

## HINTS AND TIPS



# Supporting your relative or friend

Falkirk  
Moving  
Assistance  
Project

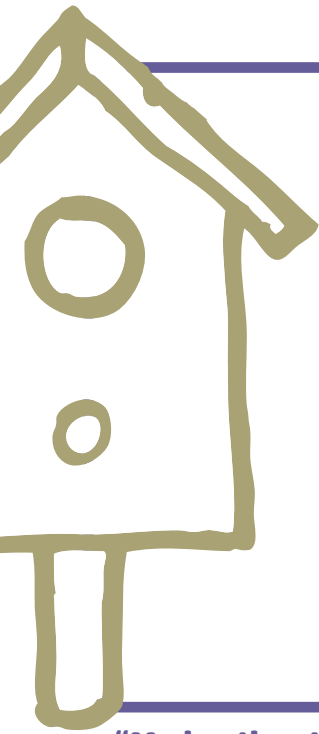
The Falkirk Moving Assistance project has written tips for people who are thinking about moving house. This set is for the people who are giving them encouragement and support – family, friends and neighbours. This is what we have included here:

- Some general tips to help you through any aspect.
- Supporting your relative or friend at each stage of the process.
- What to do if you are worried about someone.

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 live in the Falkirk and District area and who have moved house. These are the things that they said helped them. 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.**

**“My brother thought that we should be the ones giving mum advice, but she has always talked things over with Auntie Helen.”**

**“Our big mistake was starting the process off too early. My sister was worried and thought mum should move after dad died. I think we would have got there sooner if we had let mum go at her pace.”**

## **Our tips**

### **Take enough time**

Making a change in where someone lives is usually more complicated and usually takes

longer than you might expect – but for positive reasons.

- There will be options and choices at each stage, because people have developed good services and supports for people who need extra help.
- It can take time to find out what is possible and consider the options.
- Our sets of Hints and Tips and the Directory of services will give you lots of information and ideas.

**“Even once dad had decided to move it took ages to go and visit different places. He wasn’t for rushing anything.”**

**“Overall, it probably took mum 2-3 years to decide to move, and then another year to find a smaller house because she wanted to stay in the area we knew.”**

### **Try to make it right for everyone**

Remember that there may be several people involved in all of this.

- If a couple are living together – such as your Mum and Dad – the aim is a good outcome for both of them, even when they have different needs.
- Find a way to let other members of the family know what is happening. You need to still respect the privacy and choice of the person who is at the centre of all of this, but you can find a way to keep other people involved.
- Accept that different people in the family may have different views about what is best.
- Try to make time for people to hear each other’s suggestions, and have time to reflect on them.

**“I always knew it would be a compromise between what mum wanted and what was right for dad. The lists in the Hints helped get the balance between what each one needed.”**

**“Mum wants everything done yesterday and Dad likes to consider every option in endless detail. But as Dad pointed out, this happens each time they’ve moved house over the past 55 years and they’ve learned how to work things out.”**

**“My niece is very organised and put round weekly updates for everyone. Once we were at the stage of actually looking at houses, she added photos. That helped reassure folk who live a distance away.”**

### **Look after yourself**

You also want to make your own life as stress-free as possible.

- Think about practical steps that can help you have more time and energy to focus on helping the person you care about.

- It often helps if you have someone you can talk to while you are helping your relative in a big change in their life. You may want to use a friend who is not so closely involved to be your support and a sounding board for you over this period.

**“The best help was from a friend who made me go for a walk with her each weekend. Good for helping me get my thoughts and feelings straight and the exercise and fresh air helped a lot.”**

**“A big step for me was to get set up for on-line shopping and tell myself that frozen and prepared food is ok, at least for a while. That way I wasn’t rushing to fit that in as well as going over to see mum more often.”**

## **How you can help at each stage**

There are Hints for older people for each stage of the process, from deciding whether to move right through to the practical arrangements on the day of the move.

You can read these and talk them through with your relative

or friend at the time that is right for them.

**“Start with the idea of moving - whether this place and this house is still right, what could be better. The mistake we made was getting into too much detail too soon.”**

**“My advice to other families: Can you help by sometimes giving them a break from thinking about the move and not talking about houses?”**

## **Deciding whether to move house or stay**

Sometimes people need to talk about all the options and aspects of a problem, to work out what they think and feel. Can you let the person talk about the question of whether they want to stay or move, even if it feels like you are hearing the same things on many occasions?

Try to be positive about the various options.

There is a checklist in that set of Hints and Tips. Can you help them work through that?

**“The checklist is useful. It made my daughter realise**

**she was ready to move out, which wasn't what we expected (but very positive). But then my parents looked at it and decided to make changes to their house for now and plan to move somewhere smaller in a few years."**

**"Thinking about specifics, such as how much it costs to heat the house, made it easier because that was less emotional than saying: 'We're not coping'."**

**"Some of us at the Friday Club got to talking about moving after we had a talk from someone about making our homes safer."**

Many people find that the support they get is as important as their house in staying well and having a good life. Talk to the GP or to support providers, to find out what areas they cover, and if they can help you find good support in a new area if needed.

