

Care Homes – a positive choice for older people – Introduction

Positive choices and family decisions

Moving out of their own home is a big step for anyone to make. Whatever their circumstances, being such an important decision to take, families will have given it – and the choices open to them, a lot of thought.

Conversations often start with “We don’t want mum/dad to go into a home.”

There are two main reasons why people say this:

Loss

Most people have no real experience of care homes, so their perceptions are fostered by (dominant) media coverage or perhaps friends

They see care homes as synonymous with loss – loss of independence, choice and control, but also of memories and history.

Liability and guilt

Real concern that it is their own responsibility to care for the person – choosing a care home is accepting ‘second best’. Adjusting to life in a care home can be challenging for a person who has lived independently for decades, even though they may have experienced increasing social isolation.

The challenge for families is often guilt, even though they may recognise that their loved one can have an improved quality of life.

What can residents gain from living in a care home?

Sanctuary- Safety: feeling safe at night if help is needed

Protection- Security: knowing there are skilled people to help and support

Relationships- Community: making new friends, enjoying activities as well as quality visits from family members and old friends, who no longer need to spend time providing care – and worrying about the person’s safety or having time to do jobs and chores round the day.

Wellbeing- Wellbeing is made up of five principle needs Physical, Mental, Social, Emotional and Spiritual. Good care homes understand these needs well and support a positive culture of care that promotes wellbeing for the residents, their families and staff.

Peace of mind- Care homes are as individual as the people who live in them. It is not really about the building being fit for purpose, or nicely decorated. Although these are important of course, what is more essential is the quality of the relationships between residents and their families and the staff that underpin good care. A contented resident is a contented family. Families with loved ones living in good care homes can enjoy being with their loved ones, knowing that their needs – and preferences, are being actively and compassionately supported.

The Senses Framework

The Six Senses Framework is a method to provide high quality care for older people living in care settings. It was proposed by Mike Nolan and Sue Davis

from Sheffield Hallam University and is widely recognised as a framework to provide excellent levels of care. It is split into two distinct yet closely related areas, firstly ways to improve care and second to help residents and carers.



Quality of care

<https://careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2019-06/190627-guidance-on-completing-the-quality-of-care-review-en.pdf>

“There are clear lines of accountability, responsibility and delegation between the service provider, responsible individual and the manager.”

“The service provider is responsible for setting quality standards, analysing the information collected and driving service improvement through planning of agreed actions.” *Care Inspectorate Wales*

Quality of life means wellbeing

“Residents need to feel that their voices are heard that they have choice about their care and support, and that opportunities are made available to them”

Care Inspectorate Wales

Quality of life also means

- Feeling comfortable
- Feeling at home
- Enjoying good care relationships and authentic, connected social relations
- Having a positive self-image and autonomy (voice, choice and control)
- Dignity and privacy
- Having meaningful things to do.