



# BETTER CARE MOVES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

## Supporting older people's transition between different care settings

Transitions into and between social care services (e.g. care homes or extra care housing) can be challenging for older people and their family and friends. “Better Care Moves” was a co-production project which aimed to provide evidence-based resources to guide and support these transitions.

## HOW CAN WE IMPROVE MOVE-RELATED PRACTICE?

- ☑ Care moves can be proactive, timely and supportive – we can learn from good move examples that fit people’s needs better. However, challenges arise when there is a lack of practical and decision-making support for older people and their carers. It can lead to older people being fearful to move services or feeling they have lost their individuality due to being moved without proper communication. Equally, family and friend carers might feel stressed, exhausted, or guilty for facilitating the moves.
- ☑ It can be difficult for practitioners when supporting moves. For example, when building trust and effective communication, it is harder if there are disputes between different stakeholders and services. They also face barriers in getting funding and communicating about financial arrangements between different services. In addition, all stakeholders face system level challenges, such as divisions between health and social care or between different services within the social care sector, limited workforce capacity, staffing, or public budget, as well as excessive paperwork or service gaps.
- ☑ To improve move-related practice, our research suggests a need for a person-centred and more flexible approach for practitioners. They need to have a better understanding of diverse care settings, voluntary organisations and alternative options beyond care homes. More effort is required to improve effective communication between stakeholders and services to ensure consistent support. Care is relational by nature, so it is vital to actively listen to older people and their carers whilst building trust.
- ☑ Ensuring organisational and sector-level support for social care practitioners is vital. This includes allowing more time to support each person, providing supervision and peer support, mapping and sharing information about the system, organisations, and processes. It additionally involves facilitating networking opportunities so they can reach other services, professionals learn from others and promote their own services.

# KEY PRINCIPLES OF GOOD MOVE-RELATED PRACTICE

- Transitions are periods of change and uncertainty. Make time to keep the older person and their family informed and updated, as this helps people feel in control of the process and offers opportunities to discuss concerns and provide reassurance.
- There are diverse care settings and multiple ways of moves. Older people and their families may not be familiar with the care sector and the options available. Practitioners need to understand the different types of care provision that are available, including the purpose and eligibility criteria of those provisions to ensure appropriate placements are made.
- Moves can be more challenging for people with protected characteristics, such as people with dementia, Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority (BAME) groups, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups. Each person's move should be handled with sensitivity.
- Good practice should always be person-centred, identifying what the individual wants. Remember, person-centred care also considers the needs and wishes of carers – both family and friends.
- Essentially, communication is key. Practitioners should provide timely information and advice on when and what the options are and discuss the potential consequences of each option with a clear timeline. Knowing and understanding the options can empower older people and their carers to make proactive decisions, leading to a smoother move.

## CO-PRODUCED RESOURCES

The Better Care Moves project involved older people, family carers and social care practitioners as co-researchers in all stages. These findings and resources are based on research that involved:

- A literature review to discover key unmet transition-related needs of older people and the approaches used by social care practitioners in supporting the transition.
- Interviews with 10 social care practitioners, 6 older people and 11 family carers with lived experience.
- The co-production of resources and guidance through practitioner and public engagement.



Effective communication, proactive decision-making, and adequate support from practitioners are key in ensuring smoother transitions. Recognising the crucial role of social care practitioners in this process, it is imperative to equip them with the necessary tools, training, and systemic support to enhance care transitions and improve outcomes for older people.

For more information and tools, check our co-produced video-based resources: <https://socialcaretalk.org/older-people-care-moves>. If you want to know more about the project, please contact Dr Wenjing Zhang ([w.j.zhang@kent.ac.uk](mailto:w.j.zhang@kent.ac.uk)).

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