



Serving the needs of older people

Age Concern Information Sheet

Thinking ahead

Information for older people, families and carers about

Protecting your interests

Guidelines for older people

Things you can do to maintain your independence and have positive relationships with your family and community as you get older.

Communicate needs and develop interests

- Set clear boundaries and discuss these with the people involved so they don't take advantage of you.
- Keep in touch with family and friends and maintain your community networks.
- Talk to family, friends and other people you trust about your wishes and write them down.
- Develop interests that you can continue if your health or other circumstances change.

Keep your property safe

- Keep your cheques, cards, PIN numbers and other important documents in a safe place and don't give them to other people.

Seek advice

- Seek independent advice about making an Enduring Power of Attorney from a lawyer of your choice, the Public Trust or a Trustee company:
 - Explain your needs and carefully consider your choice of attorney(s) and their responsibilities, for example, how, when and to whom the attorney(s) will report.
 - Review your Enduring Power of Attorney as your circumstances or relationships change.
- Make a Will and review it as circumstances change.
- Seek independent legal advice to make sure you are protected if you provide finance for a property owned by family or others, even when you intend to live with the owners.

Plan ahead

- Consider your future housing needs and find out about other options before you become unable to manage in your current home.
- Think very carefully about the consequences of moving in with family/friends or having them to live with you. Discuss it with someone you trust who is not directly involved.
- Consider future transport needs to help you to remain independent for as long as possible.
- Find out about available services and support in your community before a crisis arises.

Guidelines for families

Issues that families need to think and talk about with ageing parents and other relatives.



Serving the needs of older people

Respect the older person's wishes

- Remember that older people have the right to make decisions and remain independent for as long as possible.
- Talk with older family members about their wishes while they are able to participate fully.

Communicate openly

- Ensure older family members have information, or know where to get information, about matters that affect them.
- Encourage positive relationships between the generations and ensure that boundaries are openly discussed and agreed.
- Consult extended family members about the care of an older family member.

Think through the issues

- Carefully consider the needs of your own family before taking an older family member into your home, for example, how the arrangements will affect you, your partner and children.
- Consider the practical details of providing care in your home, for example, bathroom and toilet facilities, cooking and sleeping arrangements, privacy and time out.
- Carefully consider the implications before moving in with an older family member, such as different lifestyles, values and beliefs.
- Delay making permanent, long-term decisions in a crisis. For example, on the death of one parent take time to consider and discuss options with your remaining parent before taking any action.
- Consider your own needs and plan ahead.

Talk to support services

- Find out about the services that are available in the community to assist older people, their family and carers.

Be kind to yourself

- Do not feel you have failed if you are unable to provide care or need to relinquish care.

Help is available

Many situations worrying older people can be resolved by talking matters through with someone who understands the issues.

**Contact Age Concern New Zealand
ph 0-4-801 9338
www.ageconcern.org.nz**

to be put in contact with your local Age Concern.

Other organisations that can help

- Health services for older people at your local hospital
- Doctor, or practice nurse
- Public health nurse
- Needs Assessment and Service Coordination service
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Lawyers
- Public Trust
- Community Law Centres
- Community constables
- Work and Income
- Ethnic support groups
- Church leaders
- Non-government health organisations (e.g. Alzheimer's Society, Arthritis Foundation, Stroke Foundation)