

**Talking Point chat room Thursday 27 August**  
**Q&A on life following a move to a care home or bereavement with Donna from**  
**the National Dementia Helpline**

HarrietD	Hi everyone, and welcome to the Talking Point chat room. We'll be starting today's Q&A session shortly on adjusting to life after a move to a care home, or bereavement. Donna from the helpline team will be here to answer your questions on this topic until 3pm.
HarrietD	Welcome, Donna :)
donnac	Hello Harriet and chat room people, thank you for inviting me.
HarrietD	So, please can you start us off by telling us a little about your role on the helpline?
donnac	I work as a helpline adviser for the National Dementia Helpline. I am part of a team of advisers. We work seven days a week and we are here for everything that may affect carers and people with dementia. For example, from a listening ear to advising on lasting powers of attorney. If we are unable to help we probably know where to signpost you to an organisation that can help.
HarrietD	Fantastic, thanks Donna.
HarrietD	To anyone who's just joined us, welcome! Today's Q&A is on life after a move to a care home or bereavement, and Donna from our helpline is here until 3. Please feel free to ask any questions to Donna. We've also had a few questions come in via email, so we'll do our best to answer those too.
HarrietD	I'll start with the first one that's been emailed to us - a member's husband, who is 64 with Alzheimer's and has been in a care home for two years, has started being aggressive. She wanted to know if this is his illness progressing, and also whether there's anything she can do to help him?
donnac	As dementia progresses there are often changes and aggression is not uncommon, but it can occur for many different reasons and getting to the root cause may be useful in helping to resolve it. For example, a person with dementia may be aggressive with some carers and not others and this may be to do with the way the person with dementia is approached. Carers are often time restricted so they may approach quite quickly face-on. This can be frightening for the person with dementia and consequently means that they may become agitated.
disi	Hi, my OH went into permanent CH nearly 3 months ago. It's very hard sometimes on my own after 53 yrs of marriage. I want to cry for the silliest things. I thought I was a strong person, but realise I'm not. When I see my husband, he still knows me, but no conversation. I hate saying goodbye, although I know within a short time he will have forgotten I had

	been. Sorry I just wanted to tell you this.
HarrietD	Thanks for sharing that, disi - Donna will reply to you shortly.
donnac	Hi Disi, that sounds very difficult. You have been together for many decades and it would be strange if you didn't feel sad about leaving him. It may help to know that there is evidence that even if a person with dementia forgets quite quickly the feeling stays for a long time, so your visits are very important for his well-being.
disi	Thank you donnas
donnac	Just wondering Disi if you have any support for after the visits. On the helpline we often get Sunday calls after carers visit their loved ones. It helps some people to talk after a visit?
disi	sorry should be donnac
disi	I do talk on TP but didn't know about the helpline, can you point me in the right direction. I should add my OH does still know me, his son and family as well. He has Vascular Dementia and is thankfully not aggressive. Also I don't live in the UK
donnac	Thanks Disi, it's good your OH still knows you, I was responding to the fact that he may forget the visit and just saying he won't forget the good feeling your visit will have generated. I don't know where you live but most countries have a version of the Alzheimer's Society. You could probably google that. However, time zones and cost permitting you can call us on 0300 222 1122. Hope that helps?
nannylondon	I am still struggling with guilt feelings husband has been in care home 3 months he was sectioned before this as he got very violent now he has really gone downhill loss of speech and mobility I now wonder if he had stayed at home would he have deteriorated at same rate he no longer recognises any of us
disi	Thank you donna
HarrietD	Thanks for your question, nannylondon - Donna will respond to you as soon as she can.
donnac	Thanks NannyLondon, easy for me to say, I know, but you have no reason to feel guilty. When someone is sectioned it is for their own safety and the safety of others. Dementia is progressive, so no matter where your husband was the pattern of progression would probably have been the same. Sometimes people with dementia do not recognise the roles within the family but he will probably be aware these are people he has an emotional bond to and the bond will remain unbroken.
lorsim	hello
donnac	Hello Lorsim, thanks for joining us. Is there anything about today's topic you want to ask me about?
HarrietD	We're coming to the end of today's Q&A, and we have a few minutes left if lorsim or anyone else would like to ask a question? In the meantime, thanks to everyone who's joined

	us today, whether to ask questions or just observe, and a special thanks to Donna for kindly answering them :)
marsbar	Logged on a bit late for today but really worried as mom is getting worse and my siblings are pushing for her to go into a care home
donnac	Hello Mars, sorry to hear you are so worried. I'm just wondering what your mum wants in this situation and what you think is the best option for her?
HarrietD	That's ok marsbar. I'll leave the Q&A open for a few minutes longer so that you have a chance to reply to Donna.
marsbar	Best option I think is for care in her home at the moment but she gets so lonely, i still work and do my best but no it's not quite good enough somehow
donnac	Sorry Marsbar but we are out of time. It looks as if you are in the UK so calling us on our helpline on 0300 222 1122 might be the best idea. We have a 7 day a week service. Also, the subject is one best explored by phone. I hope that is okay?
HarrietD	Thanks Donna - I hope that helps a little, marsbar. I'll need to bring this Q&A to a close now - thanks to all those who popped in, and thanks again to Donna for joining us today and for all your helpful answers :)
marsbar	yea that's fine, i posted on the back of a troubling visit to mom, I know I need to seek further advice, thanks for listening
donnac	Well I'm signing off too. It has been a pleasure being here today. It's a new experience for me and it's been a great opportunity to meet the users of this very popular forum. I look forward to speaking to you on the helpline or replying to one of your emails :)

Thanks for reading the transcript from our Q&A session in the chat room on 27 August.

Some helpful resources on both topics are listed below:

- Information on selecting a care home and paying for care:  
<http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents.php?categoryID=200359>
- Living alone when your loved one is in a care home – Cynthia shares her story in our magazine:  
[http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?documentID=1867](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=1867)
- Top ten tips for people whose loved ones are now being cared for in a care home:  
[http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?&documentID=1205](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?&documentID=1205)
- Alzheimer's Society factsheet on coping with grief, loss and bereavement:  
[http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?documentID=170](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=170)

- Our forum for people dealing with the death of a loved one:  
<http://forum.alzheimers.org.uk/forumdisplay.php?28-After-dementia-%97-dealing-with-loss>

### **Alzheimer's Society National Dementia Helpline**

Our helpline - 0300 222 1122 - can provide emotional support, as well as guidance and signposting to other appropriate organisations. The helpline is usually open from 9am to 8pm Monday to Wednesday, 9am to 5pm Thursday to Friday and 10am to 4pm on Saturday and Sunday. You can also email the helpline team at [helpline@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:helpline@alzheimers.org.uk).

\*\*\*

If you have questions about our chat room, please contact us by emailing [talkingpoint@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:talkingpoint@alzheimers.org.uk).

You can view the chat room here: <http://forum.alzheimers.org.uk/chatroom.php>