



Guide to Elderly Home Care

How we help you and your loved ones

Halcyon Home Care

Local, Professional, Individually tailored care management services in the home



Speak to our team, we can help you

Email: info@halcyonhomecare.co.uk

Tel. 01628 298262 / 01753 439110



Introduction

This Guide is primarily for customers requiring services in the Windsor and Maidenhead and East Berkshire area but many of the principles remain true for other areas in England and the questions to be considered are worth employing wherever a homecare provider is being considered.

What is Homecare?

Homecare, also known as domiciliary care, is a care service for supporting someone with their daily life by providing assistance in the home by one or more care workers. We firmly believe that supporting and facilitating people who need care to remain in their home for longer helps people maintain their personal independence, comfort, living style and contact with their local community. It is the preferred choice for most elderly people for longer rather than leaving to take up permanent residence in a care home.

Good design of Homecare is flexible and entirely personal. A customer may only require a small amount of support say, from half an hour a week, to several hours a day, the aim being to provide just the right amount of assistance. The aim of the care plan is to support an individual in areas where they are finding things difficult; a good care plan allows an individual to continue to do what they can manage and not take any responsibility or capability away from them. The plan should also respect that this care is taking place in someone's home and therefore observe the expectations that care will fit in around the customer and not the provider.



The care service may be on a temporary, intermittent or long term basis. Although Halcyon Home Care is a professional care management services agency, it is estimated that more than half of the homecare provided in the UK is undertaken by friends and family of the customer/user.

What Services Can You Expect?

Homecare is the ultimate in personal services and is therefore as diverse in design as each person in the community. The services are largely grouped into 3 areas; personal care; practical care; and social care.

Personal care can include assistance with:

- washing, dressing and going to the toilet
- continence care
- assistance with getting up or going to bed
- preparing meals and/or feeding
- assistance with medication
- helping with correspondence
- companionship and help to maintain an independent life style

Speak to our team, we can help you

Email: info@halcyonhomecare.co.uk

Tel. 01628 298262 / 01753 439110

Practical care is typically:

- making or changing beds and assistance with laundry
- emptying commodes
- shopping for service users
- helping with appointments
- light domestic tasks – washing dishes, dusting, cleaning of toilets and bathrooms, vacuum cleaning etc.

Social care can include:

- regular assisting with transport to shops, post office or for appointments
- social visits as a part of a wider care package

Homecare is not normally associated with medical and health care issues, which are normally handled by District Nurses and GPs or as part of a community resource from the Hospitals. Home care workers, therefore, are not involved in intrusive health or medication protocols and procedures. The carer may well administer eye or ear drops but would not be involved in administering injections such as for insulin, blood tests or insertion of suppositories.



Understanding what costs may be involved?

The social care teams across the Unitary Councils in Berkshire are obliged to perform an assessment of care needs of an individual. Once a care need is confirmed, they will undertake a financial assessment to evaluate eligibility for financial assistance.

The financial assessment process considers an individual's income and savings – but excluding the value of the home. There are several ways that care can be funded and for some people the Council will pay all or part of the costs of care, while for others they may be required to make a financial contribution to their package of care.

The Government has been pursuing a “personalisation” agenda for some years which has resulted in a small but growing number of people take up the option of using the Direct Payments Scheme, where it is available. In such cases, a cash entitlement is calculated and given to the individual customer who then takes the responsibility for organising their own care.

In some cases the Council may provide the care service through an in-house team of care workers or purchase the services from a list of approved homecare agencies like Halcyon Home Care on behalf of the customer, up to the entitlement they have determined. In such cases the choice has been taken out of the hands of the ultimate service user.

Where an individual receives no financial assistance from the Council, the family will be required to fund their own care, choosing a local homecare agency, like Halcyon Home Care or possibly to directly employ someone. Similarly, some families may want to enhance the range of services subsidised by the Council by purchasing extra help from the Homecare provider.

Speak to our team, we can help you

Email: info@halcyonhomecare.co.uk

Tel. 01628 298262 / 01753 439110

What Does a Care Agency Service Offer over Employing Someone?

We understand that for some people it is tempting to believe that a directly employed "helping hand" is all that is required. Certainly in the short-term this is often a cheaper alternative when only considering the face-to-face activities. However, there are a number of issues with this solution that appear to arise fairly often; recruitment of a carer is not an easy task and poor selection decisions are common; a large number of solo carers suffer from "carer burn-out" in a short time; the lack of cover for holidays and sickness mean that families are much more involved in the carer than originally desired; and the lack of training and care management systems do not prepare either the customer/user or the family for changes in situations and circumstances.

