



COUNTRY
COUSINS

Care where you're happiest. Home.



Care where you're happiest. Home.

When home is where you want to be



We call them Cousins because they become part of the family. You'll call them a godsend when you or a loved one is in need of professional live-in

care at home.

For over 60 years, our dedicated Cousins have been there to provide companionship, comfort and hands-on support when it matters most. We offer various levels of 24-hour, live-in support in the home, from post-operative convalescence to advanced care for dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. While most of our clients are elderly, the care is available to all adults who need some additional support to maintain their independence.

Our Cousins are all compassionate, capable individuals who are hand-picked and trusted to bond quickly with clients and to adapt seamlessly with the client's home life – whether it is for short respite or long-term care.

With around 1,500 thoroughly screened, carefully selected Cousins on our books nationwide, there's no waiting list. In fact, we've every confidence that we can rapidly provide a suitably experienced and empathetic carer, with skills and personality that tick all the boxes.

We've been trusted for over 60 years to provide companionship, comfort and hands-on support when it matters most.



Why live-in care?

If you want to retain your familiar surroundings and comfortable routines, then home is where you want to be, and you'll do whatever it takes to maintain your precious independence.

Your home is your cornerstone; it's where you belong, full of good memories and perhaps generations of family history. That's why live-in care has become such a popular choice when you or your loved ones can no longer cope as well with the challenges of living at home.

A live-in Country Cousin can provide that reassuring continuity you are looking for, with all the comforts of home, where life can go on with reliable normality. Our Cousins respect the fact that this is your domain, and they work tirelessly to help you maintain the home life you want.



“I suppose it’s my vocation to care for people – I first became a nurse at 18 and never thought about doing anything else,” she reveals, “I think care at home, right through to end of life if that is your wish, is very important and I’m doing my little bit to help make that happen.”

Chris, Country Cousins carer

A bespoke service for your unique needs



Country Cousins is an introductory agency acting on behalf of suitable, self-employed carers – we call them Cousins – throughout the UK.

We bring our Cousins to you, the clients, and carefully place them as live-in carers, according to the clients' needs and preferences.

We decided on the name 'Country Cousins' more than half a century ago because we decided the name fitted our carers' brief perfectly: to live in someone's home and quickly become one of the family.

Putting flexibility first

As all our experienced Cousins know, no two assignments, clients or families are quite the same. We have established a firm structure of guidelines and services in order to maintain our impeccable quality standards. But we fully appreciate that our Cousins have to be flexible enough to adapt to the individual circumstances of each assignment so that they can best support each client's needs and current home life.

So if you are looking for someone to help you continue to live safely and comfortably in your own home, a caring Country Cousin can help.





What kind of care do you need?



There are two crucial factors that never change: we produce different levels of support to suit each client, and we ensure the most compatible Cousin is selected for each assignment.

Because we are all living longer, live-in care through Country Cousins has become an increasingly viable option for those who need a little extra help to maintain their independence. Throughout the many years we have been operating in this care sector, our services have been constantly evolving to meet the needs of our clients and their families.

A variety of help

Our Cousins can help at short notice for periods of convalescence, holidays or for longer-term care. They can accompany clients to family weddings or take them away for a break. They can be a friend and companion to the able-bodied, or provide special care for those with Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease and can provide personalised end-of-life palliative care.

However we help, our Cousins try to make life as normal as possible. Our aim is to ensure that the Cousin provided is appropriately skilled and experienced to succeed in the assignment and fit in effortlessly with the home life and disposition of the client.

There are essentially two levels of home support.

Live-in support and care

This is for those who need some assistance with domestic care in order to continue living independently in their home. Our Cousins can assist with washing and dressing, bathing or showering and preparing for bed, and can also prompt with medication. In addition the Cousin can take care of meal preparation, light housework, shopping, home administration, personal laundry and, importantly, provide good companionship.

Live-in support and advanced care

This option is for those who need a greater degree of care in order to remain in their homes. This includes stroke patients and clients with a terminal illness, or more advanced Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease.

Let's take the next step together



Once you've decided that live-in care through Country Cousins could be for you – or if you just want to find out more before you make a decision – we have a straightforward process that makes things as simple as possible.

Send us some details

In the first place, we'll need your location and homecare needs. You can fill in a simple form online at country-cousins.co.uk/make-an-enquiry, call us on **0800 542 0657** or email us on info@country-cousins.co.uk.

However you wish to contact us, there will be a fully trained care advisor to go through the process and answer any questions you may have.

Let's have a chat

We will discuss your needs further with you and find out exactly what you are looking for.

