PODPLAN

Glossary of Terms

Understanding the language of later life

Care, housing and legal services often use unfamiliar language. This glossary explains common terms to help you understand your options and ask the right questions.

Some legal and care arrangements differ across the UK. Where a definition applies specifically to England, or England and Wales, this is noted. Housing descriptions can also vary between providers, so always check what a particular service includes.

A

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

Everyday tasks involved in looking after yourself, such as eating, washing, dressing, using the toilet and moving around. A needs assessment considers whether you can manage these tasks safely and what help you need.

Advance Statement

A written record of your wishes, preferences, beliefs and values about future care. It helps guide decisions if you cannot make or communicate them yourself. In England and Wales, an advance statement is not legally binding, but must be considered when making decisions in your best interests. It is different from an advance decision to refuse treatment.

Age-Exclusive Housing

Housing restricted to people above a specified age. It may include shared facilities, such as a lounge or garden, but does not necessarily provide personal care or on-site support. Check the age restrictions, services and charges for each development.

Allied Health Professionals (AHPs)

Healthcare professionals who assess, treat and support people in areas such as mobility, communication, nutrition and everyday activities. Examples include physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dietitians, podiatrists and speech and language therapists.

Alzheimer's Disease

A disease that damages the brain and is the most common cause of dementia. It can affect memory, thinking, communication and the ability to manage everyday activities.

Assisted Living

A term often used for housing where people have their own home with access to care or support. It may also be called extra care housing or housing with care. The support available varies, so check what is included and what costs extra.

Assistive Technology

Equipment, devices or software that help someone manage everyday activities, communicate or stay safe and independent. It includes both simple aids and electronic technology, such as adapted cutlery, reminder devices and personal alarms.

Authorised Person

In England's council direct-payment system, someone who can request and manage direct payments for an adult who lacks capacity to request them. The council must be satisfied that the arrangement meets the legal conditions and that the person will act in the adult's best interests.

B — C

Befriending Services

Services offering regular companionship through visits, telephone calls or online contact. Befrienders are often volunteers. These services can help reduce loneliness, but do not usually provide personal care.

Care Act 2014

The main law governing adult care and support in England. It sets out councils' responsibilities, including assessing needs, determining eligibility, supporting carers and safeguarding adults. Different legislation applies elsewhere in the UK.

Care Home

Accommodation where people receive care and support alongside a place to live. The term includes residential care homes, which provide personal care, and nursing homes, which also provide nursing care. Care homes are not only for older people.

Care Needs Assessment

An assessment of the help someone needs with everyday life and how those needs affect their wellbeing. In England, it is arranged through the local council and is free, regardless of income or savings. In Northern Ireland, contact the local Health and Social Care Trust.

Care Plan

A written record of someone's needs, the outcomes they want to achieve and the care or support agreed to help them. It should explain who will provide support and how it will be reviewed. The person should be involved and receive a copy.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

The independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England. It registers, monitors and inspects services, including care homes and providers of personal care at home. Other UK nations have different regulators.

Close Care Housing

Self-contained housing, usually flats or bungalows, on the same site as a care home. Residents may be able to use services or facilities provided by the home. Check the services, charges and arrangements for moving into the care home if needs change.

D — E

Day Centre

A place offering daytime activities, companionship and support. Some centres also provide meals, transport or specialist support. Services, eligibility and charges vary.

Dementia

A term describing symptoms caused by diseases that affect the brain. These can include problems with memory, thinking, language, behaviour and everyday activities. Dementia is not a normal part of ageing.

Domiciliary Care

Care and support provided in someone's own home. Also called home care, it may include help with washing, dressing, preparing meals and other daily tasks.

Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA)

In England and Wales, a legal document appointing someone to manage property and financial affairs. Valid EPAs made before 1 October 2007 can still be used, but new ones cannot be made. An EPA must be registered when the person who made it starts to lose, or has lost, mental capacity. It does not cover health and welfare decisions. Northern Ireland has a separate EPA system.

Enhanced Sheltered Housing

Housing offering more support than a standard sheltered scheme, while residents retain their own home. It may include meals, additional staff support or help arranging care. The term is used differently by providers, so check the actual services available.

Equity Release

A way of accessing money tied up in your home while continuing to live there, usually through a lifetime mortgage or home reversion plan. It can affect inheritance, benefits and future choices. Specialist regulated financial advice is required before taking out an equity release product.

Extra Care Housing

Self-contained housing with access to care and support, often from an on-site team. It usually offers more support than sheltered housing and may include communal facilities and meals. Also called housing with care or assisted living. Check how care is arranged and charged for.