**"We were pretty stressed out when we realised that the support service mum got only covered the town. The Council helped us find new support workers, and mum gets on well with**

**them now, but getting that sorted was an added worry. My advice is to look at that early on."**

**"It was mini panic when I realised we would lose the Health Centre as my parents have relied on them a lot in recent years. We asked and they told us how to check what services are available in other areas. That's something family can check out because you are just talking about what the services do, not personal medical details."**

## **Choosing the right house**

Check what help your friend or relative wants – such as someone to look at possible places with them, or to talk it over afterwards.

Do they want to talk over their priorities in what they are looking for in a new house?

Can you help them check out ways to make any new house right for them such as advice about equipment, or getting support?

You may have moved house more recently than your relative or friend. Talking

through how you did it, and what the practical and legal arrangements are like these days, can be helpful.

**“Mum’s mobility is really poor now. People to give lifts over to see a house or have a talk with the sheltered housing people are a big help. I think Mum liked the company as much as it being no hassle to get there. We had to juggle round getting time off work, so it was a big help when a few of her friends who had cars offer to help.”**

## **Reducing what someone has**

It can be a big help when someone else is there to sort through clothes, ornaments and the like. Can you help with that?

Can you help the person think of good homes for belongings that they no longer need, but don’t want to throw out?

Can you help with taking stuff away to charity shops, or the refuse place?

Can you listen when the person wants to talk about the memories items bring back?

**“Big role for family here. Lots of people can all help with a few parts of it.”**

**“Remember it is ok if the person gets upset, or if you get upset. And enjoy the happy memories too.”**

**“We learned to work to people’s strengths. My sister in law and a couple of friends were more of a help at the clearing cupboards stage than my sister was. We got her to go with Mum to choose the curtains for the new house and they both loved that.”**

## **Making the move**

What can you do to help in the run up to the person moving?

What help do they need over the few weeks before and after, as well as on the day of the move?

Can you be with someone who may get confused or upset, or needs extra support, while other people are helping with the actual move?

**“Let the person who is moving do as much as they want to, even if you think you could do it quicker or better. Just have someone who can help them and**

**switch off the bit of your brain that says 'I could do this in half the time'."**

**"Neighbours were great at helping on the week of the move. That made it much easier for mum and for us."**

**"Dad gets anxious when he can't remember why things are happening. One of his friends stayed with him that day, took him out to their usual haunt for lunch, just reassured him."**

### **What to do if you are worried about someone**

Sometimes the suggestion that someone moves house arises when people are worried about them not being able to look after themselves, or not being safe. But they may not see the situation that way. Or they may not realise that you are worried about them.

Plan how and when you can talk to your relative or friend about your concerns. Try to find a time when neither of you is too tired and you have enough time. List out what it is you are worried about before you talk to the person. Try to be specific and give examples of when something happened (or got missed) and why you were worried.

Think about what is going to keep the person safe and well and reassure you and other people who care about the person. Make a list of things that you think could help.

Try starting with suggesting solutions to one or 2 things if you have a long list. Often people find that reducing one problem makes it easier to deal with the others.

### **If you think your relative or friend needs support to manage and stay well**

#### **Falkirk Social Work team**

will tell you about services that the person may be entitled to receive.

T. 01324 506070

E. [contact.centre@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:contact.centre@falkirk.gov.uk)

Emergency Out of Hours:

01786 470 500

#### **Self-Directed Support Forth Valley**

is an independent charity that gives people advice and information about getting support.

T. 01324 508794

E. [info@sdsforthvalley.co.uk](mailto:info@sdsforthvalley.co.uk)

**Carers' Centre** has advice and information for people who care for a relative or friend.

T. 01324 611510

[www.centralcarers.org](http://www.centralcarers.org)

## If you have an immediate or serious concern

There are people who can help keep your relative or friend safe if they are at risk of harm from someone else, or if they are not looking after themselves.

### Falkirk Council Adult Protection

Community Care Team  
Brockville  
Hope Street  
Falkirk FK1 5RW  
T. 01324 506400

The emergency out of hours number is 01786 470 500

A good website for advice and information about the adult protection arrangements in Scotland is [www.actagainstharm.org](http://www.actagainstharm.org)

### Community Police and Fire Safety

If you are worried about the safety of your relative's house, you can ask for a free Home Safety visit.

The Community Police service will also give advice on keeping someone's home safe.

The details are in the Moving Assistance Directory.

## Contacts and more information

Strategy Team on 01324 590797 (then select option 2) or email [strategic.housing@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.housing@falkirk.gov.uk)

Kay Wood on 07753229673 or email [olderpeoplesforum@btconnect.com](mailto:olderpeoplesforum@btconnect.com)

All of the Moving Assistance Hints and Tips the Directory of Services are available from the Wisdom in Practice Website <http://www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/falkirk-moving-assistance/>

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It has been developed and delivered by Outside the Box with help from the Make It Happen Forum.

The Make it Happen Forum is for people aged 50 and older to get involved and have their say in community life.

[www.makeithappenforum.org.uk](http://www.makeithappenforum.org.uk)



Falkirk Council