



**Medicare
People** 

Talking About Care

How to raise care with someone you love, and agree next steps together

Raising the subject of care with a parent or partner is one of the hardest conversations a family can have. This guide offers practical ways to start that conversation, listen well and agree next steps together, while respecting your loved one's right to choose.

It is written for families in Surrey, Kent, West Sussex and East Sussex who are worried about someone who may need more support at home. It covers:

 Signs it may be time to talk

 Respecting their choices

 Preparing for the conversation

 When they say no

 Starting the conversation

 Support for you

Signs it may be time to talk

Changes often creep in slowly, so they can be easy to miss. Signs that someone may need more help include:

- missed meals, an empty fridge or noticeable weight loss
- unopened post, unpaid bills or missed appointments
- falls, bruises or difficulty with the stairs
- missed or muddled medication
- the home becoming less clean or tidy than usual
- withdrawing from friends, hobbies or going out
- worried comments from neighbours or friends

One sign on its own may not mean much. A pattern of changes is worth talking about.

Before you talk

A little preparation makes the conversation calmer and more useful:

- **Talk to the rest of the family first**, so you're not giving mixed messages
- **Choose a good time and place**: somewhere familiar and quiet, without rushing
- **Know the options**, so you can talk about real choices, from a little help at home to live-in care
- **Think about it from their side**. Accepting help can feel like losing independence
- **Decide who is best placed to talk**. Sometimes that's the person they trust most, not the eldest

Starting the conversation



Open, gentle questions usually work better than suggestions. For example:

"How are you finding things at the moment?" · "What would make the day-to-day easier?" · "What matters most to you about staying at home?"

- Talk about what they *can* do, not just what's become difficult
- Present help as a way to **stay independent at home**, not a loss of control
- Be honest about your worries, using "I" rather than "you": "I worry when you're on your own at night"
- Don't try to settle everything in one go. It may take several conversations

Respecting their choices

Adults have the right to make their own decisions about their care, even ones their family disagrees with. Under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, a person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision just because the decision seems unwise ([Mental Capacity Act 2005, section 1](#)).

If you're worried your loved one can no longer understand or weigh up their choices, speak to their GP. It also helps to set up **Lasting Powers of Attorney** while they can still choose who they trust to make decisions for them ([GOV.UK](#)).

When they say no

It is common for someone to refuse help at first. Some approaches that often help:

- **Take a step back** and come back to it later, rather than pushing
- **Start small**, with help for one task or a short trial of live-in care while you have a break
- **Involve someone they trust**, such as their GP or a close friend
- **Link help to something they value**, such as staying in their home or keeping up a hobby
- **Make sure they know the door is open**. Many people change their minds when they feel in control

Keeping the family on the same page

Caring for a parent often falls unevenly across a family. A family meeting can help you:

- agree what support is needed and who will do what
- choose one main point of contact for carers and professionals
- share information, so no one is left out
- check in regularly as needs change

Support for you

Supporting someone you love can be hard. If you look after a family member, you have the right to ask the council for a **carer's assessment**, to look at the support you need ([Care Act 2014, section 10](#)). For free, confidential advice, call the **Age UK Advice Line on 0800 678 1602**, open 8am to 7pm every day.

Your next steps

- ☐ Write down the changes you've noticed, and when
- ☐ Talk with the rest of the family before the main conversation
- ☐ Find out about the options, including live-in care
- ☐ Choose a calm time to talk, and listen first
- ☐ Agree one small first step together
- ☐ Call us for a free, no-obligation chat about the options

Talk to our Guildford team

 **020 3443 9844**

medicarepeople.co/live-in-care/guides

We arrange live-in care across Surrey, Kent, West Sussex and East Sussex.

Important information and sources

This guide gives general information to help families talk about care. It is not medical or legal advice. If you're worried about someone's health or safety, speak to their GP, or call 999 in an emergency.

Medicare People currently provides introductory live-in care services. We have submitted our application to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and intend to introduce a fully managed live-in care service following registration.

Sources:

- [Mental Capacity Act 2005, section 1](#)
- [Care Act 2014, section 10: carer's assessments](#)
- [GOV.UK: Lasting power of attorney](#)
- [Age UK Advice Line](#)

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