

The Older People's Advocacy Alliance

27 January 2025

HOW CARE HOME GROUPS IN THE UK SIGNPOST OLDER PEOPLE IN THEIR CARE TO INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY

Key findings from OPAAL's review of Care Home Group websites' compliance with NICE Guidance NG227.

- It is very difficult to find a reference to independent advocacy for older people on the majority of Care Home Group websites, with the one notable exception of Brancaster Care Homes.
- It is highly unlikely that older people living in care homes, who may not know about advocacy, and in some instances may not have anyone in their life who can help them speak up about their needs and wants, will get the support they need to fully express themselves about decisions that directly affect the quality of their lives.
- The vast majority of Care Home Groups are not demonstrating that they are complying with the NICE Guidance NG227, specifically.
"Offer advocacy to people who are not covered by the legal entitlement, but who would otherwise not be able to express their views or sufficiently influence decisions that are likely to have a substantial impact on their wellbeing or the well being of someone they have caring or parental responsibility for." [NG227 1.2.1]

OPAAL is calling upon all Care Home Groups in the UK to take the following actions:

- To provide information on independent advocacy; what it is, how it could help older people (and others), and how it can be accessed.
- Information on independent advocacy should be provided **prominently** in the places and online sites that older people, or those that support them, are likely to visit when considering if a care facility is right for them.
- Care Home Groups should **prominently** signpost older people in their care to organisations that can either provide some form of formal or informal advocacy, or can provide advice/information/resources on how older people can self advocate.

Introduction:

On 9 November 2022, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence issued guidance on advocacy services for adults with health and social care needs ([NG227](#)).

In the NG227 Guidance, NICE asks all those involved with the provision of health and social care sector to,

“Offer advocacy to people who are not covered by the legal entitlement, but who would otherwise not be able to express their views or sufficiently influence decisions that are likely to have a substantial impact on their wellbeing or the well being of someone they have caring or parental responsibility for.” [NG227 1.2.1]

18 months after the issuance of the NG227, the Older People’s Advocacy Alliance (OPAAL) began conducting a survey of Care Home Groups in the UK, to examine how many Care Home Groups have information on their websites, or, once having been written to, could provide evidence to show that their policies and procedures would meet the requirements of NG227. This report details the findings of those enquiries.

OPAAL's method:

OPAAL used data provided by the website carehome.co.uk to identify care home groups that provide social care services to older people. The decision to focus on care home groups was taken so that OPAAL could assess compliance on NG227 in the widest number of care homes possible.

We conducted an internet review, to see which of the care home groups (listed at Appendix 1) also referenced advocacy in some form. The review was undertaken between 19th June and 20 December 2024.

We followed this basic methodology:

- We looked for care home groups listed on www.carehome.co.uk and checked to see if there was a website listed.
- If there was a website, we looked for an obvious reference to advocacy on that site.
- If we could not see a reference to advocacy, we attempted to find a way to contact the care home group, either an email address or if there was a contact form on the website.

Our method contained the following weaknesses:

- No reference to advocacy on a website, does not necessarily mean that there are no advocacy policies or practices in place for that care home group.
- No response to an enquiry about advocacy policies and procedures does not necessarily mean that there are no advocacy policies or practices in place for that care home group.
- If the contact form on a care home group's website only allowed for a short message, we excluded that care home group from our enquiries.
- A proportion of care home groups do not have a website listed on www.carehome.co.uk.
- A proportion of care home groups do not have a working email listed on their website.

OPAAL's method (cont.):

- A proportion of care home groups only had email addresses for individual care homes, in this instance we emailed just one of the care homes as a representative of the whole group.

Where we found no reference to advocacy at all, we wrote to the care home groups (See message at Appendix 2). We introduced ourselves, explained the concept of independent advocacy, talked about NG 227, and where possible included an article (See Appendix 3) detailing the practical benefits of the application of advocacy. We then asked the following questions:

- Any adjustments you have made to your services in order to inform older people about independent advocacy when decisions are being made about their lives.
- Any additional training you have implemented so that your staff are aware of independent advocacy and can identify when it is needed, and signpost older people to it.

We also offered FREE resources and training aides, to enable organisations to make the necessary changes to incorporate advocacy into their policies and procedures.

