

Investigating "optimal time": Multiple perspectives on the timing of moving into care homes for people living with dementia

NIHR SSCR Webinar series

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Background to the study



Moving to a care home may be **difficult decision** for some people with dementia and their carers. Studies suggest people with dementia are often **not included in decisions**, which may negatively affect their ability to settle into the care home.

Determining **when (if any) is an “optimal time”** to make this move may be difficult.

Aims of the study

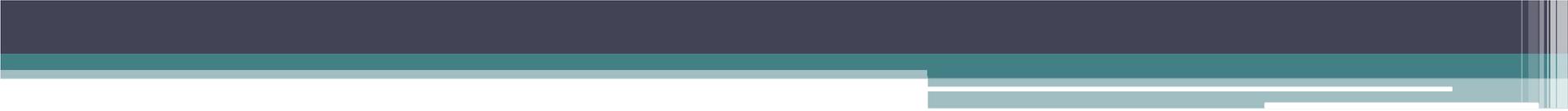


3 year, 3 part which investigated:

1. **Factors** that affect decision to move

2. **Drivers** of this decision

3. What may be considered an '**optimal**' time to move



Part 1: Systematic review

Our review of the literature was completed in 2018.

Published:

Cole L, Samsi K & Manthorpe J (2018) 'Is there an “optimal time” to move to a care home for a person with dementia? A systematic review of the literature', *International Psychogeriatrics*, pp. 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610218000364>



Methods: What we did

- Face to face one-off interviews
- Audio-recorded, with permission, transcribed
- Analysed using thematic analysis (looking for repeated patterns in transcribed interviews)

Method: Who we spoke to

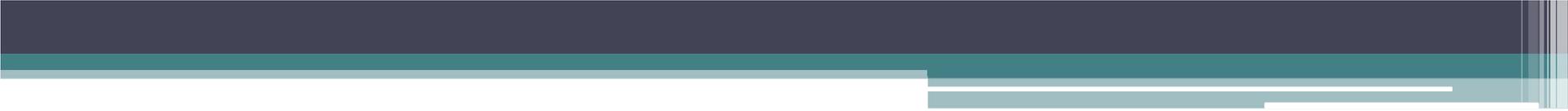
Criteria: Those who had supported people with dementia and family carers to make the transition to a care home move

Social workers (20): 2 men, diverse ethnicity, 5 worked in hospitals

Care home managers (20): 4 men, 14 White British



FINDINGS



Findings: Social workers

- Risk and safety + family carers' ability to continue with caring at home safely
- Wishes of person with dementia were very important
- Acting in the best interest of person with dementia necessary:
 - Even if over-riding their wishes
 - Reports of these having positive outcomes



So it's kind of constantly looking at the risk, I think and weighing up. Is that a risk that we would be willing to take? Is there something we can do to kind of prevent that risk to get them back home [from hospital]? But if we have kind of ruled out everything, then we will suggest that maybe a [move to a care home] would be the better option. (SWo8)



Findings: Care home managers

- Early moves beneficial as care staff can get to know likes/dislikes of person with dementia better
- Needs to be balanced against most older people's wishes to stay in their own homes for as long as possible
- Paving the path:
 - Respite suggested by social workers as stepping stone towards permanent move
 - Waiting lists used by relatives as a way of preparing for a permanent move

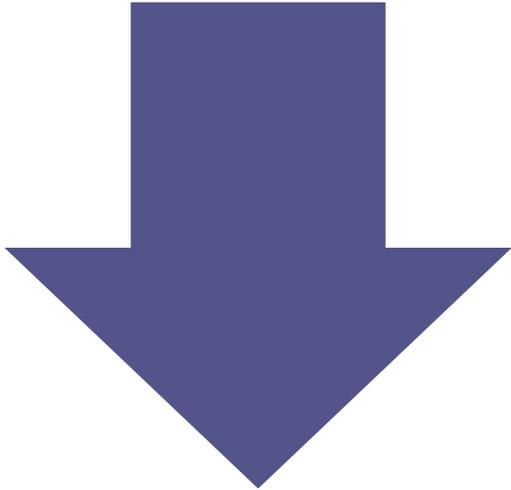
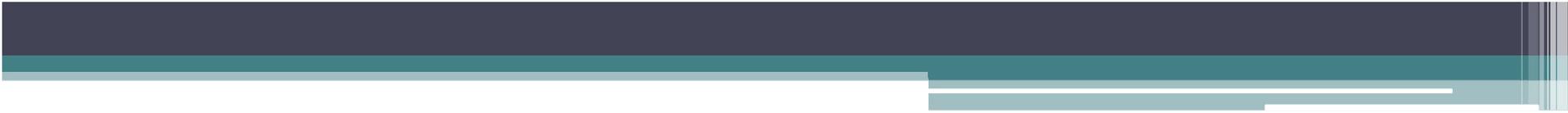


At least start the ball rolling and build up a relationship with the [care] home that you would really want to move in. I absolutely welcome people if they wanted to come their names down on the waiting list... If they just want to come and have lunch once a week or something and just sort of take part in a little bit of the [care] home, I wouldn't have an issue with that... I think that would be a really nice way of sort of introducing them to the home and how the home works. (CHM11)



Is there an “optimal” (or best) time?

