YOUR CARE / HOME SUPPORT

5 Steps to Getting Parents to Accept Home Help

A practical conversation guide for families

It can be hard to bring up help when Mum or Dad insists they're managing. Choose a quiet moment and ask about one thing they'd welcome help with. Here are five ways to get the conversation started.

1 Change the language

What can sound like pressure
"We need to get you a carer."

Try this instead
"How would you feel about a bit of help with the shopping?"

Why it helps
The word "carer" can feel like a big change. Naming a specific task, such as carrying shopping, doing a bit of cleaning or making lunch, makes it easier to picture what the help would involve.

Words to try
"Mum, would a hand with the shopping once a week make things easier? You could still choose what we get. Someone could help with the bags and putting things away."

2 Explain what would help you, too

What can sound like pressure
"You need help."

Try this instead
"I'd feel better knowing someone could pop in when I can't."

Why it helps
Your parent may worry about being a burden. Sharing what you're finding hard can make it easier to talk about what would help you both. Give them room to say what they'd be comfortable with.

Words to try
"Mum, I worry on the days I can't get over. Would you be comfortable with someone popping in once a week to help with the shopping or a few jobs around the house?"

Make the first step manageable

Talk about one visit and how to make it feel familiar

3 Start with one thing

What can sound like pressure
"We need to set up regular care."

Try this instead
"How would you feel about starting with one visit and talking afterwards?"

Why it helps
Agreeing to an ongoing arrangement can feel like a lot. One visit with a clear purpose gives your parent a chance to see how the help fits their routine and tell you what they think.

Words to try
"How about we start with a one-hour visit to help with the shopping? Then we can talk about how it went."

4 Keep it familiar

What can sound like pressure
"Someone will come when they're available."

Try this instead
"We can ask for the same person at a regular time."

Why it helps
Knowing who to expect and when can make a visit feel easier. With time, a familiar Personal Assistant can get to know your parent's preferences and how they like things done.

Words to try
"Would Thursdays suit you? We can ask for the same person each week, so you can get to know each other and show them how you like things done."

What could make the first visit easier?

One thing Mum or Dad would welcome help with

A day or time that would suit them

Keep their independence in view

Let your parent decide what they want to keep doing

5 Talk about what they want to keep doing

What can sound like pressure
“You can’t manage on your own anymore.”

Try this instead
“Which parts would you like to carry on doing yourself?”

Why it helps
Practical help with a tiring job can leave more time and energy for the things that matter to them. Ask what they want to do themselves and what they’d be happy to have help with.

Words to try
“Mum, you can still decide what goes on the list and how you want things done. Would a hand with the heavy bags give you a bit more energy for the garden?”

Terry and Janet’s story

Terry was in his nineties and caring for his wife, Janet, who had become frail. He did the cooking, cleaning and other household jobs. His family lived too far away to help regularly. Terry was fiercely independent and turned down help. After a fall, he was given a wheeled walker but chose to leave it unused.

After a second fall, Terry agreed to one weekly visit for help around the home. His home help gently encouraged him to use his walker. As they got to know each other, Terry accepted help with cooking and housework and had more time to sit with Janet.

Terry went on to use his walker daily and continued with regular visits. Starting with household jobs gave him a way to get to know the person helping him and decide what else he felt comfortable with.

If they say no

If it’s safe to pause, give them some space. You could say, “Okay, we can leave it today. Would you be happy to talk about it again another time?”

What happens next?

How home support starts through Your Care

We get to know your parent

We ask about their needs, personality, interests and routines. Then we introduce a vetted, self-employed Personal Assistant (PA) who could be a good match. Your parent meets them before visits start and decides whether to go ahead.

We talk through the first visit

Agree what the PA will help with, what your parent wants to do themselves and when the visit will take place. Visits have a one-hour minimum. We aim for the same familiar person at a regular time.

We support you while things settle

Our three-month settling-in period gives everyone time to get used to the arrangement. There's no long-term contract. Ask us how changes and cancellations work, including the notice to give if you need to adjust or end visits.

Why bring it up early?

A fall, illness or sudden change can leave families making difficult decisions in a hurry, with practical costs and more pressure on everyone. Talking early gives your parent time to weigh up their choices. A familiar visitor can notice changes, lend a hand with tasks your parent finds difficult and give the family some reassurance.

About Your Care

We're a family-run home support introduction agency based in Hanham, Bristol. Since 2014, we've supported families to find help at home. We specialise in dementia support and carefully match experienced PAs across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset.

Book a free, no-obligation chat

Tell us what would help. We'll talk through your options and answer your questions.

Call 0117 947 7422 or visit your-careuk.co.uk/contact-us