Our findings:

Total number of Care Home Group websites reviewed.	515
Number of Care Home Groups that reference advocacy on their website.	1 (0.2%)
Number of Care Home Groups that do not obviously reference advocacy in some form on their website.	514 (99.8%)
Total number of Care Home Groups written to.	514
Number of Care Home Groups that responded to the letter in some form.	5 (0.9%)
<i>Of the 4 Care Home Groups respondents:</i>	
Number of Care Home Groups that provided a substantive response to the letter, giving evidence of advocacy policies and practices.	2
Number of care home groups seeking advice and information about the application of informal advocacy.	3
Number of Care Home Groups that did not respond to the contact in any way	509 (99.1%)

Our conclusions:

The findings of our review are really clear. It is very difficult to find a reference to independent advocacy for older people on care home websites OR when contacting a care home group, to get reassurance that independent advocacy practices and procedures are in place.

It is therefore highly unlikely that vulnerable older people in care homes, who may not know about advocacy, and in some instances may not have anyone in their life who can help them speak up about their needs and wants, will get the support they need to fully express themselves about decisions that directly affect the quality of their lives.

This means that the vast majority of Care Home Groups in the UK are not complying with the NICE Guidance NG227.

OPAAL is calling upon all the Care Home Groups in the UK to take the following actions.

- To provide information on independent informal advocacy, what it is, how it could help older people (and others), and how it can be accessed.
- Information on independent advocacy should be provided prominently on the places that older people, or those that support them, are likely to see when dealing with health, social care or housing issues.
- Care Home Groups should provide links to organisations that can either provide some form of informal advocacy, or advice/information/resources on how to self advocate prominently on the pages that older people, or those that support them, are likely to visit when dealing with health, social care or housing issues.

Care Home Groups and Independent Advocacy for Older People

Appendix 01

3A Care (London)
Ayush Care Ltd
Axel Bond Care Ltd
Avondalecare (Kent) Ltd
Avondale care (Scot) Ltd
Avon Care Homes
Avery Healthcare Group
Avante Care and Support
Avantage care homes
Autograph Care
Aurem Care
Aura Care Living
Auditcare
Atkinson Homes
Athena Healthcare Group
Athena Care Homes
Astoria Healthcare
Assured Healthcare Solutions
Asprey Healthcare Ltd
Aspen Hill Healthcare
Askham Village Community
Ashton Healthcare Group
Ashton Care (Bognor Regis)
Ashmere Nottinghamshire
Ashmere
Ashdene Management Services Ltd
Ashall Care
Ascot Residential Homes
Ascot Care Ltd
As U Care Ltd
Arrowsmith Lodge Rest Home Ltd
Armscare Ltd
Aria Care
Ardale
Archmore Care Services
Archers Healthcare Ltd
Apex Healthcare
Anson Care Services Ltd
Ann's Care Homes Ltd

Angel Healthcare Ltd
Anchor
Anavo Group
Amstecos Ltd
Amicura Ltd
Amica Care Trust
Amesbury Abbey Group
Amber Care
Alton Care Group
Alpha Health Care Ltd
Allegra Care
Allendale Care Group
Allag Care Ltd
Burnview Healthcare
Bupa Care Homes
Buckland Care
Brookvale Healthcare
Bristol Care Homes
Brighthelm Care
Brighterkind
Brendoncare Foundation
Brecon Care
Bradwell Hall Nursing Home Ltd
Bracebridge Care Group (Email)
Boutique Care Homes
Borough Care Group
Bloom Care Group
Blissful Care Homes
Bliss Care Ltd
Black Swan Care Group
BJP Group
Birtley House Group
Birchester Care
Bethseda Healthcare Ltd
Berkley Care Group
Benslow Management Company
Benridge Care Group
Belong Group
Belmont Healthcare
Bellavista Nursing Homes

Care Home Groups and Independent Advocacy for Older People

Appendix 01
(cont.)

