



Live your best  
life at home

# Choosing home help

THAT WORKS FOR YOU

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Getting some kind of home help means you can look after your health, as well as your house and keep doing the things you love, including staying living in your own home.

Finding the right kind of home help can be easier said than done. Too often, the selection of a home help provider is left until the need is urgent and people simply settle for whoever can start tomorrow. If you're keen to stay in your home as you grow older, it makes sense to plan ahead to choose a provider you can trust.

**This is a quick guide that will simplify the process of choosing a home help provider.**



# Contents:

- 1. Plan ahead** to get what you want and need. This also means there is someone you trust that you can call on if your needs suddenly change
- 2. Learn how** publicly-funded and private-funded home services work
- 3. Look at all options** objectively - and the pros and cons of residential care and home-based support
- 4. Take time** to choose the right home help provider

# Plan ahead

THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT YOUR HOME HELP NEEDS AND WANTS

Home support organisations provide different services. Some may offer cleaning, housework and cooking. Others may offer help with showering, dressing, personal care and taking prescribed medications.

Those that include appropriately-trained caregivers can also offer help with daily medications, monitoring your health and supporting your health and mobility goals.

So before you start researching providers, it pays to plan ahead for the types of help you may need in the short and long term.

## Questions to ask yourself:

- What matters to me around the house and garden and makes me feel positive and in control?
- What are the tasks that feel hard or tedious but need to be done?
- What could I do with the extra time I'd gain if someone helped me?
- What sort of person do I want to help me?

## Talk to trusted family, friends and advisors

Think about what you want to be able to do with your days and talk to your doctor and family to get their input. Keep an open mind about what they have to say. People who know you well can often spot changes in your well-being that you're either optimistically ignoring or have gradually become accustomed to.

While you may not like the idea of a 'stranger' being in your home, let alone helping you with things like showering and dressing, finding someone you can trust early on lets you build a good relationship, so they won't feel like a stranger for long.



# Ideas for home help that can work for you

## Companionship and help with your house and garden

- **A regular check-in** – it can make a huge difference just to have someone to pop in each week, to have a chat and a quick cuppa. This can also stop your family worrying and filling your precious conversations with annoying questions about whether you're really OK.
- **Home help** – an extra pair of hands to help keep your household running smoothly by taking care of things like grocery shopping, meal preparation, home technology challenges, vacuuming, laundry, changing sheets and more.
- **Companionship** – a friend to spend time with you and keep you company, at home or helping you stay connected with friends, the local community, and your favourite hobbies.
- **Regular home clean** – someone to get the basics done, take care of the hard-to-reach places or give your home a spring clean.
- **Light gardening** – a skilled helper who can take care of weeding, mowing, planting, trimming, sweeping and so on, to keep things the way you like them.
- **Home maintenance** – a reliable local maintenance person to keep you on top of all those small repairs and home maintenance tasks that don't require a tradie.

## Personal care at home and nursing

Getting support with your health and daily personal needs is really helpful after an accident, surgery or just when you'd like to be faster and safer getting ready for your day. Some examples are:

- **Personal care** – a helper who visits at a time you choose to give you a hand with daily hygiene, grooming and dressing.
- **Nursing care** – a private visiting nurse for everything from general wellness to recovery from an accident or medical event.
- **Rise and shine** – a morning helper who can provide whatever assistance you need to ensure your day gets off to the best possible start.
- **End of the day** – an evening helper who takes you effortlessly from dinner to bedtime, from cooking your meal to checking the house is secure and putting the rubbish out.

# Learn how publicly-funded and private-funded home services work

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Public-funded home support for older New Zealanders is managed through our district health boards (DHBs) and is available to you for free, following an assessment of your needs. Private suppliers give you a lot more choice and control about what services you have, who gives them and what time they come, so they charge professional fees for the services they provide.

To help you, or someone close to you, get started on understanding the options, here's a summary of how each system works and an example of what you might pay for private care services. Remember, you can always have a mix of both to make it work for you.