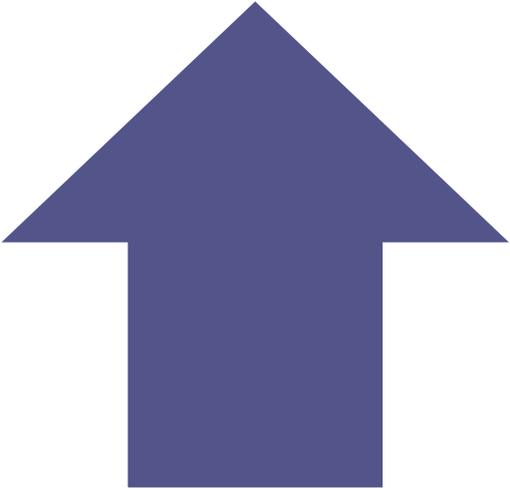
- Highly subjective, complex, personal decision
- Hard balance to strike – lots to weight up
- When the person with dementia and /or relative is “ready” or when they realise they can no longer cope at home



Move in
early?



Move
during
later
stages?

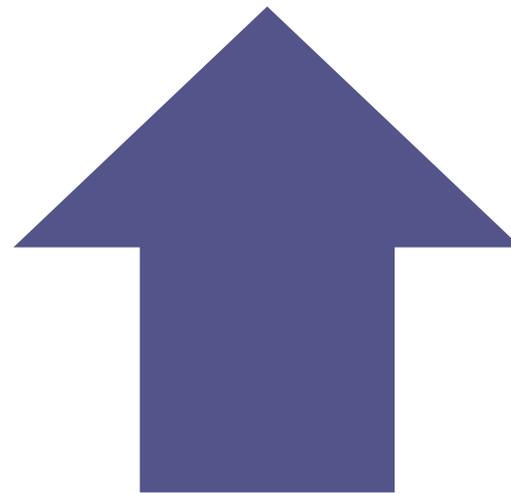


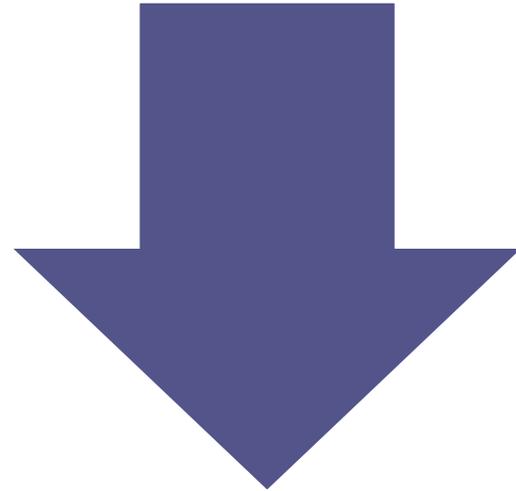
- The person with dementia is able to take part in the decision making process

“I think it's better to give them the opportunity to adapt into such an environment and they do, they do sometimes.”

(SW14)

Move in
early?





Move
during
later
stages?

- Limited awareness can be beneficial in minimising distress
- De-skilling environment for older people

“Moving in too early, you are de-skilling someone. A lot of homes, they do things for you. You are in a 24 hour living environment, where they get you up at a certain time, they make tea for you, they make lunch for you. You don't really have that independence.”
(SW10)

Impact of finances on “optimal” time

- Social workers and care home managers often provided information and advice about England’s system of means testing in social care to families
- Appeared to be limited choice of care homes if LA-funded
D: Dal, masala fish, chapatti, salad

“I think people are a lot more aware these days that social care isn't free, and they're going to be financially assessed, and you know, savings are expected to pay for their own care. But understandably people do get very upset about that, and feel that it's very unfair.” (SW02)



Overall comments

- There was no consensus on ‘optimal time’
- Care home managers provided substantial amount of support (informational and emotional), especially to those who are self-funding
- Costs shouldn’t include need or timing – but affected choice

Covid context

- Relevant research questions:
 - Has the nature of decision-making changed?
 - Notion of settling in and associated impacts
 - Pervasive uncertainty and how this can be managed
 - Generalisations persist in care home sector
 - Role of managers under-considered

Thank you!

Any questions/thoughts?

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Link to full report: <https://www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/RF88.pdf>

Link to paper: Cole, L, Samsi, K, Manthorpe, J. Professionals' views on the “optimal time” for people living with dementia to move to a care home. *Int J Geriatr Psychiatry*. 2020; 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/gps.5405>