

Arranging help at home (domiciliary care)

Many carers are often faced with the task of finding services to provide extra help at home.

Before making any arrangements it is advisable to contact Health and Adult Social Care. This is an opportunity to discuss the help you need and to find out if you are eligible for any financial support. Carers' Resource can provide information about assessments and means of paying for care.

You may of course decide to arrange and pay for domiciliary care as a totally private arrangement between you and the care provider.

When arranging care at home you will need to ask the right questions to find a high quality service to meet your needs. Reputable firms should visit to discuss your needs and then provide a clear, detailed confirmation of the work to be done and the costs involved.

What services are offered?

Nursing and Personal Care

N.B. All organisations offering nursing or personal care have to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Nursing care is given by qualified nurses and can include such tasks as changing dressings, giving injections etc. as well as general nursing care.

Personal care could include help with getting up, going to bed, dressing and undressing, washing and bathing, personal hygiene, using the toilet or managing incontinence. It also includes help with health related tasks such as dealing with pressure sores or stoma care that can be done under guidance from a doctor or community nurse.

Domestic help - tasks such as cleaning, washing-up, laundry, cooking/preparing meals, lighting fires.

Shopping - could also include collecting pensions, benefits or prescriptions.

Companion/social - could include spending time with someone to help write letters or make phone calls; helping to learn new skills; going out on social trips.

Live-in help – ranging from a few days to cover for an emergency, to permanent full-time care.

Sitting services provide someone who will spend a few hours looking after the 'cared for' person so that his/her carer can have some free time to spend as they like.

Night care - ranging from 'sleeping over' to provide reassurance to being available throughout the night to provide care. When arranging this type of care it's important to make clear what level of care is likely to be needed. If any personal or nursing care is involved, it must be provided by an organisation registered with CQC.



Gardening - regular visits for grass cutting and weeding or major tidying and replanting.

Meals - help with meal preparation, provision of ready-cooked or frozen meals (meals on wheels or private firms), help with eating.

Some questions to ask care providers

Charges

- How much do you charge? Are there any 'extras' such as mileage payments?
- Do you charge more for weekends, evenings and bank holidays?
- Will you provide written confirmation of charges before care starts?
- Will I be notified in advance of any changes in charges?
- How do I pay you? (Do you bill me weekly, for example?)
- How much notice do I need to give if I need to cancel help for any reason?
- How much notice is needed if I want to cancel services altogether?
- Is there a charge if I cancel at short notice?

Insurance

- Do you, the service provider, have public and employer liability insurance?
- Can I see confirmation in writing of your insurance cover?
- What household insurance do I need (in case a worker is injured or items get broken, for example)?

Staff

- Have all your staff been interviewed and their references checked?
- Have they had DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) checks?
- What training/qualifications will staff have?
- Will you tell me in advance if a different carer is coming?
- Will you let me know if my carer cannot come at the usual time?
- How do you supervise the work your carers do?
- How do you check they are doing what has been agreed?

Complaints

- What can I do if I don't get on with my carer?
- How do I make a complaint – do you have a formal complaints procedure?

Equipment

- Do I have to provide any equipment?
- What equipment do your staff provide?

Emergencies

- Who do I contact in an emergency?
- What help could you provide in an emergency?



Some questions to ask care providers continued

Confidentiality

- Who will have details about me and the care you provide?
- What personal information do I have to provide?
- What records do you ask your staff to keep – if they're handling money, shopping, collecting pensions, for example?

If you need further information or would like to discuss any aspect of your caring role, please contact Carers' Resource:

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We can provide this information in another format. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

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