If you wish to join, there is a membership fee, and a detailed registration process to really understand what's needed.

A selection of options

We will then offer you the most appropriate Cousin we think would be a suitable live-in carer for you.

Organising the logistics

Then it is just a matter of arranging to settle your Cousin into your home.

With so many suitably experienced, meticulously chosen Cousins from around the country on our books, we are confident that we can find a Cousin-client match that's just right – professionally, practically and temperamentally. Whatever the situation, there's an excellent chance we've encountered it before.

More questions?

Just ask and we'll be happy to help. Call or email us:

0800 542 0657

info@country-cousins.co.uk



Getting to know our clients



Our Cousins can provide all kinds of care, at all levels. Just as clients have different needs, our carers have different skills to offer – it's never one size fits all. Until we get to know a little about you, we cannot start finding you the right match.

The process starts with establishing the client's primary care needs. Do you require high levels of care? Or are help around the home and companionship your priorities?

Then we find out about your likes and dislikes and how you like your routine at home. Are you an early riser or a night owl? Do you like the cinema or the theatre? Are you a keen gardener? Do you knit or sew? Do you have grandchildren? What is your daily routine?

We take into account your background, interests and preferences so we can get as good a match as possible on a personal level, as well as in relation to your specific care needs.

For each assignment, all contact should be made by telephone. We find that most clients prefer this to filling in forms, and it ensures that any questions can be asked and answered.



“Our Country Cousin carers are great – providing companionship as well as keeping my mother safe.”

Client satisfaction survey feedback

How we choose our Cousins



It is important to us that our Cousins provide only the best service to our clients, therefore the selection process to get on to our Cousin register is rigorous. Remember, Cousins are self-employed freelancers.

Skills, experience and reliability

Firstly, Cousins are all selected for their specific skills and experience as a carer.

To protect our clients from abuse or neglect, and to ensure that we adequately safeguard vulnerable adults, we make careful checks during the initial selection process and throughout their time supporting clients we introduce.

We guarantee to:

- confirm the identity of applicants;
- take up and verify references;
- carry out interviews;
- perform an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check;
- verify, and if necessary provide, appropriate training.

At Country Cousins, we do not discriminate based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Personality profile

In addition, Cousins must have a personality suited to becoming a live-in carer, so we find out about their interests and things they like to do. This is also vital when it comes to the matching process. So we ask them about specific skills and hobbies – do they like to cook? can they drive? do they prefer longer assignments or shorter ones? do they prefer a city or a country location?

Training

Cousins undergo an in-depth interview and receive training before being introduced to their clients by Country Cousins.

All our Cousins are trained in safeguarding of vulnerable adults, moving and handling, plus basic life support, either by our in-house training, or an accredited external provider. Many have a broader range of skills and experience in specialisms such as dementia or physical disability support.

This training shows how Cousins can meet the expectations of their clients, while delivering an efficient, flexible service, taking into account individual requirements and preferences.

The perfect match



For each client, we ensure that the most compatible Cousin is selected every time. Each Cousin is hand-picked to match the requirements in the initial client brief.

Using our skills and experience, we will then patiently match client to Cousin, noting histories, hobbies, skills and inclinations, as well as the client's care needs. Our comprehensive register of Cousins also tells us who is available. We select based on care and cannot guarantee special skills, such as driving or being locally based.

Once a match has been identified, a member of our contact team will make a call to introduce our recommended Cousin. They will supply brief personal details, such as name, where the Cousin is based, confirm what is involved, the duration of the assignment and why we think it is a suitable match.

We give similar information to the Cousin, including the location of the assignment.

If the client, or their representative, is happy, the prospective carer will then call them for a chat. Even after just a few minutes on the phone, the client will soon know whether that Cousin is the right choice. clients then give us their verdict.

Only if both are happy to go ahead will arrangements be confirmed.

“Some aspects of being a carer have come easy to me because of those years dealing with the public all the time. Respect is key, and treating people as you would like them to treat you.”

Jennifer, Country Cousins carer



Making the connection



Once the match has been decided, the Cousin will agree the finer details with the client or their representative.

This phone call is the opportunity to find out all about each other and to agree the details of the assignment. We recommend that as much as possible is discussed and agreed in advance.

You can make and compare notes, if you like, so that it is quite clear from the start how you are both going to make the assignment a success.

Main points

- The start and finish dates of the assignment.
- The amount and timing for paying the Cousin (for example a daily rate payable at the end of the assignment, or an alternative arrangement).