The public-funded home care service is an important part of New Zealand's health framework, because it helps to keep older people healthy, happy and independent for longer. The number of people receiving care is significant.

As you'd expect, the funding is limited and services are provided based on assessed criteria. The goal is to ensure that older people with more acute needs are helped to continue living in their home, maintain their independence and quality of life, and involve themselves in the community.

For a wide range of reasons, many people choose to pay for private home care - either instead of, or in addition to, their local DHB services.





## Who is eligible for publicly funded home care?

Publicly-funded home care is available to New Zealand citizens or residents who are eligible for public health or disability services. If you're not sure whether you're eligible, there's a detailed guide on the [Ministry of Health website](#).

Being eligible doesn't mean you're automatically entitled to home care services. That will depend on the outcome of a needs assessment by your local DHB.

### What home care services might be included?

Based on your DHB's assessment of your needs, the home care provided may include some level of:

- Personal care, such as helping you get out of bed, shower, dress and/or manage your medications.
- Household support, such as cleaning (if you have a [community services card](#), which is income based) and preparing meals.
- Carer support, which is help for someone who lives with you (such as your partner) or someone who looks after you for at least four hours a day.
- Equipment that helps keep you safe at home.

The amount or frequency of any support will depend on both what the DHB assesses is necessary and what it is able to fund. For example, some people may only be allocated help with one shower a week or half an hour cleaning a month; others may receive a lot more.

Things like gardening, shopping and companionship are not usually included. As mentioned above, the DHBs need to ensure their funding is used to support as many people as possible, starting with those who have the greatest need.

## A step-by-step guide to the publicly-funded home help process

Here's a basic step-by-step summary of how publicly-funded home care works:

1. Talk to your GP first. Ask them to refer you to a DHB assessment service. (You can refer yourself directly, but the assessment team will usually want to talk to your GP as part of the process anyway.) If you are in hospital and need help when you get home, the DHB will organise 'post discharge assistance'. This follows a similar process, but usually takes less time.
2. The DHB's assessment service will arrange a time for an assessor to visit you in your home. Some may begin with initial questions over the phone. You can have someone with you for the visit, like a member of your family.
3. The assessor will conduct a detailed conversation with you to explore all your needs and the existing options you might have available, such as help from family or close friends. It may take a few hours.
4. The assessor makes a recommendation to the DHB.
5. The DHB decides what help you can have and allocates those services to one of their contracted providers.
6. The service provider contacts you to tell you what will be provided, called a care plan, when it might start, how often helpers will come, and if it will be in the morning or afternoon.
7. Helpers come to your home as arranged. It's usually not the same person every time, and sometimes different tasks may be shared between different care givers at different times.

So, it could be one person for showering, another for medication or meals, and another for cleaning. However, they will all have identification, know your name and know what they are coming to do. You just need to be home for each of the allocated mornings or afternoons, as they can't guarantee a specific time.

8. There is a clear process for providing feedback (questions or complaints) to the contracted service organisation about a helper or the services provided, if required.
9. Your needs are reassessed and a new care plan provided each year, or sooner if you ask for reassessment because your needs have changed.





## Why get private home help?

For those who can afford private care, either through their own funds or with assistance from family, it can contribute to wellbeing and peace-of-mind as well as the ability to remain living in your own home for longer with enhanced support and companionship.

Many people arrange private home help because the services they need are only partly provided by their DHB, are not assessed as a 'must-have' by their DHB or are simply not available as public-funded services. Others choose private home help because they feel safer and more certain knowing who is coming to help them and exactly when they will arrive.

## What services are available through private home care?

Everyone has different needs, ranging from regular medical assistance or personal care to shopping, exercise support, outings and companionship - or simply keeping on top of your 'to-do' list. Most well-known private help providers offer a similar list of services, but they're not always the same, so it pays to look around.

Arvida Good Friends is one of the newest private home help providers in New Zealand. Our approach is designed to put you in complete control of the services you require. Initially available in Christchurch, Arvida Good Friends is proving very popular. Our home help services will soon be available in more and more centres throughout the country.