Belfast Central Mission
BCOP Care Homes
BCG Care Homes
Bayswood Care Group
Barleybind Ltd
Barchester Healthcare Ltd
B and M Care Ltd
B C and G Care Homes Ltd
Czajka Care Group
Cygnets Nursing Homes
Curo Care Group Ltd
Curaa Group Ltd
Crownwood Healthcare Ltd
Crown Care Group
Crosscrown Ltd
Cromwell Care
Crocus Care Ltd
Country Court Care Homes
Coton Care Ltd
Corton House Ltd
Constantia Care Homes
Connaught Care Group
Colville Care Ltd
Colton Care Ltd
Cobham Care Home
Coate Water Care Co Ltd
Coast Care Homes Ltd
Clontara Group
Clearstone Care Ltd
Clarendon Care Group
Claregrange Ltd
Church Farm Care
Chiltern Residential Homes Ltd
Cheshire Residential Homes Trust
Cherry Garden Properties Ltd
CHD Living Ltd
Charis House Ltd
Charing Healthcare
Chanctonbury Healthcare

Cephas Alpha Group
Centrum Care Homes
Central England Healthcare
Cedarmore Housing Association
Cedar Care Homes
Cathena Healthcare Ltd
Castlemeadow Care Group
Cartwright Care
Caron Group
Carlton Care Group
Caring Homes Group
Carey Care
Carewise Homes Ltd
Care Concepts
Carebase Ltd
Care UK Nursing and Residential Care Services
Care South
Care Homes UK Ltd
Care Homes of Distinction
Care Fulfilment Ltd
Cardinal Healthcare
Caram Group
Capital Care Homes
Capital Care Group
Canterbury Care
Cannon Care Homes
Canford Healthcare
Camelot Care
C & C Care Homes
Cedar Trust Care Homes
Dunluce Healthcare
Dryband One Ltd
Dreams Care Homes
Doveleigh Care Ltd
Dorrington House
Dormy Care Communities
DMP Healthcare
Diamond Care Homes
Diagrama Healthcare Services Ltd
Devonshire Care

Care Home Groups and Independent Advocacy for Older People

Appendix 01
(cont.)

Devon Care Group
Delta Care
David J Mitchell
David Cope
Danforth Care Homes
D E M A and Bismor Care
D & L Care Homes Ltd
Exclusive Care Group
Excelcare
Evolve Care Group
Evermore Care Homes
European Healthcare Group
Eothen Care Homes
Enhanced Elderly Care Ltd
Elizabeth Finn Homes
Eleanor Nursing and Social Care Ltd
Elder Homes Ltd
Eastleigh Care Homes
East Anglia Care Homes
Each Other Care
Flyde Care Group
Future Care Group
Friends of the Elderly
Friendly Care Group
Friary Care Ltd
Franklin Care Group
Foxholes Care Home Ltd
Foxcare Ltd
Forest Care Ltd
Florence Care Reading Ltd
First Care Home Group
Fewcott Healthcare Ltd
Father Hudson's Care
Fairways Care Ltd
Guild Care
Green Square Accord
Green Cross Care
The Graham Care Group
Grace and Compassion Benedictines

Goring Care Homes Ltd
Gloucester Charities Trust
Glenholme Healthcare Group Ltd
Glaslyn Care Homes
Glancestyle Care Homes plc
Gingerbread Commercial Ltd
Gem Care Ltd
Huntingdon and Langham Estate
Hudson Healthcare
Hornby Healthcare
Homescare Ltd
Homecroft Ltd
Holmwood House Holdings
Holden Grange Care Group Ltd
Hillcroft Nursing Homes
Highgate Care
HICA Group
Hestia Care Ltd
Hermes Care
Heritage Manor Ltd
Herefordshire Care Homes
Heatherwood Nursing Home Ltd
Healthcare Management Trust
Healthcare Homes Group Ltd
Hatzfeld Care Ltd
Hartford Care Group Ltd
Harbour Healthcare
Handsdale Ltd
Hamberley Care Homes
Hallmark Luxury Care Homes
Halcyon Care Group
Hafod Care Association
Hadrian Healthcare
Island Healthcare Ltd
Integrum Care Group
Improving Prospects Ltd
Ideal Carehomes Ltd
I Care International Ltd
Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust
John Whitgift Foundation

Care Home Groups and Independent Advocacy for Older People

Appendix 01
(cont.)