We can only really state how Halcyon Home Care work, but we see ourselves as offering a professional care management service and not just a "provider of carers". In our experience in elderly care management, things rarely remain the same for a long period. At Halcyon Home Care we maintain a full record of the care and risk assessments and copies of care plans and what happened at every visit our carers make. We use a system of duplicates to store a copy of the records of visits in the house so that visiting doctors or members of the immediate family can see what has happened and any concerns that might have arisen. The "top copy" of the record is taken to our Head Office where it is reviewed to see that things are progressing well and that there is no cause for concern. In those instances where we believe action needs to be taken, we will contact GPs or pharmacists directly, keeping the family aware of what is happening. Should a customer be taken to hospital we will keep in contact with the hospital to ensure there is a smooth transition back to the community once their treatment is completed.

We do support some solo carers with a regular care respite programme (one or two days a week where we take up the tasks). This does assist in preventing carer burn-out and means that we can be useful in assisting with emergencies and holiday cover. In such circumstances, we need to find a way of integrating our activities with the solo carer, which is not always easy, particularly where they are less well trained and do things in a way that is different to our normal practices, but this has been done.

How Do You Get Things Started?

In choosing a Care Agency remember that not all care agencies are alike and you need to choose one that you feel comfortable with. Start by contacting a care agency to enquire about the availability of their care staff for the times that you would prefer a visit, a list of their general prices and their key terms and conditions. With a good agency this can be normally be done via their web-site, email or telephone.

As well as you understanding what the Care Agency can offer, they need to understand what services are actually needed. This is best done by a visit to the home to see the customer in order to assess things such as mobility, speed of movement, personal preferences, aspirations and sensory capabilities as well as the home environment. This is all done as part of a care and risk assessment. If the ultimate end-user is in hospital and the care to be set up is a part of a hospital discharge, an initial care assessment can still take place, although it is obviously not as easy and a more thorough care and risk assessment is normally undertaken after the service user returns home.

The Care and Risk assessment normally takes between 1 and 2 hours and a good Care Agency should be able to offer you a free Care and Risk Assessment at a time that suits you.



Speak to our team, we can help you

Email: info@halcyonhomecare.co.uk

Tel. 01628 298262 / 01753 439110

What questions should I ask a homecare provider?

Obviously each customer will have a different set of requirements but we believe the following questions may help in finding the most suitable provider:

- How would you intend to provide the care that I need, including and understand what my personal preferences are?
- Do you provide a free Care and Risk Assessment at a time that suits me to assess my needs?
- Have you provided care for someone with similar needs to mine?
- Will you provide me with a Care Plan that I can discuss with you prior to commencing the care service?
- How will you ensure that my needs are regularly reviewed so that the Care Plan is always appropriate?
- If my care isn't provided by a local council, do you have a standard contract that I can read before signing?
- You will be visiting me in my own home and providing personal care. How will you and your staff respect my privacy and dignity? How will you ensure that I'm safe and secure during and after your visit?

Do I have any say in who will come to my house?

- Are all your staff trained? What sort of training do they receive prior to starting and during employment?
- What happens if my regular care worker is sick or on holiday?
- Are you registered with the Care Quality Commission?
- Is your organisation insured in order to protect my safety and interests?
- What charges, if any, will I be expected to pay?
- Is there a minimum charge if I only need a small amount of care?
- Are there any hidden extras in the prices you quote
- Can I suspend the service if my son/daughter comes to stay for a short while?
- What happens if I'm unhappy with the service I get?

Final Thoughts

Good quality Homecare services happen when the care needs are correctly identified, trained and capable care staff delivered the agreed Care Plan and the service is supported by a business infrastructure that can respond to changing needs with the minimal amount of bureaucracy and fuss. We believe in homecare activities that the customer is King (or Queen) ... but always right. Make your wishes known.

Speak to our team, we can help you

Email: info@halcyonhomecare.co.uk

Tel. 01628 298262 / 01753 439110

About Halcyon Home Care

Halcyon Home Care offers professional, care management services with the aim of supporting elderly people to live as long as possible in their own home. The business strongly believes that care in the community should be provided by local, professional carers that can communicate and empathise with the local customer base.

Carers provide services from personal care in washing, bathing and toiletry needs through to support in meal preparation, shopping and laundry. All the carers are trained, criminally vetted at appointment and supervised, working to a series of care tasks that are agreed directly with customer users and documented in a Care Plan.

All the care services and the changing needs of the customer are monitored by a Care Management team operating from 7am-10pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year in an area roughly 20 minutes drive from the centre of Maidenhead, covering Windsor, Ascot and Marlow.



Speak to our team, we can help you

Email: info@halcyonhomecare.co.uk

Tel. 01628 298262 / 01753 439110