a day to day basis. This is called a Personal Plan and is separate from a Care and Support Plan.

Your Personal Plan must include details of your personal preferences and outline how your day-to-day care will be provided, including how your wishes, aspirations, language needs and religious beliefs will be supported.

An initial Personal Plan must be written before you move into the care home and it must be reviewed and updated during the first seven days after you move in.

A copy of your Personal Plan must be provided to you and/or your representative. It must be reviewed and amended as and when required (but at least every three months) to reflect any changes needed to your care and support, or changes regarding what you would like to do or achieve.

You must be given a signed copy of any agreement or contract relating to your care and support, any other

services provided to you, the costs you and/or your local authority will pay and the terms and conditions of the service.

Your care home must produce a clear written guide with information about key staff, fees and costs, terms and conditions, family/carer involvement, making a complaint, advocacy services and accessing healthcare. This should be given to you and copies should be available in the care home. This important information must be clearly and prominently provided and kept up-to-date (including on websites and in response to telephone enquiries).

# Can I have a say in decisions that affect me?

You have the right to be involved in decisions that affect you in relation to your care and support, as well as the things that matter to you.

Your local authority must work with you and listen to your views, wishes and feelings during a care and support assessment or financial assessment, or when a Care and Support Plan is being created. This does not necessarily mean that you will get everything you want, but it means that all decisions about your social care must be developed in genuine partnership with you. If this does not happen, you can make a complaint to social services.

You may need support to help you have your say. Local authorities have a legal duty to consider whether you need advocacy support to put forward your views and wishes, which can be provided by a family member, carer, friend or an independent advocacy service. In some circumstances, you may have a right to an Independent Professional Advocate (IPA). You can ask your local authority about independent advocacy and whether you are entitled to IPA.

Your care home must involve you in the discussions about how your care is delivered, including the creation of your Personal Plan. Your Personal Plan must include enough information to allow staff to meet your care and support needs and help you do what matters most to you.

Examples of this could include what and when you like to eat, or what you enjoy doing.

Your care home must set out in its written guide how it will involve people living there in the day to day running of the care home.

In some cases, a person may lack the capacity to make certain decisions. Where a person lacks capacity, family, friends, carers and other professionals should be involved in the decision-making process and every effort should be made to help people to make decisions for themselves. An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate may be appointed in certain situations to help a person who lacks capacity to have their views and wishes listened to. In other situations, an Independent Professional Advocate may be appointed to this role.

# What activities will I be able to do?

You should be able to continue enjoying activities and hobbies when you have moved into a care home, including getting out and about (with support if needed).

When you have an assessment from your local authority, they should identify the things that matter most to you and work with you to develop a Care and Support Plan. This could include activities, hobbies and interests that are important to you.

This information should then be shared with the care home, so they can plan how to meet your day-to-day care needs and how they can help you do the things you enjoy.

If you move into a care home without an assessment from your local authority, the care home should create a Personal Plan with you when you move in.

Each care home should discuss with residents what they enjoy then organise their own activities, which could include activities such as keeping fit, arts & crafts, musical entertainment and film showings. You can join the activities you choose when you please.

There is no reason why you shouldn't have access to a television, radio or internet in your own room, and your own books or personal items can move in with you.

Some care homes support people to bring their own furniture or pets, and additional services, such as hairdressing, may be also be available. You may wish to talk to the care home about these things when considering moving in.

# Can family and friends visit, and can I come and go as I please?

Living in a care home should be no different to living in your own home.

Your care home must have space for you to meet visitors privately which is separate from your own room (you can refuse visitors if you wish). Care homes must keep a record of all visitors, including their names and who they are visiting.

You should be able to come and go as often as you please, visit friends, go shopping or attend events/social activities, as long as your health allows this.

If you need support to help you to do these things, this should be stated in your Personal Plan, which should set out how your care home will support you to achieve these personal outcomes.

In some cases, a person may lack capacity to make certain decisions and restrictions may need to be put in place to ensure that the person is safeguarded. This could include measures that restrict movement both outside of and within a care home. In these circumstances, there are strict legal procedures that must be followed, known as the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) is undergoing change and may be known by a different name in the future.



