

Care Home Nursing

Care homes sometimes need to close or change ownership due to financial difficulties or challenges over standards of care.

When facing a change to working conditions RCN members have the right to full and meaningful consultation. RCN representatives and staff can assist and support. Often RCN members, reps or staff only receive notice of changes or closures late in the process. This means that there is little time to prepare support for RCN members or the business.

A business closure may take place for a variety of reasons. For example, a care home becomes unsustainable due to the relative cost of management and regulatory overheads. Another reason may be that the site landlord decides to find another business operator or sell/redevelop the building/land for other purposes. Other reasons for closure may be associated with the unsuitability of the building or unsustainable standards of care.

If other trade unions are organised in your care home you should still contact the RCN for advice and support when you need it. The RCN will join up with other unions, as necessary. RCN advice about your employment rights and the procedures your employer should follow can be viewed at the

RCN advice page [Redundancy and reorganisation+](#).

During the closure of the care home your concerns may be as much about the future of the residents as they are for yourself or your colleagues. Working in a care home often feels like working as part of a family and the residents are central to that. Changes may feel very unsettling, with staff feeling the loss of working as part of a great team or a close family.

Moving frail older people with complex long term health conditions from their home can have detrimental effects on their health. Any change needs to be sensitively and properly managed as part of their individual care plan. This must include support for residents and ~~choices~~ choices and their transition to an appropriate home. You must receive training to enable you to do this. During the time of transition it is important to have enough staff to cover training, daily care and the extra support needed. A senior nurse providing clinical support must also be available in the care home.

You and your colleagues will need to collaborate with the community care team, the regulator and families to secure the best outcome for your residents.

NHS England has produced good-practice guidance to support health systems to [manage home closures](#). COSLA has produced [good-practice guidance for Scotland](#). In Wales, the [Regulation and Inspection of Social Care \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) is changing the way care homes are being regulated and statutory guidance relating to care home closures will be issued in due course. Concerns can be raised directly with the Care Inspectorate Wales, see their [guidance on non-compliance and enforcement](#). Where a service is intending to close in Northern Ireland, Regulation [Regulation and Improvement Authority \(Registrations\) Regulations](#) apply.

RCN members have a key role in asking questions about the business and raising professional concerns on behalf of the residents.

Key questions and points

What are the problems with the home that are affecting its future?

Can we work together with the owners and commissioners or campaign to save it?

Poor staffing; what would assist with local recruitment?

High lease/rents; can we join in lobbying the landlord over the lease?

Poor funding settlement; can we lobby local commissioners for improved funding?

Poor leadership; the RCN can provide leadership support.