

## Specialist care (all ages)

Support and care services for people with special needs offer a range of options aimed at maintaining their independence by living in their own homes and communities.

### Learning disability

If you are considering moving out of your family home, there are a number of options that could be explored before considering a care home. You may be able to have your own flat with support. There is also the option of supported living, where you can share a property with other people with support provided for all. Support can include learning independent living skills like cooking, cleaning and money management as well as help with health needs. Either of these options can often give you greater independence and choice than care homes may be able to offer. There are other alternatives too such as Adult Placement or Shared Ownership schemes that could be considered and these can be set up through Adult and Community Services.

An important change affecting people with learning disabilities is the introduction of Personal Budgets ([explained in Personalisation](#)), putting people at the centre of how they choose to pay for their support. This may be in their own flat or house, a supported living scheme or a care home or care home with nursing which specialises in this type of care.

Many adults with learning disabilities can live in their own homes in their local communities with support but there may be times when an individual has specialist health care needs or behaviour that is particularly challenging when a care home may be more appropriate.

Care homes for people with learning disabilities often specialise e.g. homes for people with autism and challenging behaviour or dementia. A good home will provide opportunities to learn and maintain skills and opportunities to take part in enjoyable and stimulating activities. Care managers, social workers and community nurses from Adult and Community Services, who specialise in learning disability, will be able to give you information to enable you to make the right choices.

### Physical disability

Following an assessment of your needs, you may be eligible for help from Adult and Community Services, including a Personal Budget, occupational therapy, adaptations to your home, supported housing or help for the person caring for you.

Day support services are available to assist and support people to take part in activities, meet with others and regain their confidence. Day services range from sheltered work to leisure activities, as well as individual provision.

A short break away from home can provide a welcome change for yourself and anyone caring for you. The respite care might also be provided in your own home (through a –'live-in' carer). The support you require if you have a physical disability must be tailored to your specific needs and can be provided by the independent and not-for-profit sectors as well as by Adult and Community Services. Help at home with personal care is available during the day and night, 7 days a week. There are also private agencies offering help at home with personal care and housework.

### Dementia

As it can be best for the person with dementia to stay in their own home for as long as possible, a range of community care services are available to facilitate this. Adult and Community Services can provide access to: home care; meals in the home; sitting services (which provide a break for carers); advice on equipment and adaptations; day care centres and respite care. If you are responsible for looking after someone with dementia in their own home you may be entitled to support in your own right to help you manage.

These services can be provided to you directly by registered providers to those who do not require financial help from Adult and Community Services, however Adult and Community Services will still be willing to offer an assessment of need. You may have a choice of which agency you receive your care from whether or not Adult and Community Services assist with the funding of your service.

If you are considering a specialist care home, remember it should be able to maintain and improve your quality of life. Depending on the degree of the dementia, you should be able to live in a care home that offers quality personal care and person-centred care. It's important to consider homes that provide nursing care in case your condition deteriorates and you require a higher level of care. Many care homes offer specialist units with experienced nursing staff and facilities adapted to the needs of residents with dementia.

People with dementia can benefit from a range of group or individual therapies involving social interaction and mental stimulation, including reminiscence. Activity co-ordinators and occupational therapists can provide people with dementia with reality orientation, reminiscence and validation therapy. Music therapy, art therapy approaches and other creative therapies can also be helpful.

Behaviour management approaches that promote understanding of the behaviour of the person with dementia can also be beneficial and trained staff can offer this service within many care establishments.

### **Mental Health**

Your local Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) should be your first point of contact if you have mental health issues. You can ask your GP to refer you or ask someone who knows you to contact the CMHT on your behalf.

The local authority is investing in supported accommodation and home support for people with mental health issues. A move to residential or nursing care will only be necessary for people who cannot live in their own home with support. Like other specialist care services, home support can be paid for (if you have been assessed as eligible) with a Personal Budget or Direct Payment.

Alternatively, a good care home can help improve the quality of your life - the structured environment and activities provided can build up your confidence. Your Care Coordinator and the care providers should assess you carefully to make sure the placement is right for you and all care providers should operate to a recovery model, helping people to learn the skills they need to become more independent.

A member of staff may visit you at home, talk to you and look at your assessments of health and social care need.