Where the person lacks capacity, family, friends, carers and other professionals (such as an independent advocate) should be involved in the decision-making process and every effort should be made to help people to make decisions for themselves.

# How will I access health care?

Living in a care home means that you will have exactly the same rights to access appropriate and high quality health and care services as you did before you moved.

For example, if you have moved into a care home in the same GP catchment area, you should be able to remain with the same practice. If your care home is outside of your GP catchment area, it is likely that you will need to re-register with another service. Most care homes will have a GP service that they work well with.

If you are able to get out and about independently, there is no reason why you can't continue to use the dentist, optician and other health and care services. If this is no longer possible, care homes and the bodies responsible for delivering health services (Health Boards) should ensure that you have access to appropriate, high-quality healthcare services.

Information provided in the care home's written guide must include how the care home supports you to access healthcare services.

# What quality of care can I expect?

You have a right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times by your care home and your local authority.

Staff at your care home must respect your privacy, dignity and confidentiality, and promote your autonomy and independence.

Your care home must also listen to and communicate respectfully with you. Your care and support must be the main focus of staff's attention. You have to be treated with respect and should feel valued.

If you require intimate personal care, your care home must provide this in a dignified way and respect your personal preferences. This should be agreed with you and recorded in your Personal Plan, which should also include information about any use of special aids and/or products. You must be supported to wash and use the toilet as independently as possible.

You should be encouraged to take part in everyday tasks and to contribute your views to help with the running of the service if you choose. Technology and specialist equipment must be accessible so you can call for assistance where required and manage your own needs where possible.

Your care home must ensure that care and support is delivered in a positive and caring way and staff should take time to get to know you. Staff must be trained to

understand and respond appropriately to those who have complex needs and must be able to recognise when a person is in pain and know how to manage this. They must also be trained to communicate with, and respond appropriately to, people living with dementia and/or sensory loss.

There should be consistency in care and support staff, and you must be told about staff changes which affect you.

# What should I do if I am unhappy?

If you want to provide positive feedback or constructive comments to your care home you can do this directly to the staff or manager.

You can also raise concerns or complaints directly with your care home - details of how to do this must be set out in the care home's written guide.

Your care home must have effective arrangements in place for identifying, investigating and acting on complaints, including providing a written report to you. Your care home must act in an open and transparent way with residents and their representatives.

If you are concerned about the quality of care provided at your care home, you can also raise these concerns with your local authority.

Providing feedback, raising a concern or making a complaint should not impact upon the care you receive at a care home, or the way that you are treated by your local authority.

When dealing with your local authority, if you feel that your rights have not been upheld or that the local authority has not listened to your views, wishes and feelings, you can make a complaint through their complaints procedure.

Your local authority must follow specific processes and timescales when dealing with your complaint and will need to consider what support it can offer you, including advice, assistance and advocacy.

If you have pursued the internal complaints processes of the organisations involved and are still unhappy, you have the right to escalate your complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

# Useful Contacts

## Find your local authority:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

## Find your health board:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/ourservices/directory>

## Age Cymru

Mariners House  
Trident Court  
East Moors Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5TD

**08000 223 444**

[advice@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advice@agecymru.org.uk)

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/>

## Alzheimer's Society Wales

16 Columbus Walk  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff  
CF10 4BY

**0300 222 1122**

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/wales>

## Care Inspectorate Wales

Responsible for registering, inspecting and taking action to improve the quality and safety of care services.

Welsh Government office  
Rhydycar Business Park  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF48 1UZ

**0300 7900 126**

**ciw@gov.wales**

**<https://careinspectorate.wales/>**

## Carers Wales

Unit 5  
Ynys Bridge Court  
Cardiff CF15 9SS

**0808 808 7777**

**advice@carersuk.org**

**<https://www.carersuk.org/wales>**

## Citizens Advice Wales

**03444 77 20 20**

Find your local Citizens Advice Bureau:

**<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/>**