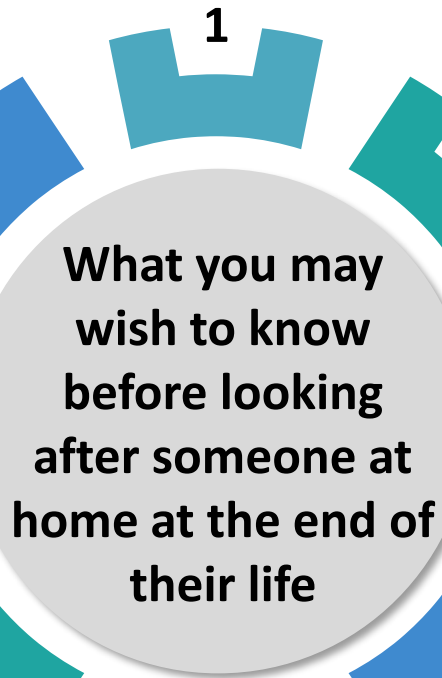




Are you considering looking after a relative or friend who wishes to die at home?



Wishes

Many people in the UK would prefer to be looked after and die at home, and this can often be achieved. Both the preferences of the dying person and the ability of the family/friend carers to continue caring may change, especially when health, care needs or confidence of the carer become negatively affected.

Relationships

Caring for someone nearing the end of their life can be very rewarding... or not. You may choose to provide care out of a sense of duty, or for any other reason. You should also consider that providing care, especially intimate or personal care, might change your relationship with the person who is dying. Sometimes it might be hard to know in advance how relationships will change.

Preparing for the unknown

As a carer, you will need to be well prepared for the unknown journey that you will be embarking on. Every situation is different, but professionals supporting you may be able to help you prepare and anticipate some of the changes. Accepting unpredictability will be equally important.

Bereavement support

After the person you cared for has died, you may need bereavement support and/or advice with practical arrangements. It is okay to need support for yourself. Consider reaching out to your local hospice. It is important to look after yourself while you grieve and reflect on your caring role.

Influence on your life

You will need time to plan and consider options of caring for someone at home. Caring is likely to influence your life practically, logistically, financially and in a number of other ways (eg disrupt family and social life). Discuss this with people around you, including health and social care staff who may be providing support.

Not forgetting yourself

Understandably, you may end up focussing on the person nearing death more than yourself. It is crucial that you don't forget yourself and maintain physical, mental and spiritual health. Find out if you can access respite services (eg from your local hospice).

Advocacy

You will need to establish links with health and social care providers for all aspects of care, and be ready to ask for advice (eg regarding provision and use of equipment). Caring is likely to involve advocating for the person nearing death, especially if they are no longer able to do so for themselves. You may wish to consider [Power of Attorney](#) and [Advance Care Planning](#). You may also get support from having a [Carer's Assessment](#).

Hospice at Home

You may receive palliative care support from services called 'Hospice at Home' or similar. You should know there are considerable differences from one service to the next in what support they offer and how you can be referred to them. Find out about your local service; look up [Hospice Care Finder](#), [Hospice UK](#). You may also visit [Marie Curie](#) website or call their helpline 0800 090 2309.