Changeover arrangements

- Approximate arrival and leaving times to allow for a full handover between the incoming and outgoing Cousins (see changeover day section).

“Most people would want to stay in their own home when they need care. It’s particularly beneficial for people with dementia as changes in environment can cause anxiety.”

Gayil, Country Cousins carer

Travel

- Arrangements and costs, including whether out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
- For those arriving by rail, confirmation of the nearest railway station and onward transfer arrangements to the client’s house.
- For those arriving by car, agreement that this is acceptable and a mileage rate.

Daily routines

- Client’s and Cousin’s expectation of the type of work involved.
- How housekeeping money will be organised and accounted for.
- Night calls.
- Medication.
- Downtime.



Living together



We appreciate that accepting the need for live-in care for the first time can be emotionally difficult for clients and their families alike. So our Cousins

do all they can to make the start of a new era as painless as possible. Whatever you need, you only have to ask.

Accommodation

Cousins must be given their own bedroom and somewhere to keep their clothes and belongings.

Clients sometimes provide a television and armchair in the Cousin's room and this is appreciated, but we accept that it is not always possible.

Privacy and dignity

Cousins ensure that care and support are delivered in a way that maintains and respects the privacy, dignity and lifestyle of the client at all times. This ranges from dressing and bathing, toilet and continence requirements, manual handling and medication needs, together with handling personal possessions and documents, entering the client's bedroom, bathroom or toilet. Discretion is all part of the role that a Cousin fulfils.

Cousins are often privy to sensitive information such as personal correspondence, banking information, family phone calls and other

arrangements. Clients can rely on their total discretion, though we suggest a more formal agreement with your Cousin should you have concerns.

Meals

Sufficient food should be provided for three healthy meals a day, for both client and Cousin. You should discuss both your dietary requirements and preferred mealtimes, and those of the Cousin.

If Cousins have special dietary requirements, we suggest that they purchase any "special" provisions before the assignment. You will need to agree this with them.

Clients quite often want to be involved in decisions about the preparation and serving of meals, whilst others like the Cousin to take over – it's best to make this position clear at the beginning of each assignment.

Our Cousins can prepare meals for the client(s) they are looking after; should additional family members, or guests, wish to have food prepared then this needs to be agreed with the Cousin in advance.

“Very excellent and organised.”

Client satisfaction survey feedback

Shopping

The Cousin's responsibilities can include shopping, if required. Non-drivers may still be expected to do the shopping and this may involve the use of taxis, walking etc.

Dealing with money

There should be sufficient housekeeping money available to cover reasonable costs for shopping and we would suggest a cash float with a record book be provided by the client for the Cousin to maintain a detailed record. We advise clients not to ask Cousins to use their credit and/or debit cards when shopping on their behalf as this places the Cousin in a vulnerable position.

As well as shopping, many Cousins are responsible for the payment of household expenses, such as window cleaners, gardeners, and so on.

Key to this is how money is made available and replenished for these expenses and what records are kept. To avoid any confusion at a later date, it's also important to find out who is responsible for payment of specific items. Is it the client, their representative or someone else?

Housework

One of the duties that can be agreed with a Cousin is to keep the house clean and tidy during the assignment. Cousins should not be expected to carry out heavy housework or spring-cleaning.

If there is already a cleaner in post, the Cousin should have been informed before the assignment begins, but you can still require them to take responsibility for the day-to-day tidiness of the house, i.e. for ensuring that kitchens (work tops, ovens, fridges, floors etc.), bathrooms and lavatories are kept clean, any out-of-date foodstuffs are removed from fridges etc. and for maintaining their own accommodation.

We suggest that you also require Cousins to ensure that the client's home is secure at all times.

Guests

Having the support at home often gives clients the confidence to invite friends or family around again. Cousins can help in the preparation and support for these types of event. However, their main focus is on caring for the client. They are not party planners or waitresses.



Arrangements for time off

You should agree time off arrangements with your Cousins. We suggest a daily two-hour break to be taken away from the client's premises.

However, the reality of the situation may be very different. There may well be an hour or two each day for Cousins to have time to themselves, but it may not always be possible to leave the client's home.

Sometimes, more complicated arrangements have to be put in place – perhaps a friend or relative has already agreed a regular time to take over or a relief carer is supplied by a local care agency. Again, the key is to be as flexible as possible. Whatever arrangement is made, it is best to discuss and agree this before the Cousin arrives.

Night calls

Cousins are there for security and emergency during the night. However, in order to carry out their daytime assignments effectively, they need to get a good night's sleep. If they are regularly disturbed at night, we advise them to let both the client or their representative and their care relationship executive know so that alternative arrangements for night cover can be made.

