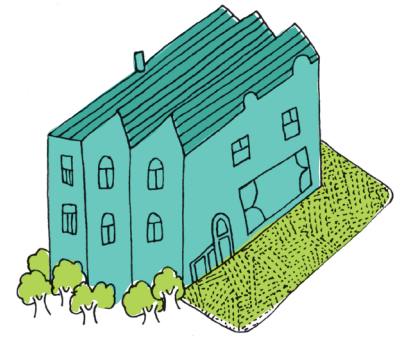


# Care homes



Care Homes are an integral part of the local community - a place where relationships are established between the people for whom the care home is a home, the staff and the carers and families.

Care homes are challenged with establishing a balance between helping the person and their family to make the most of the present, therefore maximising the person's potential and helping them to live as they would wish to, whilst being mindful and informed concerning the future.



The majority of people residing in care homes are aged 85 plus. Many enter the care home as people with multiple complex needs, including cognitive impairment. These people have significant life experience and will have seen/experienced a variety of losses along their own journey. The care home will be the place where they choose to spend the remainder of their lives. End of life care and the whole concept of living and dying well is a key component of residing in a care home.

## Opportunities exist for care homes and the people who live and work in them to:

- Foster a culture of open communication where talking about living and dying well is not a taboo subject.
- Enable staff to explore the issues for themselves so that they feel more prepared and able to talk about living and dying well with residents and their families
- Engage with other professionals who are involved in the life of the resident. e.g. GPs, District Nurses, Community Psychiatric Nurses and palliative care nurses.

## Raising Awareness

### Internally within the Care Home Community

- Making available the Dying Matters Coalition DVD 'Party for Kath' and other materials to facilitate discussions with staff, residents and families
- Listening to residents' experience and using it with their permission to form wider conversations and to inform and shape 'the way we do things around here' within the care home
- Understanding and using Life Histories from each resident
- Making links with My Home Life movement, a new initiative aimed at improving the quality of life of those who are living, dying, visiting and working in care homes for older people, [www.myhomelifemovement.org](http://www.myhomelifemovement.org)

### Externally within the community

- Speaking on the local radio station about the importance of having a conversation about living well and dying well. Dealing with the taboos.
- Speaking at a local event.
- Hosting an awareness raising activity within the care home

### Existing resources that could be utilised

- Expertise of staff within a given care home and their local networks
- The residents and the families themselves
- The Gold Standards Framework which is used by a significant number of care homes
- Dying Matters leaflets which have the potential to be expanded for the care home sector.

## Example

### Somerset Care – Life Histories

This project by Somerset Care informs and shapes living and dying well. The staff are ensuring that they have as full a life story of the individual as possible. This is not just about past information but also about hopes and dreams for the present and the future.” Examples from My Home Life: Supporting Good End of Life – Valuing the ‘living and dying’ in care homes and helping residents to prepare for a ‘good death’ with the support of their families.

Visit [www.myhomelifemovement.org](http://www.myhomelifemovement.org) for more details.

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*Care home staff should feel prepared and able to talk about living and dying with residents and their families*

### Useful weblinks:

[www.ecca.org.uk](http://www.ecca.org.uk)

[www.nationalcareforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalcareforum.org.uk)

[www.rnha.co.uk](http://www.rnha.co.uk)