

HINTS AND TIPS

Do you want to move or stay?



**Moving
Assistance
Project**

This set of hints and tips is for people who are beginning to think about whether their current house is still right for them. This is what we have included here:

- **Why you might want to move house.**
- **Checklist – is my house still right for me?**
- **Where to get advice.**

This is one of a series of hints for older people at each stage of moving house.

- **Do you want to move or stay?**
- **Choosing the house that's right for you.**
- **Reducing what you have.**
- **Making the move.**
- **Supporting your relative or friend.**

They all connect with each other, and it doesn't matter where you start.

We have talked to older people who have moved house. We have also produced a Directory that provides more information about the services and community groups in the area.

Our most important advice is: This is about what is right for you. If other people are worried – family, friends or staff such as GPs and care workers – you should recognise this, as they may have a point. But it is your life and your decision. There almost certainly will be a way to have the home you want and stay safe and well.

Some general tips

- Remember that you don't need to do this on your own. There are people who will help you at every stage.
- Think about what is important to you. Know what your priorities are.
- Make a list of things to ask or find out about – jot them down as you think of them.
- Take your time. Do it in small steps. You don't need to do it all at once.
- Try to think of the positive and exciting aspects of a change if you can. They are usually in there somewhere, even in difficult situations.

Talk to people.

- Ask family and friends and other people you know.

Ask people who have been in your situation. Find out what they did and how it has worked for them. You don't have to follow their example but it will help you work out what is right for you.

- Get specialist advice and information, especially for legal and financial things.
- If your choices affect other people, make sure you include them in your discussions and plans. And do it early on.

Make decisions in your own way.

- Some people like to have a plan and know what they are aiming for. Then they can think about each point and how that helps them achieve their plan.
- Other people don't make decisions that way. They just know when something is the right decision for them. Remember that's ok too. (But our checklists will still be useful.)
- Sometimes worrying about making the right decision or the best decision almost stops us making any decision. When that happens, start by making one change or decision. Getting something decided – even a small thing – can help with the rest.
- If it feels hard or upsetting, get out and get some fresh air if you can. Go away for the day, or an hour or two. Being somewhere different often gives us a fresh view on a problem.

“Be willing to make compromises. If you know what is important to you it is much easier to compromise on things that don't matter so much.”

“Gather information from different sources if you can. If they all point to something being good (or bad) it probably is.”

Why you might want to move house

The starting point is what you want your home to give you.

“I live at the top of the hill. I can still drive but I won't be able to soon. There is no bus and there are no shops nearby. Maybe now is the time to start looking for somewhere in the town.”

This is what most people want from their home:

- Being in a location that is near people they know – neighbours, friends, family, activities and groups they enjoy.
- Being handy for services – shops, library, social club and the like. Convenience for transport is also important for many people.
- Having support and care services that they like – a good Health Centre with staff who you know, a good home support team, a group that has a friendly lunch club, and so on.

- A house that feels safe is warm and comfortable – a place that works for you.
- Space and rooms to have the life that you want.
- A house that is easy to look after and not too expensive to run.
- Outside space – your garden if you want that, or no garden if that’s what you prefer; being close to parks and other open spaces.
- Try to be as specific as you can about what you want to change – there may be solutions that you haven’t thought about.
- For some people making alterations to their home or getting some extra support or help can make all the difference and help them stay where they are.
- For some people moving is the best option.

“I am the carer for my sister and would prefer to be nearer her. I could move near her, or she could come near me. Or we could move in together - that would be a right laugh!”

“I would like to be nearer my family with the grandchildren able to drop in.”

As we get older, our needs can change. We’ve made a checklist to help you work out what is right for you.

Our advice is to think about what you want now, and what you might want in a few years. That helps you think about whether you want to move to a new home or whether you want to make changes to what you have now.

“The house was good when my family were at home but it is too big now.”

“My family want me to move near to them. But I want to stay here - this is where I’ve been all my life and I’m happy here. We are coming to a compromise. I’ll look for somewhere smaller and have an alarm and so on, and they will have to learn to cope with relying on phone calls to know if I’m ok.”

Checklist - is my house still right for me?