Cousins can make an additional charge for night calls (see our price list documentation supplied, or available on request from our customer service team). It is important that the client is aware of this, and that this is agreed with your Cousin, so that they can budget accordingly. Head office also need the information so that future Cousins can be matched appropriately.

Medication prompting

Please be aware that Cousins can only give limited assistance with the management of medicines. They can give support and help, acting under the direction of clients or their representatives.

Personal emergency or illness

Whatever happens, even in the case of personal emergency or illness, our Cousins are asked to remember that they have a duty to preserve the safety of our clients.

Need advice?

If there is a problem with an assignment, a change in a client's condition or unresolved differences between client and Cousin, we are happy to discuss this with both client and Cousin.

What will it cost?



Care is a complex, bespoke service, so to understand the costs associated, we recommend an initial conversation with our care advisors who can outline the costs and check Cousin availability.

Our price list gives more details of our Cousin and agency fees and can be obtained from our customer services team.

Remuneration levels

We estimate from our experience of live-in care that the maximum working hours are less than 10 per day. This helps us to scope the requirements of the assignment when making an introduction and make sure the right Cousin is introduced. Should your requirements be different from this estimate, or change over time, we will need to adapt our service provision accordingly.

“First-class care, compassion, cooking meals, and companionship, particularly for my husband.”

Client satisfaction survey feedback

Organising payment

In the first instance, there is a non-refundable registration fee at the start of your application to allow us to begin the complex search and matching process.

Once a Cousin has been matched with a client and the dates of the assignment agreed, remuneration needs to consider:

- payment rates and dates;
- the number of days of the booking;
- any travel expenses (unless they are classed as out-of-pocket expenses);
- night-call charges.

Cousins issue invoices directly to the client or their representative. These invoices are usually presented on the final day of a short-term assignment or at regular intervals on a longer-term assignment. Cousins will usually require payments made by BACS transfer or by cheque. We also suggest Cousins re-claim their travel costs at the beginning of the assignment, as these are deemed to be out-of-pocket expenses.

Ongoing costs

In addition to the Cousins fees you will pay an agency rate for each day of the assignment. This fee covers:

- our work to maintain a bank of available carers when they are needed, including high demand seasonal coverage;
- our ongoing carer compliance checks and service feedback;
- our support to arrange future assignments and cover periods of respite;
- our provision of recommended rates of pay and ongoing service guidance;
- central office support to answer your general queries, respond to feedback on the Cousins and to provide new introductions upon request.

“It’s the same with the continuity you can only get with a live-in carer – people prefer a carer with whom they’ve forged a connection and, again, that’s especially true in dementia cases.”

Gayil, Country Cousins carer

Insurance

It is the client’s responsibility to ensure that they provide a safe and secure home for the Cousin during their stay. The client’s normal household contents insurance policy should include public liability and (if relevant) employer’s liability, which is there to cover anything that may occur as a result of an accident in the home.

If the Cousin uses a car to provide transport for the client, the client, or their representative should ensure that they have adequate business insurance.

Tax

Cousins work on a self-employed basis with clients and are therefore responsible for their own tax and National Insurance contributions.





Going forward or going back



It is the responsibility of the Cousin to confirm that the assignment has been formally agreed so that it can go ahead as arranged.

We need to know the agreed start and finish dates for the assignment to allow us to arrange for future help, if required. At this stage, the Cousin would also pass on any new information about the assignment that was discussed and agreed during the initial conversations. This information ensures that we provide adequate briefing to future assigned Cousins.

Second thoughts

On the rare occasion that things do not go to plan, the first step is to contact us at head office – we will do everything we can to make things right.

If clients wish to cancel the assignment, they must give notice to head office and notify the Cousin accordingly. We ask you to contact us immediately by telephone on **0800 542 0645** or by email on **info@country-cousins.co.uk**.

For more information on our cancellation policy and other terms and conditions, a copy is supplied with the registration paperwork or available on request by contacting head office. If the client decides not to go ahead after the notice period has elapsed, they would be liable for payment to the Cousin, unless an alternative assignment is found for the Cousin or an alternative arrangement has been made between

you and the Cousin. We will always use our best endeavours to introduce the Cousin to another client so they can start an alternative assignment, however this cannot be guaranteed.

If, however, the client provides the agency with at least fourteen days' notice prior to the day on which the Cousin is booked to start the assignment, the agency will cancel the assignment and the client will not need to pay the Cousin anything (unless you have agreed different terms with the Cousin).