Jewish Care
Jesmund Care Ltd
Jasmine Healthcare Ltd
Janes Care Homes
KYN Ltd
KRG Healthcare
Knights Care Ltd
Kirklands Care Ltd
Kingsley Healthcare Group
Keychange Charity
Kew Care Group
Kent Square Care Group
Kay Care Services Ltd
Kathryn Homes NI Ltd
Luxe Manor Care Group
Lukka Care Homes
Lovett Care Ltd
Loveday
Lotus Care Management Services Ltd
LittleInch Ltd
Littlehampton and Rustington Housing Society
Littlecombe Park Ltd
Lister House Ltd
Lindemann Healthcare
Lilian Faithfull Care Charity
LifeCare Residences Ltd
Lidder Care
Lee Mount Healthcare Ltd
Leaders of Worship & Preachers Homes
LifeCare Residences Ltd
Larchwood Care
Langsdale Homes Ltd
Landona House Ltd
Lakeview Rest Homes Ltd
L Adams and J Adams
My Care Ltd
Mrs C Mills
Mr and Mrs Raj Doorga
Mr and Mrs G Haddow

Mr and Mrs B I Seedeehul
Moundsley Hall Ltd
Morar Living
MNS Care Plc
Mission Care
Minton Care Hotels Ltd
Minster Care Group
Millennium Care Group
Millcroft and York Lodge Care Homes Ltd
Milkwood Care Ltd
Milford Care
Midplant Ltd
Midlands Care
MHA Auchlochan Ltd
MG Homes
Merling Care Homes
Memory Lane Care Homes Ltd
Medicrest Ltd
Meallmore Ltd
Meadow Care Homes Ltd
May Residential Homes Ltd
Maven Healthcare One Ltd
Mauricare Homes
Marton Care Homes Ltd
Mark Cowling
Marina Stack
Maria Mallaband Care Group Ltd
Marantomark Ltd
Mansfield Care Ltd
Manor Care Home Group
Mannamead Care
Majesticare
Magna Care Group Ltd
Macklin Care Homes
MACC Care Ltd
M R Patel
M D Homes
Numada Health Care
Notaro Homes Ltd
Norwood House Nursing Home Ltd

Care Home Groups and Independent Advocacy for Older People

Appendix 01
(cont.)

Northgate Healthcare
North East Care Homes Ltd
Norse Care (Services) Ltd
Normanhurst
Norfolk Care Homes
Nightingale Hammerson
Nick Hawkins
Nicholas James Care Homes Ltd
Newbloom Healthcare
New Care
Nene Valley Care
Nellsar Care Homes
Nazareth Lodge Ltd
Navigation Care Ltd
Oyster Care Homes
Outlook Care Locations
Osborn Care Homes Ltd
Orla Homes Ltd
Orchard Care Homes
Orchard Care (South West) Ltd
Opus Care Ltd
Optima HCI
Optima Care Group
Optalis Ltd
Only Care
Olea Care Ltd
Ochre Care Ltd
Oakland Care
Oak Tree Care Group
O S W L
prOKare Ltd
Priory Adult Care
Priority Care
Princedale Care
Primula Care Ltd
Prime Life Ltd
Prime Care Group
Prime Care (GB) Ltd
Pressbeau Ltd

Premium Care Homes Ltd
Portland Care
Porthaven Care Homes
Popular Care Ltd
Plas Garnedd Care
Pilgrims Friend Society
Phyllis Lee Locations
PH Care Group
Peveler Court Care
People First Care Ltd
Peninsula Care Homes Ltd
Pearlcare
Pearl Healthcare Group
Parkhaven Trust
Park Homes UK Ltd
Park Healthcare Ltd
Papillon
Pallottine Missionary Sisters
Pages Homes Ltd
Quantam Care Ltd
Qualia Care Ltd
Runwood Homes Ltd
Royal Star and Garter (Email)
Royal Bay Care Homes
Rotherwood Group
Rosmead Healthcare
Rosewood Healthcare Ltd
Rosedale Care
Roseberry Care Centre Ltd
Rockdale Housing Association
Roche Healthcare
RochCare (UK) Ltd
Roberts Homes Care Ltd
RNJ Care Ltd
RMD Care
Richmond Villages
Renaissance Care
Regency Healthcare (Email)
Regal Care Trading Ltd
Redwood Health Care

Care Home Groups and Independent Advocacy for Older People

Appendix 01
(cont.)