# Choosing the right home support provider

Once you have a list of the types of help you might need in the future, you can start looking for the best in-home help providers based on your needs.

A search on the internet is a great place to start. You might use phrases like home care, help at home, personal care, nursing care, dementia care, companionship or transport for older people. Adding the name of your city or region, or the words 'near me', will help locate home care organisations in your area.

Eldernet has a very good directory and they have online and print resources you can use. You can also contact national organisations like Age Concern.

Collect the names and details of the options that look promising and dig deeper for more detailed insights.

**Here are some things to look for:**

- Independent customer stories and reviews
- Membership of organisations, such as the Home and Community Health Association
- Do they employ suitably qualified people?
- Do they screen employees carefully with things like police checks and drug tests?
- How are their helpers monitored and supervised?
- Do the helpers receive regular ongoing training?
- Will you get an individual help plan to approve before services start?
- How easy is it to arrange or change services?
- Will you get the same or different helper every visit? Can you meet them in advance?
- Can you choose the time that the helper visits you?
- Can you have direct contact with a senior person at the home help organisation?
- Can your family be involved if you want them to?



## Asking other people about in-home help services

The good, or not so good, experiences and opinions of others are a powerful source of information.

All kinds of people you know will have needed home help at some stage or helped to arrange it for someone else. Neighbours, friends, colleagues and wider family members are all people you can ask. You don't have to give too much away if you don't want to. You can always just say you're asking for someone else or planning ahead.

Don't forget to check with your doctor and ask your friends to do the same with their doctor. Ask if they recommend any home help providers and see if they have an opinion on the providers you're considering.

If you have a particular medical condition, there may be a support organisation that can provide recommendations.

## Visiting your top home help organisations

Once you've chosen three or four top home help organisations for your needs, it's time to arrange an appointment to interview them in person. Have a loved one or trusted support person with you, so you can compare notes afterwards.

## It helps to have a prepared list of questions you want to ask

### The right services for me

- Do you provide [insert the services you require]?
- What happens if my needs change? What levels of care can you provide?
- Do you have any clients I could talk to for references?

### The right person coming into my home

- What are your criteria for hiring helpers and carers?
- What background checks do you perform on your people?
- What ongoing training is provided for helpers?
- How do you ensure a good fit between a helper and the person they're looking after?
- Will I have the same helper every time or different people in my home?
- What happens if my helper can't make it or is running late?

### The cost to me

- What are your charges? Do you charge more on weekends?
- Is there a minimum time charged per visit?
- Do I still pay if I'm away on holiday or in hospital? What happens if I need to cancel a visit?
- How do I pay? Can my family pay for me?

## How do Arvida Good Friends home services work?

The Arvida Good Friends service is all about providing the assistance you want, when you want it, through a helper you are involved in choosing.

### Here's a summary of how that happens:

1. To talk about a membership plan that suits you best, you can talk to us on the phone or make a time to come and see us at our Living Well Centre.
2. We meet with you in your home to understand your story and create your personalised Help Plan. You're welcome to have someone like a family member present for support. It takes just over an hour and includes talking with you about the helper who best suits your needs.
3. Your Help Plan is always available to you and your helper (through our app, or in printed form) and can also be available to authorised representatives who you choose.
4. Before we start helping you, we introduce you to a trained and verified helper we think you will like and make sure you are happy with them as your main helper.
5. If you need extra services or your main helper is ever unwell or on leave, we will also introduce you to the person who will take their place when they are away and show them what we normally do. So when they come, you already know them and they know how you like things done.
6. Your helper visits on the scheduled days at the times we've agreed with you.
7. You can change, extend or cancel a helper's visit whenever you choose by contacting them directly in advance, or through your Care at Home Lead.
8. If you have questions or an issue with the service provided, you can contact your Care at Home Lead or one our friendly Living Well advisors.
9. You can ask your Care at Home Lead to update your Help Plan whenever you choose.

