PODPLAN

Moving Into a Care Home: A Practical Checklist for Families

A step-by-step guide to help older people and their families prepare for a move into residential care. Funding guidance applies to England. Arrangements differ elsewhere in the UK.

How to Use This Checklist

Work through at your own pace

Tick off tasks as they are completed. You do not need to do everything at once — the aim is simply to make the transition as smooth and stress-free as possible.

- Ask family members, friends or trusted advisers to help where needed.
- Keep important documents together in one place.
- Revisit the checklist during the first few weeks after moving in to make sure nothing has been missed.

This checklist is intended as a general guide to help individuals and families prepare for a move into a care home. Every person's circumstances are different, and some of the steps may not apply to you. While we aim to keep our information accurate and up to date, regulations and individual circumstances can change. If you are unsure about any decision, we encourage you to seek further advice.



BEFORE THE MOVE

Confirm the Details & Costs

Confirm the Details

- [ ] Confirm the move-in date and arrival time with the care home.
- [ ] Ask what furniture, equipment and personal items the home provides.
- [ ] Check how much storage space is available in the room.
- [ ] Ask whether clothing and personal belongings need to be labelled.
- [ ] Find out how medical care will be provided, including GP arrangements.

Understand the Costs

- [ ] Confirm the care home's fees and what is included.
- [ ] Explicitly ask "what is NOT included" such as hairdressing, chiropody, outings or personal services.
- [ ] Ensure you are clear on any top-up fees and who is liable to pay them.
- [ ] Ask what, if any, circumstances would require a resident to move out.
- [ ] Set up a suitable payment method.
- [ ] Future proofing → Ask if council funded residents are ever accepted.
- [ ] Make sure a trusted family member or adviser understands the financial arrangements.

Check Financial Support and Benefits

Care can be expensive, so it is important to understand what help may be available.

- [ ] **Attendance Allowance:** If not already claimed, check whether you meet the eligibility rules. Self-funding does not automatically qualify you.
- [ ] **NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC):** Ask whether NHS Continuing Healthcare may apply if care needs are complex and who would start the assessment process when requested.
- [ ] **NHS-funded Nursing Care (FNC):** If moving into a nursing home, ask whether NHS eligibility has been assessed, with CHC considered first, and when any funding will start.
- [ ] **Local Authority Funding:** Check eligibility for local authority funding. If funds are expected to fall below the threshold, plan to request a **care needs assessment** at least **six months in advance**.

BEFORE THE MOVE

Documents, Notifications & Property

Organise Important Documents

Keep key documents together and make sure someone knows where they are.

- ☐ Photo identification.
- ☐ NHS number.
- ☐ Medication list.
- ☐ Power of Attorney documents.
- ☐ Advance Directive.
- ☐ Details of pensions, savings and insurance policies.
- ☐ Other important contact numbers.

Tell People and Organisations About the Move

- ☐ Contact your local council to update any Council Tax or care-related records.
- ☐ Inform the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) if circumstances are changing.
- ☐ Notify banks, pension providers and insurance companies of the new address.
- ☐ Inform your GP, dentist, optician and any hospital specialists if required.
- ☐ Arrange for post to be redirected.
- ☐ Update delivery addresses for regular services or subscriptions.

If a Property Is Being Left Behind

- ☐ Ownership Decision: Decide whether the property will be sold, rented out or left empty. Check whether Council Tax changes apply.
- ☐ Utilities & Services: Arrange for utilities to be cancelled or transferred. Update any regular service accounts.
- ☐ Insurance & Security: Review home insurance to ensure the property remains covered. Arrange cleaning, maintenance or security checks if needed.
- ☐ Neighbours & Agents: Inform neighbours, a landlord or managing agent if appropriate.

BEFORE THE MOVE

Belongings, Health & Emotional Preparation

Prepare Personal Belongings

- [ ] Label all clothing clearly.
- [ ] Pack comfortable everyday clothing.
- [ ] Include suitable clothing for different seasons.
- [ ] Remove valuable or delicate items that could be lost or damaged.
- [ ] Prepare a list of belongings being taken to the care home.

Prepare Health Information

- [ ] Ensure there is enough medication available for the move.
- [ ] Provide an up-to-date medication list.
- [ ] Record any allergies, dietary requirements or medical conditions.
- [ ] Share important health information with the care home.

Prepare Emotionally

Moving into care can take time to adjust to. These steps can help make the transition feel less daunting.

- [ ] Visit the care home before moving day if possible.
- [ ] Meet staff and ask questions.
- [ ] Discuss routines, preferences and support needs.
- [ ] Talk openly about concerns and expectations.
- [ ] Choose personal items that will help the room feel familiar and comfortable.

MOVING DAY

What to Take on Moving Day

Clothing

- Everyday clothes and nightwear
- Underwear and socks
- Comfortable shoes and slippers
- Coat and weather-appropriate clothing
- Outfit for special occasions

Personal Comfort Items

- Family photographs
- Favourite books, puzzles or hobbies
- Mobile phone and charger
- Contact list for family and friends
- Favourite blanket, cushion or keepsake
- Toiletries and personal care items

Everyday Essentials

- Glasses
- Hearing aids and batteries
- Dentures and cleaning products
- Walking aids or mobility equipment
- Clock or calendar
- Small amount of cash if appropriate

Essential Documents

- Including Photo ID

On the Day

1

Confirm Travel

Confirm travel arrangements in advance and make sure family members and key contacts can be reached if needed.

2

Pack a Day Bag

Pack a separate bag with first-day essentials so everything you need immediately is easy to find.

3

Keep Documents Accessible

Keep important documents easy to access throughout the journey and on arrival.

AFTER THE MOVE

Settling In

Check Everything Is Running Smoothly

- [ ] Confirm that address changes have been completed.
- [ ] Check benefits, pensions and other payments are being received correctly.
- [ ] Confirm care home fees are being paid as expected.
- [ ] Review funding arrangements after the first month.

Help the New Room Feel Like Home

- [ ] Unpack personal belongings.
- [ ] Display photographs and familiar items.
- [ ] Arrange furniture and possessions to create a comfortable space.
- [ ] Make sure favourite hobbies and activities remain accessible.

Look After Emotional Wellbeing

- [ ] Allow time to adjust to the change.
- [ ] Maintain familiar routines where possible.
- [ ] Stay connected with family and friends.
- [ ] Speak to staff if any concerns arise.
- [ ] Ask for additional support if feeling anxious, isolated or unsettled.

Settle Into Daily Life

1

Get to Know the Community

Get to know staff and other residents. Learn about activities and events available at the home.

2

Establish a Routine

Establish a daily routine and try at least one social activity when ready.

FINAL CHECK

Before You Put This Checklist Away

Take a moment to confirm that all the key steps have been addressed.

Finances in Place

Financial arrangements are understood and in place. Any available benefits and funding have been explored.

Organisations Informed

Important organisations — councils, banks, DWP, GP and others — have been notified of the change.

Care Home Prepared

The care home understands personal preferences, routines and care needs.

Support Network Ready

Family and support networks know how they can help. Everyone feels as prepared as possible for the transition.

A Final Thought

Moving into a care home is a major life change, and it is completely normal for settling in to take time. Be patient with yourself and your family. Ask questions, accept support when it is offered, and remember that creating a sense of comfort, routine and connection is just as important as completing the practical tasks.

Small steps now can make a big difference later.