Red Homes Healthcare Group
RDCP Care
RCH Care Homes Ltd
RCB Healthcare Group
Rayners (Extra Care Home) Ltd
Raycare Ltd
Randolph Hill Nursing Homes Group Ltd
Radfield Home Care
R K L Living Ltd
Swan & Cygnet Care Ltd
Swallowcourt Ltd
Sussex Housing and Care
SUSASH GB Ltd
Surecare Group
Superior Care (Midlands) Ltd
Sun Healthcare Ltd
Summerhill Group
Strong Life Care Ltd
Strathmore Care
Stowcare Ltd
Stow Healthcare Group
Stour Valley Care Group
Stonehaven Care Group
Stocks Hall Care Group
Stag Care Group
St Vincent Care Homes Ltd
St Philips Care Group
St Monica Trust
St Michael's Homes Ltd
St Michael's Care Homes Ltd
St Martins Care Ltd
Springdene Nursing and Care Homes Ltd
Springcare Ltd
Spring View Care Ltd
Splendid Health Care
Sovereign Care Ltd
Southey Care (Dorset) Ltd
Southcare Homes
South West Care Homes Ltd

South Coast Nursing Homes Ltd
Somerset Care
Sohal Healthcare Ltd
Smart Care Homes Ltd
SLR Care Homes Ltd
Sisters Hospitallers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus CIO
Silverline Care
Silverlake Care
Silvercrest Care
SheffCare (Email)
Shaw Healthcare
Sfera Care
Sevaline Care Homes Ltd
Serene Care Ltd
Sentimental Care Ltd
Select Healthcare
SCL Care Ltd
Saturn Healthcare Ltd
Sandstone Care Group
Sanders Senior Living
Sanctuary Care Ltd
Sai Care Homes
Sage Care Homes Ltd
Safequarter Private Care Homes
Safe Harbor
SLW Ltd
Ty Draw and Wentworth Lodge Ltd
Twelve Trees Ltd
Trustees Augustinian Community
Trust Care Ltd
Townfield and Coach House Care Ltd
Towans Care Ltd
Thistle Healthcare Ltd
The Seckford Foundation
The Salvation Army
The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust
The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution Care Company
The Prestige Group
The Park Lane Healthcare Group Ltd
The Orders of St John Care Trust

Care Home Groups and Independent Advocacy for Older People

Appendix 02

Message to Care Home Groups

Dear XXXXXX

We are the Older People's Advocacy Alliance charity (OPAAL) www.opaal.org.uk and for over 20 years we have promoted independent advocacy for older people, particularly at key points in their lives when they face decisions about their health and wellbeing.

The decisions about how we live as we age are crucial to ensuring that we can all enjoy a happy and fulfilling later life. With this in mind, in November 2022 the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) issued the following guidance as part of NG227: "Advocacy services for adults with health and social care needs",

"Offer advocacy to people who are not covered by the legal entitlement, but who would otherwise not be able to express their views or sufficiently influence decisions that are likely to have a substantial impact on their wellbeing or the wellbeing of someone they have caring or parental responsibility for." [\[NG227 1.2.1\]](#)

[Included with email contacts: I have attached an article that fully explains what we are seeking to clarify with you.]

As a provider of adult care services, I would be really grateful if you would share any ways in which your network of establishments has changed the way it operates to take account of NG227 including:

- Any adjustments you have made to your services in order to inform older people about independent advocacy when decisions are being made about their lives.
- Any additional training you have implemented so that your staff are aware of independent advocacy and can identify when it is needed, and signpost older people to it.

If for any reason you have not been able to make any adjustments as outlined above, OPAAL is more than happy to provide you with FREE relevant resources and training materials, so that you can easily meet this requirement. This aligns with our charitable objective of promoting independent advocacy for older people.

You may be interested to know that earlier this year we completed a review of how many Local Authorities in England and Wales are signposting independent advocacy to older people at the point of need for health and social care services. You may be as dismayed as we were to learn that a great many older people will struggle to get independent support in making the decisions that best suit them, just when they need it the most. We shared our findings with the CQC, who were very supportive and encouraging in our mission to improve matters.