**Ring our Living Well Advisors on 0800 20 41 20 or [contact us online](#) to learn about us.**



## How much does Arvida Good Friends private home care cost?

Arvida Good Friends keeps all costs out in the open. Our members pay a weekly subscription fee, based on the type of service they want.

The subscription fee includes your assessment, your Help Plan preparation and management, the first half hour of your services every week and all helper travel time, as well as all your interactions with us. After that, you simply pay a fixed hourly rate for your helper's agreed time with you.

### Here are some of our popular plans and their pricing:

- **Living Well** – a base plan that gives you monthly wellbeing calls and advice over the phone, as well as access to discounts and exclusive events at our community living well centre. This plan is included with all others and costs \$5 a week.
- **Help at Home** – help around the house and garden, companionship and shopping - \$30 a week, (including the first 30 minutes), then \$36 an hour after that.
- **Care at Home** – services by qualified caring professionals that include personal care for your health and body as well as home help - \$50 a week, (including the first 30 minutes), then \$43 an hour after that.

### Keeping connected and staying in control

If you choose to, you (or your family) can access our easy-to-use Arvida Good Friends app. This gives you an, if you wish, your family, secure access on your smartphone to:

- Your help plan, which is also shared with your helper, including important information about the things that matter to you, the services/support you are to receive, and the family, friends and health professionals who support you.
- Information about your main helper, their skills and experience and their photo.
- A calendar of what services are scheduled.
- Live indication of when helpers are in your home.
- Notes for each visit and how you were that day.
- Your Care at Home Lead and helper's contact details so if you need to contact them you can, including things like cancelling or extending a scheduled visit.
- Statements and invoices so you are always up to date with how much you are paying and when.

# Understanding all your options

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Things can change quickly. Being prepared and understanding all your options at an early stage means you will be safe and well looked after by people you already trust if your needs change. The right choices for your friends may not be the right ones for you. The right choices now may not be the right choices in 5 years' time.

All this can be hard to think about, so having open conversations with your friends and family and doing your research early can help you see things from all perspectives. Most importantly, it can help you feel in control and ensure you make the best choices for you, at the right time.

## Thinking about home help

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Research at Macquarie University shows that every hour of basic home help a person gets, means they can stay living independently for 6% longer. This makes sense, because keeping your home and garden clean and safe, having regular companionship and being able to plan your days for social connection and physical activity are all powerful drivers of wellbeing as you grow older.

### Benefits of staying in the home you know and love and getting help

- You get to stay in your current home and live independently, your way
- If you qualify for some public-funded help, you might not have to pay
- If you opt for private home help, you can choose your helper and what they do for you.
- You're still close to friends, family and familiar neighbourhood amenities

# Thinking about residential communities

Many retirement communities provide a range of accommodation styles, from 100% independent living in standalone homes right through to 24/7 care in specialised rest home and hospital-level care rooms. Increasingly, communities are offering secure dementia care as well. This means that one of the key benefits of living in a community is something called 'continuum of care', where you can move through the various levels of care according to your needs.

Specialist rest home and hospital-level care can be both a temporary and a permanent option to consider when circumstances mean staying at home is too difficult.

## Benefits of residential communities

- You meet new people for companionship and social interaction
- There are recreational facilities and organised activities
- There's no more worry about house maintenance
- There are caring professionals on site and 24/7 security



# Take your time to choose the best approach for you

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Choosing the right home help provider for you is a major decision. Take your time, involve people you trust, ask questions and seek more information until all your questions and concerns are addressed. Make sure you choose someone who can provide the level of care and trust you deserve.

**If you'd like to talk to Arvida Good Friends about home help options, call 0800 20 41 20 or email us at [hello@goodfriends.co.nz](mailto:hello@goodfriends.co.nz) for more information.**

If you're interested in learning more about residential communities and care levels, the Arvida website includes an online tool that helps you to identify communities and care levels that could be right for you or someone close to you. Use our steps to care tool.

