



# Starting the care conversation

How to approach the topic of additional support.

# Talking about care?

## Where to start

Talking to family members about considering extra support isn't always easy, especially discussing the future and how to maintain a good quality of life as we grow older.

If you've noticed your family member struggling with everyday tasks, it might be time to consider getting extra support. If this is the case, it might be time to consider the support options available to you.

This will provide you with peace of mind that your family member has the help they need, and that you can continue to enjoy your time together as a family.

So, where do you start? How do you begin 'that' conversation? And what do you do if your opinions clash?

This guide will help support you through these difficult conversations, highlighting common obstacles and how to overcome them.



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**I have been using Helping Hands for years. The staff are wonderful and nothing ever seems too much – from the staff members in the office to the carers who visit my home. They are reliable, professional and I trust them to deliver my care package.**

”

Tracey, 2025

# Preparing for 'the' conversation

**There are several reasons why you may feel you need to talk to your family member about a bit of extra support. Starting the conversation earlier gives them the best chance to continue living well independently for as long as possible.**

Approaching the topic of care can be unnerving for all involved, but it's important to remember to encourage open channels of communication. From the very beginning of the conversation, be clear that it is a two-way discussion and you only have their best interests at heart.

It's important to make sure your family member knows that any extra support is completely their decision. Remind them that you are informing them of their options because you care about their well-being and independence at home.

It's important to weigh up all aspects of getting more support. Remind your family member of the benefits a helping hand could bring, the ability to remain at home and maintain independence.

It's helpful to be informed of the different support options available, so you can reassure your family member that together, you can find the right options that work for them.

## Reach out for advice

You might find comfort in confiding in another member of the family or a close friend who has been through a similar situation. They could provide helpful tips and advice on how to approach beginning a conversation about getting further support.



## Choose the right time and place

Try to find a time where you'll be able to talk about their concerns without feeling rushed and when you're both in the right frame of mind. Try to allow as much time as possible for you both to express your views and discuss the various options available.



## Plan your opening line

Begin your conversation with a compassionate opening line. For example, if you have noticed that your family member's house isn't as clean as it usually is. You could begin by saying 'How are you finding the housework? It's a big space to manage on your own.' Try to avoid strong opinions or orders and keep it neutral and open.



# Where to start

**Approaching the subject of additional support can be challenging and emotional. Planning for the conversation in advance gives you the opportunity to approach it the right way.**

Additional support is personal to each individual situation, so planning for the conversation in advance gives you the opportunity to approach it in a way that's right for them.



## Tone of voice

It's often not about the words you choose – it's how you say them.



Use a gentle and encouraging tone and take the time to explain why you feel that having extra support might be beneficial.



## Listen to them

Communication is more than just talking; maintaining eye contact and keeping your body language open and relaxed will show your family member that you're listening. If they are finding the conversation difficult, allow them to speak and pay close attention to what they're saying.



## Give them time and reassurance

Reassure your family member that a carer will allow them to do more of the things that they love and keep their independence. If they become upset or are unsure, you may want to postpone the conversation to give them time to think things through.



## Take the 'care' away

Instead of using the words 'care', try using words like 'support', 'additional help' or 'companionship'.



You may find that your family member is more open to the idea of additional help if they feel they are just having 'some help around the house', instead of being 'cared for'.



# Following up

**Every conversation about support is different, so you may find that you might have lots of conversations about getting help over time.**

## Have patience

It allows you to take the time to guide your family member and deal with every situation as it arises, helping them to come to terms with the idea of help at a pace they're comfortable with.



## Bring support in gradually

You may have noticed that there is an element of daily living that your family member is finding more difficult or doesn't enjoy doing as much, such as preparing their meals or sorting the laundry.

In this instance, what is the least amount of help you can arrange? Short visits from a carer or support worker once or twice a week are a really effective way to help your family member get used to the idea of having some extra support, without becoming overwhelmed by a sudden change of lifestyle.



## Offer temporary support

If your family member is considering care but they're not sure how much help they want or need, introducing care on a short-term basis can be a good way to help them gauge the level of support that is right for them.

Alternatively, if you're due to go away and you're concerned about your family member being left alone, 'respite' care on a live-in or visiting basis can be put in place so that they have a friendly face to stay in the home with them.



# Overcoming common challenges

You may find that your family member is struggling to come to terms with the idea that they may need additional support.

That's why we've highlighted some of the most common obstacles that families can face when talking about care, and ways that may help you to overcome them.