Financial Assessment

An assessment of someone's finances to work out what they may need to pay towards care. It may consider income, savings, investments and, depending on the circumstances, property. It is separate from the assessment of care needs. Rules differ across the UK and between types of care.

H — I

Hospice Care

Care focused on comfort, quality of life and support for people with life-limiting illnesses and their families. It may be provided in a hospice, at home or through outpatient and day services. Hospice care is not limited to someone's final days and may include symptom management or short stays.

Independent Living

Living with choice and control over your everyday life. It does not necessarily mean managing without help: someone may live independently while using equipment, adaptations, personal assistance or other support.

Informed Consent

Agreement given freely by someone who has capacity to make the particular decision and has enough information to understand it. For treatment, this includes the benefits, risks, reasonable alternatives and what may happen without it. Consent can be withdrawn.

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)

Tasks that help someone manage life at home and in the community, such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, managing money, using transport and keeping in touch with others.

L

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)

In England and Wales, a legal document appointing one or more people, called attorneys, to help you make decisions or make decisions on your behalf. You must have capacity to make the LPA, and it must be registered before use.

There are two types:

Property and Financial Affairs

Covers money and property. Once registered, it can be used with your permission while you have capacity, unless the document restricts this.

Health and Welfare

Covers decisions about care and treatment. It can be used only when you lack capacity to make the particular decision.

Attorneys must follow the document's instructions and the law. Scotland and Northern Ireland have different power-of-attorney arrangements.

M — N

Means-Tested Contribution

The amount someone is assessed as able to pay towards care or support after their finances have been considered. It is not a fixed charge for everyone. The rules depend on the service and where the person lives.

Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)

Problems with memory or thinking that are greater than expected but not severe enough to be diagnosed as dementia. MCI does not always lead to dementia. Some people remain stable or improve, while others develop dementia.

Nursing Home (sometimes know as *a Care home with nursing*)

A care home providing personal care and nursing care, with registered nurses on duty around the clock. It supports people whose needs require this level of care. Check that the home can meet the person's particular needs.

P

Palliative Care

Care that aims to improve quality of life for someone with a life-limiting illness. It includes managing pain and other symptoms, alongside emotional, social and spiritual support. It can begin before the final stages of illness and may be provided alongside other treatment.

Pendant Alarm

A wearable alarm button, usually worn around the neck or wrist, that lets someone call for help. Depending on the system, it connects to a monitoring centre or nominated contacts through a home unit or mobile network. Features and coverage vary; automatic fall detection is not included in every alarm.

Personal Care

Help with tasks such as washing, dressing, eating, drinking, using the toilet and looking after the mouth, skin and hair. It can include prompting and supervision where needed. Companionship and housework alone are not usually described as personal care.

Power of Attorney (POA)

A legal arrangement allowing someone to appoint another person to act on their behalf. The decisions covered and whether the authority continues after loss of capacity depend on the type of power and the law where it was made. In England and Wales, an ordinary power of attorney does not continue if the person loses capacity.

R

Residential Care Home

A care home providing accommodation, meals and personal care, with care staff available around the clock. It does not provide the on-site nursing service of a nursing home, although residents can receive visiting NHS healthcare.

Respite Care

Temporary care or support that gives an unpaid carer a break. It may be provided at home, through daytime services or during a short stay in a care home or another suitable setting.

Retirement Housing

Housing designed for older people. It may offer shared facilities, management services or support, but the term does not guarantee that personal care is available. Check the age restrictions, charges and services.

Retirement Village

A development of homes for older people with shared facilities and services. Some include care services or a care home, while others focus on independent living. What is available varies between developments.

S

Sheltered Housing

Self-contained housing, usually for older people, with some additional support or security features. Schemes may offer an alarm service, a manager and shared facilities. Staffing and services vary, and personal care is not automatically included.

Society of Later Life Advisers (SOLLA)

An organisation helping people find financial advisers with specialist knowledge of later-life issues. Its accredited advisers have achieved the Later Life Adviser Accreditation. SOLLA accreditation is separate from financial-services regulatory authorisation.

Solicitors for the Elderly (SFE) — now The Association of Lifetime Lawyers

The former name of The Association of Lifetime Lawyers, a membership organisation for legal professionals with specialist expertise in supporting older and vulnerable people. Members advise on matters such as wills, powers of attorney, probate and care funding.

Support Worker

Someone who provides practical support to help a person manage everyday life and live as independently as possible. Their duties depend on the service and the person's needs, and may include personal care, community activities or help developing daily living skills.

Can’t find what you’re looking for?

If you’ve come across an unfamiliar term or need help understanding your options, contact **PodSupport**. We can explain what it means and help you find the information you need.

This glossary provides general information. Services, legal arrangements and funding rules vary across the UK. Check the details that apply to your circumstances.

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