Elder finds older people and their families reluctant to talk about care

Thursday 25 May, 2023

- **A recent survey from Elder – a leading live-in care marketplace, found just 27 percent of older people who either need care now, or had started to think about options had discussed this with their families.**
- **74 percent of family members would find it difficult to bring up the topic of care with an older loved one.**

With the UK care sector continuing to face extreme challenges, Live-in care marketplace Elder wanted to understand how families across the UK feel talking about care, and whether older people feel confident voicing their care wishes.

According to The King's Fund, the UK is seeing more requests for adult social care support. However, the total number of care home places has declined, staff vacancy rates are the highest since records began, and fewer people are receiving local authority care funding in the form of direct payments - a crucial step in personalising individual care experiences.

Elder surveyed over 700 people who either have an older loved one needing care, or were considering their own care needs. The survey focused on how they've felt, or would feel having these conversations with family, friends or loved ones.

A staggering 74% of family members reported they would find it difficult to bring up care with an older loved one. Of the people who had already talked to a loved one about care, almost half stated it was initially difficult to bring up the subject.

Of family members that haven't had the care conversation yet, 57% felt particularly uncomfortable at the thought of discussing care funding and finances with their loved one. The level of care needed was the topic most addressed by families who had talked about care, however, many commented on initially struggling with denial about their loved one needing care at all.

When it came to the participants who were thinking about their own care, all either needed care now or had started to consider their options. Yet only 27% had had a conversation with their family about it.

Despite this, 60% of people thinking about their own care would prefer to have a thorough conversation about care before the need arises. Family members were far more divided about when they wanted to talk about it, highlighting a disconnect between when the 'right moment' would be.

Easier in practice

An overwhelmingly positive message from the survey is that care conversations are generally easier than many people imagine. Despite people initially feeling daunted and uncomfortable about care conversations, most participants from both groups found conversations to be easier in practice. In over three quarters of cases, the family largely agreed with the individual's care wishes too, and many felt more calm and confident about the future as a result.

In response to the findings, Pete Dowds, CEO and Founder of Elder said

> "There's no question that talking about care may not be completely comfortable, and with social care continuing to dominate headlines it's no wonder the older generation and their families are feeling apprehensive about having these conversations.
>
> However, a lot of families come to Elder at a time of heightened stress – when mum or dad's needs have drastically changed and the prospect of care is no longer hypothetical. Being open about our wishes for the future - and starting these discussions as early as we can, gives us a chance to change our perception of care, and prepare for this significant life moment. It doesn't need to be something scary or unknown.

Media:



Related Sectors:

Health :: Lifestyle & Relationships :: Medical & Pharmaceutical :: Public Sector & Legal ::

Related Keywords:

Live-In Care :: Home Care :: Communication Methods :: Difficult Conversation :: Elder Care :: Elderly Care :: Family :: Care Options :: Domiciliary Care :: Care Funding ::

Scan Me:

Of course, this requires a societal change too. We need to ensure older people feel confident that their voice will be heard when the time comes. It also needs to be easier for families to access the right information when figuring out how to support loved ones. This is something we're committed to at Elder – offering advice, protecting the right to choose, and keeping people in control."

Company Contact:

Elder

T. 0333 220 4550
E. knurse@elder.org
W. https://www.elder.org/

Additional Contact(s):
zsmith@elder.org

View Online

Additional Assets:

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.elder.pressat.co.uk