In the unlikely event that the Cousin should decide not to go ahead with the assignment, Country Cousins would use its best endeavours to find an alternative Cousin and there would be no payment due to the original Cousin.

Future arrangements

Arrangements do not change after the first assignment; in fact, all bookings will be handled in exactly the same way.

More questions?

Just ask and we'll be happy to help. Call or email us:

0800 542 0657

info@country-cousins.co.uk



A day in my life as a carer



As I mulled over life on the caring front over the last nine years, I reflected on what a complex role it is to be a carer. Caring is far different to my professional work before I retired and became a carer. I am passionate about not only caring for my clients but also caring about them.

On an average assignment I can experience on a daily basis the whole gamut of emotions and experiences life has to offer. I meet the most fascinating people and have visited little hamlets and towns that are far off the beaten track. There has been much fun, laughter and jokes and occasionally very sad and frustrating times. I love the flexibility and the almost nomadic existence. I have travelled the length and breadth of the UK and the Channel Islands.

Besides needing a good sense of humour, empathy, patience, great people skills, the usual technical caring skills and great hands-on management and housekeeping abilities, I have developed a whole new subset of skills and roles that are vital to being a good carer.

These include being an actor (vital when dealing with someone with Alzheimer's), chef, therapist, physio, deep-clean specialist and an advocate for my clients against what can sometimes seem an uncaring NHS.

That feeling of joy and achievement I have when I leave an assignment knowing that I have just made a fundamental difference in how a weak, frail and lonely person experiences their life, is like no other reward in life.

Thank you to my fellow carers who keep the benchmarks high!

“Whatever problems people face, they can still enjoy a certain quality of life. Every individual is different, so I speak to the family and the medical professionals to find out what steps to take. Activities can help – everything from board games and baking to craftwork or little trips out for coffee.”

Jennifer, Country Cousins carer



Changeover day – exclusive to Country Cousins



Too often with other agencies, the handover is like a baton pass in a relay race, the leaving carer is gone on the changeover day with barely, or in some

extreme cases, no handover at all.

Not at Country Cousins, we insist on a long handover process, with one carer preparing the home and the client for the change. Providing time, and often a meal, together with the incoming Cousin and client.

Our aim is that the experience is a positive and stress free one – sharing practical information, but more than this a social event that everyone enjoys.

The changeover day arrival time is usually midday (unless you agree alternative arrangements) so that there is plenty of time for the handover to take place, to show the new Cousin around and allow the outgoing Cousin to leave at 2pm. The handover provides an opportunity for the Cousin to get to know the client and the routine of the household, and to find out more about what is required of them during the assignment.

What can the Cousin expect?

When a new Cousin arrives, their predecessor will have:

- prepared lunch for the client and both departing (if appropriate) and arriving Cousin;
- the housework and laundry up-to-date;
- sufficient food to be in the house for at least the next 24 hours. There should be sufficient food for both client and Cousin to cover weekends and bank holidays;
- the client's bedroom is clean and tidy, with the bed freshly made up;
- updated records. In addition to the handover, we suggest there be a file or book in the house, detailing the daily routine, local facilities, client preferences, emergency contact numbers etc.

Once in place, the client and new Cousin can begin the rewarding process of getting to know one another.

“Very professional and reliable service. Cousins have universally provided excellent practical assistance and reassurance to my mother.”

Client satisfaction survey feedback

Keeping things up to date



Our clients' circumstances will undoubtedly change over time and it is important that the client or their representative lets us know about those changes, so that we can keep our records up to date.

Any changes to the level of care should be agreed between the client or their representative and the

Cousin. We ask to be notified of any changes as this will enable us to make the correct match in the future.

Returning to a client

Because we always try hard to find the right match, we are especially delighted when Cousins are asked by clients to return for a future assignment.



Let's make it happen



Thank you for choosing Country Cousins and for taking the time to read through this booklet. We'll be delighted if it has answered all of your questions, but whether you are ready to supply your information or looking for more reassurance, we are here waiting for you to get in touch.

Country Cousins is determined to offer you the highest-quality service, so call, email or go online. We look forward to hearing from you.

Compliments and complaints

We encourage our clients to communicate any compliments, comments or suggestions whenever they wish. It is always nice to know that one's efforts are appreciated, so we are pleased to pass on any good reports from clients to our Cousins.



"I have found the staff very helpful
patient and understanding."

Client satisfaction survey feedback

More questions?

Just ask and we'll be happy to help. Call or email us:

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Care where you're happiest. Home.



Country Cousins

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