

Advantages And Disadvantages Of Home Care & Residential Care

By **Adam Pike** - June 29, 2018



As parents and loved ones become older, their wellbeing and [safety can become major concerns](#). For all of us, our memories can struggle with age, and that can affect how well we look after ourselves. That can range from forgetting to take daily [medicines](#), to having trouble getting out of bed, to falling in the night. It can be scary and upsetting for a grown up child to see their parent get old and struggle, but it is important to be aware when they need extra help. If you think that your parent needs some extra everyday assistance, there are many [care options](#) available. From home care workers to 24 hour residential care. Here we highlight some of the advantages and disadvantages of home care and residential care, to help you make the right decision for your loved ones.

Home Care

For older adults that are able to do most of their [day to day activities independently](#), but require additional support with cooking, cleaning, house work or getting out and about, home care can be a great option. Many organisations offer a range of support services, so that you and your parent can decide how much support to organise.

Advantages of using home care:

- Carers visit on a daily basis to assist with everything from bathing to cooking, cleaning, buying groceries and taking your parents to doctor's appointments.
- Individuals can remain in living in their own home and maintain a degree of independence which can be really important for many.
- For those that prefer home comforts, residential care might be overwhelming so home care offers a great intermediary option.
- Home care ensures that family and friends can come over at any time and are not restricted by visitation hours which can be important in maintaining mental wellbeing and preventing [loneliness](#).
- As the older person remains in their own home, and doesn't get 24 hours care, often, home care is more affordable than residential care.

Disadvantages of home care:

- Although home care may be cheaper on the surface, the home may need fitting with ramps, railings and chairlifts, which can become costly and difficult to organize.
- Many home care agencies change from week to week and this can be unsettling for older people as well as their families. If home care is opted for, make sure all financial options are discussed and that everyone is happy to proceed.
- Some older people may not trust external support. This can make them feel vulnerable and alone. It is important to talk to older parents about their worries, and also [consider whether the carer is right for them](#).
- For older people who are very social, some may enjoy the social side of sheltered housing or residential care- which is not offered by home care.

Residential Care

Residential care, strictly speaking, is out of home care for those with no longer able to live alone and who have low additional care needs. However, many people and organizations have come to use the term 'residential care' to describe all out of home care, including the most complex and intensive care such as nursing care and specialist care for those living with [dementia](#).

If your parent needs extra support and is no longer able to live alone, then residential care can be the right solution. However, the confusion over what term to use can be just the tip of the iceberg with regards to deciding what type of out

of home care to look for, and where to look for it. However, the most important thing is to start the research process, consider what advantages and disadvantages residential care could offer and [discuss it with your parent](#). Here we have listed some of the most important pros and cons consider:

Advantages of residential care:

- Residential care is a safe and secure option for older people who are no longer able to live alone, or who are lonely. Residential care ensures all of the individuals living needs are taken care of and the home will provide a room and full board. This will remove the responsibility and worry about doing house work or making own meals.
- Personal and medical care is available 24/7, which can be really helpful for older adults who are lonely, prone to [falling](#), or who require frequent medications but often forget. Having staff on hand all the time to help out can also reassure older people.
- Many residential care homes allow those who are married to stay together. This can be reassuring for many senior citizens who are afraid of separation.
- Most residential care facilities offer activities and trips. Activity programs provided by care teams can vary depending on location, and size of the home, however activities can include gardening, baking, gentle exercise and music. Some residential home also offer specialist activities such as brain training and complementary therapy.

Disadvantages of residential care:

- Residential care is typically more expensive than home care due to its all inclusive nature and the fact that staff are available 24/7. This can make it difficult to access for some families.
- Residential care can be a nurturing environment. Organisations such as [Oomph Wellness](#), can make life in the home active and enjoyable, offering engaging activities and help with getting out and about. However, despite the activities on offer, some older people can find it difficult to adapt to living in a care environment, and miss their independence. It is important that you talk to your loved ones about residential care, and ask them about the activities they would like to get involved with, and what worries them, before committing to a residential home.
- Although most homes have all-day visiting hours, the location of residential care can be some distance from the family. This makes it harder to maintain family bonds and regular activities. It is important that you consider distances when choosing which care home is right for your loved one.

After considering all the possible advantages and disadvantages, it's important to remember that everyone is different, and that no matter how elderly your parent may be, or how much care they may require, it is important to include your parents in the discussion about their care to help them feel more comfortable and confident in the care that they receive.