

Frequently Asked Questions on the Telephone Care Advisory Service

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Who is Grace Consulting?

Grace Consulting specialises in providing independent care advice and has supported thousands of people, helping them resolve care issues, decide on the best type of care for their personal circumstances and choose the most suitable provider of care.

Grace says “We stand alongside people and help them through the maze of care – what's out there, what's right for them, what they're entitled to and what they have to pay for themselves. We hold hands – support people through all the distress, guilt and confusion.”

Grace was founded by Chris Cain in 1984 after he tried to find care for his grandmother and was shocked to find that there was no independent support available to help him. Grace has since grown to become a leading provider of independent care advice, with a team of experienced care advisers covering the whole of the UK.

Grace’s care advisers are all specialists in their own field, such as nursing, care home management, social work and occupational therapy, and are highly trained to provide expert advice about all care issues in a professional yet empathetic way.

Grace Consulting is a founder member of the Association of Independent Care Advisers (AICA), which represents organisations based in the UK dedicated to advising people about care, and its care advisers all abide by the AICA Code of Practice

Do I need a professional to help me find care?

You can certainly find care yourself, and there are a number of websites that carry comprehensive listings of care providers. But this is a major, life-changing decision. Do you feel able to make a fully informed decision? Do you really know whether care would be best provided at home or in a care home? Do you have the time to research and visit care homes, many of which might be unsuitable or full? Are you confident you will be paying the right price? Do you know all the available state benefits? If you can't answer yes to these questions, might it not be best to get some professional help?

This service is part of your Westfield plan. And you have the peace of mind of knowing you have covered all the options – and made the right decision.

Surely, I have a duty to my relative to personally find them care?

This is an entirely natural feeling, but without experience it is difficult to know where and how to look. If your relative will be receiving care at home or living in a care home for a number of years, your real priority is presumably to ensure that this care is the best that can be found. Grace can help you make

that choice by presenting you with all the best options. The final choice will always be yours.

Won't Social Services help me find care?

Social Services have a remit to help vulnerable people. However, Social Workers have time and budget constraints, often understandably prioritise the less well-off and generally find it hard to give individuals all the time and resource they deserve. Grace will always be available to guide you through the maze and can also be more proactive in its suggestions for the best care.

Surely, I know more about my relative's needs and wishes than a Care Adviser could?

You do! The Care Adviser's role is not to make the decision for you but to help you use your knowledge and understanding of the person needing care to ensure that you all agree and choose the best way forward.

Grace's Independent Care Advisers are drawn from a wide range of skilled and professional backgrounds such as nursing, counselling and occupational therapy and all are experts in their field. They have specialised in elderly care for many years, providing exactly this type of advice and help to families every day.

What is an Independent Care Adviser?

A Care Adviser is an understanding professional who will listen to your needs, assess your individual care requirements and give the best possible advice on suitable care options. A true Care Adviser should be completely independent, not accept commissions from care providers and adhere to the Association of Independent Care Advisers' Code of Practice. An Independent Care Adviser will provide unbiased information and advice according to individual needs.

Is my relative entitled to financial assistance?

Depending on their circumstances, financial assistance is available to older people. For information on benefits, the Benefits Enquiry Line is a useful source of information – 0345-605-6055. For further advice, it is recommended that you contact an Independent Care Adviser.

Where can I get financial advice?

A number of Independent Financial Advisers specialise in advising on long-term care. Before taking advice, it is recommended that you establish your IFA does have this specialist knowledge. It is additionally suggested that you use a SOLLA accredited IFA. The Society of Later Life Advisers was founded in 2008 as a not for profit organisation, to meet the need of consumers, advisers and those who provide financial products and services to the later life market. Its aim is to ensure that consumers are better informed about the financial issues of later life.

What type of care will be most appropriate for my relative?

This is often not a straightforward question. The answer will depend on a number of factors according to individual requirements and circumstances. Options might include

- Care at home, either full-time or a with a visiting package of care
- A care home
- Sheltered accommodation or supported living
- Extra care housing
- A care home with nursing

We would always recommend that you take independent advice before making any long-term decisions.

Can the hospital discharge my relative before we have found care that the whole family is happy with?

Acute hospitals have an agreed policy to address this situation. If there is no clinical reason for your relative to remain in hospital and your chosen care home does not have any current vacancies or you have not managed to find your ideal home yet, 'transitional care' may be necessary. This is a temporary placement until a vacancy in your chosen home becomes available. Hospitals can enforce this policy but the older person and his or her family will be given notice of a hospital's decision to consider this type of placement.

Can I insist my relative leaves his or her own home and moves into a care home?

Older people have the same rights as every other adult throughout the UK and, as long as they are mentally capable of making and communicating their own decisions, no-one can insist that they leave their own home. If you are concerned about an older relative's (or friend's) ability to care for themselves in their own home, you should discuss this with their GP.

Who do I turn to if I am not happy about care received?

Every care provider should have a clear complaints procedure and it is advisable to initially try to sort out any issues or concerns with the Manager. However, if you remain dissatisfied then depending on where you live you could speak with:

- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England
- The Care Inspectorate in Scotland
- The Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales
- The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in Northern Ireland