Hopefully, with your support and the support of other care groups, we can generate some momentum within the care sector, to normalise older people getting help to speak up about their needs and wants if they need it, and thereby ensuring that older people get to live the way they choose in later life.

If you would like to discuss any of this further with us, we would very much welcome a conversation with you.

With best wishes,

Colette Isaaks

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Making the right choice at the right time

The importance of independent advocacy, information and support for older adults when making decisions about any care needs in later life.

As the numbers of older adults in the UK continues to grow, for everyone to enjoy a happy and fulfilling later life, making the right choices that reflect individualised care and support needs becomes increasingly crucial. Ensuring that each older individual receives the right care, at the right time, requires a system that not only meets any medical and physical needs but also respects the autonomy and personal preferences of that older person. This is why independent advocacy, support, and information play a vital role in any decision-making process about care needs, as highlighted in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidance NG227.

The role of independent informal advocacy

Independent informal advocacy ensures that the voices of older adults are heard and respected when decisions about their care are made. An informal advocate can be anyone the older person chooses, e.g. a family member, a friend, a faith leader, who has the time to listen to the older person's needs and wants and is able to help them express them. For this to be effective however, the advocate must be able to remain totally impartial about any decisions made by the older person.

These advocates can help navigate the often-complex healthcare and social care systems, making sure that older individuals are fully informed about their options and the implications of different choices. This guidance is crucial for making informed decisions that reflect the individual's values and desires. And they can act as intermediaries between the individual and healthcare providers, ensuring that the individual's preferences, rights, and best interests are prioritised.

Some older adults neither need, want, or have access to someone in their circle who is willing and able to act as an informal advocate for them. In these circumstances steps must be taken to support an older individual to advocate for themselves. Self-advocacy is very powerful as it ensures that the older person is always recognised as the expert on themselves. To execute self-advocacy effectively however, some older people may need some different kinds of support, such as note-taking in meetings and/or telephone conversations, information gathering, and additional time for reflection before reaching any conclusions.

The necessity of timely and relevant information

Access to comprehensive information is essential for older adults to exercise their rights and make informed choices about their care. Information should be presented in a clear, accessible manner, considering the potential sensory impairments that can sometimes accompany ageing.

Information is also crucial for families and caregivers, who play a significant role in the support system of older adults. Educating caregivers about the needs and rights of older individuals helps in providing better care and ensuring compliance with the individual's wishes.

It is important to remember, however, that if an older person has been given all the relevant information, had time to consider their options, understood any personal or financial risks that they may be taking, and then decides not to make any changes or to make changes that may appear risky, it remains their right to act in a way that may seem to others to be contrary to their best interests. Whilst this may be hard for others to accept, taking considered risks is a big part of adulthood, and an important factor in ensuring that our autonomy remains intact.

Compliance with NICE Guidance NG227 and Care Quality Commission monitoring

In the NG227 Guidance, NICE asks all those involved with the provision of health and social care sector to,

“Offer advocacy to people who are not covered by the legal entitlement, but who would otherwise not be able to express their views or sufficiently influence decisions that are likely to have a substantial impact on their wellbeing or the wellbeing of someone they have caring or parental responsibility for.” [NG227 1.2.1]

With this in mind, the Care Quality Commission has created “People’s experience” as a distinct evidence category that they will consider going forwards. This has been designed to identify both good and poor practice when delivering care. Taking account of individual needs and wants is at the heart of that commitment. Providing evidence that an individual has been signposted to independent advocacy or support to self-advocate, will be an important practice for everyone involved in health and social care for older adults.

Conclusion

Independent advocacy, support and information are cornerstones of effective, individualised care for older adults. These elements ensure that older individuals can navigate complex healthcare systems, understand their options, and make decisions that align with their personal values and preferences. Adhering to NICE Guidance NG227 is crucial for fostering a care environment that respects the dignity and autonomy of older adults, ultimately leading to better health outcomes and improved quality of life. As we move forward, it is imperative that healthcare providers, policymakers, and society at large prioritise these aspects to support our ageing population effectively. For more information and many free resources on the provision of independent informal advocacy for older people please visit www.opaal.org.uk.