Aspect	My assessment			Points to consider
	Ok now	Change in a few years	Change now	
Location of the house				
Size of the house, or layout of the rooms				<p>Look for areas that have the sort of houses you will need</p> <p>Check out options for improving what you have</p>
Upkeep				Can you get help with this?
Garden – easy to manage? Too big? Not big enough?				Gardening clubs may know people who can help you find someone to take on a big garden, or let you work in an allotment or someone else's garden
Keeping warm, cost of fuel				Grants to improve fuel efficiency
Easy to keep in touch with friends				
Looking after yourself				Talk to your GP and the Council, check what support is available
Access to good services				If a service like your GP or support at home is important, you might want to stay in the area they cover
Your priorities				
Your priorities				

Do you want to move or stay?

Our tips

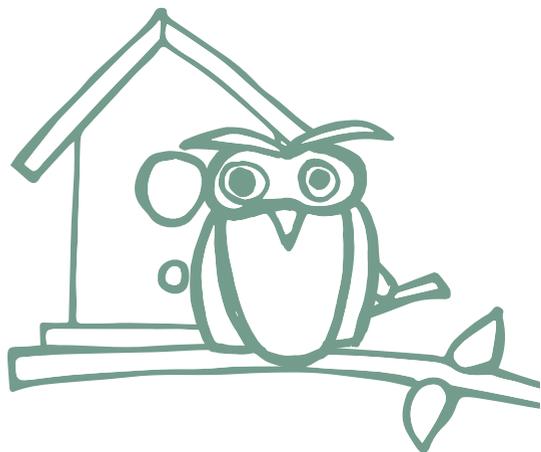
- If most of the points are ok, look at ways to improve the few that are not ok.
- If most points are ok now but likely to change, you can start planning ahead now.
- If there are matters that need sorting now, look for options that improve these for you. But still think of the other factors too.
- If several points are in the 'need to change now' column, this should help you work out your priorities for your next house move.

"Our house was fine but the hill is becoming a problem. So we've started looking for somewhere easier in a location that is better for us now. It's not immediate, but we're planning to move in the next year or two."

"Mum and Dad had been planning to move in a few years, but after Mum's fall it became more urgent. But it was good to still think about what they wanted, so the move was to the right place for them and not just moving in a panic."

"The checklist is a good idea because it makes you think about each aspect of your house. I was so caught up with the size of the house and going somewhere smaller, I forgot about being near friends. It helps you think about what you can improve in your own house while you look around."

"I talked to the manager of the care at home service who support mum. Now I know the area they cover, we've all decided to narrow the location down to that but be more flexible about what sort of house it is."



Where to get advice

These are some of the organisations that other older people told us helped them.

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Carers Trust
- Small Repair and Handyperson Service
- Later Life Information Centre
- Solicitors for Older People

The directory has contact information for these and other sources of advice and practical help.

“My John used to do all the little jobs around the house. He isn’t able any more. We live in our own house, I didn’t realise that we could get help from the Council. We got help through the Small Repair and Handyperson Service. It was great. They fixed the door so that we don’t have a draught anymore. They fixed the taps that were leaking and sorted the light switch that was broken.”

“The doctor got the OT (Occupational Therapist) to come and see us because we were both struggling at home. She asked us lots of questions and watched us get around the house. She organised handrails to help us at the front door and sorted the bathroom out for us. We can manage a lot better now.”

“We talked to the Housing Association about a possible move, maybe next year. The lady gave us good suggestions on ways to make the house work better for us now and reassurance about having choices for the years ahead.”

“The solicitor was helpful about the money and legal side of releasing money for changes to our current house and moving home.”

“Get some extra people on the list of possible helpers if you can. If the person who is moving is frail there may be extra things to do that the rest of us don’t think about. Another source of suggestions is really useful.”

More information

This booklet was first developed by Outside the Box for Falkirk Council Housing Services, with help from the Make it Happen Forum and people living in the area. We are pleased to be sharing it with more people across Scotland.

Useful contacts to check

- Housing Services at the Council for your area
- The self-directed support team at the Health and Social Care Partnership
- A forum for older people in your area

You will get the set of Moving Assistance booklets and useful contacts at www.otbds.org/projects/moving-assistance-project/