## Reluctant to talk

If your family member is reluctant to talk to you about their needs, try not to take it to heart. It may be that they would feel more comfortable talking to someone who is not as close to the situation – perhaps a friend or healthcare professional. If the care is for someone who once looked after you, such as a parent or grandparent, it could be difficult for them to get used to this change in dynamic where you are now looking after them.

If your family member doesn't want to talk to you about their care or if you feel that you're not the right person to have this conversation with them, it doesn't mean you can't help them. Gently ask them if there's someone you can help them reach out to or consider asking for professional advice from someone who deals with these situations on a regular basis, such as a GP.



## Finding it difficult to accept their condition

Whether your family member has recently been diagnosed with a progressive condition or they are simply experiencing age-related difficulties, it can be difficult for them to accept the changes that they are facing.

Acceptance makes it real, so your family member may find it easier to cope with these changes by overlooking them completely.

### Possible solution:

First and foremost, have patience. Understanding the changes that they are going through can be difficult for your family member to come to terms with.

Empathise with them and reassure them that you are here to help them find the right support so that they can carry on as they were, just with a little help along the way.



## Insisting they can manage on their own

If your family member is fiercely independent, accepting the need for additional support will, understandably, be very challenging for them.

It may be that they don't recognise how their health or mobility has deteriorated over time, or perhaps they don't realise the extent or flexibility of the support that is available to them.

Ask your family member if there is anything they're finding more difficult than usual, or use examples of situations that you've noticed where they may benefit from some additional support.

For example, if you have noticed that their home isn't as clean as it usually is, advise them that there are services available to help them around the house, so they don't have to worry.



### Reacting angrily or becoming confused

If you have already noticed signs of early stages of dementia in your family member, be prepared for them to potentially react angrily, confusedly, or defensively.

They may be having periods of 'lucid moments' where they are aware that something isn't quite right, but they may not fully understand the nature of the conversation, causing them to feel frustrated.

Patience is paramount. If your family member is experiencing the early stages of dementia, it will be a very difficult and confusing time for them.

Reassure them that you are here for them and gently encourage them to see a GP – just to check that everything's okay.



If you are finding it difficult to approach the topic of care with your family member and would like someone to talk to, we're here to help.

For more information:



call our team on **0808 239 7044**



email **[enquiries@helpinghands.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@helpinghands.co.uk)**



# Flexible home care services

Our expertise doesn't stop there – we provide dedicated home support for all of the following:



## Companionship care

A friendly face to pop in for a cup of tea and a chat.



## Overnight care

Staying awake with your loved one or sleeping over for reassurance.



## Palliative care

Providing specialist support so your family can make the most of your time together.



## Complex care

Enabling individuals with more complex conditions to live independently at home.



## Support for young adults

Supporting a young adult at work, home, or university, so they can fulfil their potential.



## Emergency care

Competent care to be at your doorstep within 24 hours in the case of an emergency.



## Elderly care

Enabling you in your older years to remain in the home you know and love, for as long as you want to.



## Personal care

Supporting you to live independently at home with dignity and compassion.



## Condition-led care

Expert home care that gets to know you and your condition.



# Why choose Helping Hands?



Flexible care packages from 30 minutes per week to full-time live-in care for constant peace of mind.



A dedicated team of local Care Managers, spread out over 150 branches across England and Wales, to offer guidance and support.



Our 6000 carers are matched to our customers' personality, so we're not just a carer in the home, but a valued companion too.



We do more than care - we can help with cleaning, cooking, personal care, companionship and even looking after your pets.

Rated **Excellent** on  **Trustpilot** based on **4700+** reviews



**I honestly don't think you would find a nicer, more caring group of people no matter how long you looked for them - everyone I have seen is lovely and the office have also called and checked everything is as needed to ensure a high level of customer care.**

Toni, customer, 2025



**The support, care, compassion and thoughtfulness shown by everyone (without exception) in the team has been simply lovely and more than we could ever have hoped.**

J-Nine, customer, 2025



Free, no-obligation assessment to meet with you and your family member to assess the right level of support for them.



All Helping Hands branches are regulated and kept up to standard by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) or the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

## **We can support you with much more than your day-to-day routine.**

Perhaps you need a little support getting out and about to the church fete, a family event, or a hospital appointment.

Or, it may be that you need to give your kitchen a spring clean, prepare some meals for the following week, or you fancy a chat over a coffee and a slice of cake.

Whatever it is that you need, we'll be there to ensure that you can continue to do the things that you love, in the home you love.



**Call our friendly team for a chat today on:**

**0808 239 7044**

**[helpinghands.co.uk](https://helpinghands.co.uk)**