Caring Britain

How homecare reviews are shaping care choices











Foreword

by Will Blackwell, CEO of Tomorrow's Guides

More people in Britain receive care at home than live in care homes, with nearly 639,000 people receiving home care compared with around 441,000 people living in residential care. Yet because home care is usually provided to one person in their own home, much of it takes place out of sight, making it harder for families and care seekers to understand what good care looks like and what to expect from a provider.



Staying at home brings real benefits: familiar surroundings, more independence and care that fits around a person's daily life. However, home care is also harder to judge from the outside. A family looking at care homes can visit and get a feel for the setting before they commit. Home care offers no equivalent. Home care is delivered in the comfort of people's own homes, often through short visits, meaning much of the care and support provided goes unseen by the wider public.

For this reason, reviews can be even more valuable for care seekers looking for home care, especially for families arranging care for the first time. Across the sector, reviews also help build the visibility that home care has sometimes struggled to achieve. They also give a voice to the people receiving care at home. **In this report, over a quarter (28%) of reviews were written by people receiving home care – seven times the proportion of care home reviews written by residents.**

For providers, verified reviews show the day-to-day reality of care at home. They reveal what families notice and value, and point to the areas that may need more attention. For carers themselves, reviews can offer valuable recognition. As they often work and travel alone between clients, they rarely have colleagues around to see the difference they make. A review that names a carer, or thanks them for their patience and kindness, shows them that their work is noticed.

Following our previous Caring Britain report on care home reviews, this edition sets home care and residential care side by side for the first time. Overall, the findings are positive. **Home care providers achieve an average review rating of 4.76 out of 5, and people receiving care rate being treated with dignity more highly than any other part of their care.** "Carers" is the word that appears most often in positive reviews, which mirrors the central place staff hold in home care reviews.

Other findings give more cause for reflection. Value for money is the lowest rated area, as it is in care homes. **In England, 38% of home care providers have no current Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating, and 57% of providers have no homecare.co.uk reviews at all.** Many families therefore choose care with limited information to guide them.

We are calling on every home care provider to encourage their clients and families to leave reviews. Each review helps a family searching for care, and each one shows providers what they do well and where they can improve.

The report also looks at how families search for care, as AI tools play a growing role in how people find and compare providers. A strong, verified review profile will matter more as a result.

Trust in home care starts with the care people receive, and with the confidence families can place in what they read about it. That is why homecare.co.uk believes families deserve a full and honest picture of home care, not a partial one.

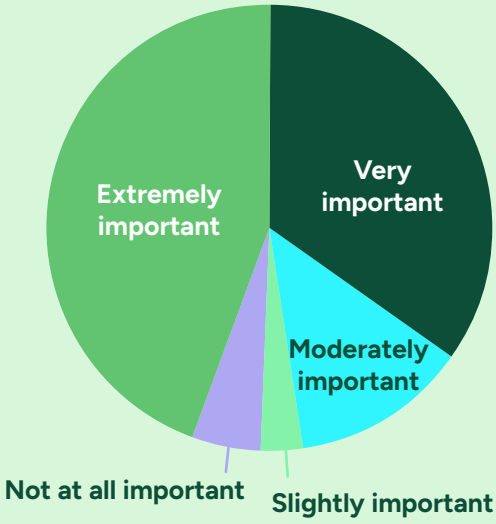
Introduction

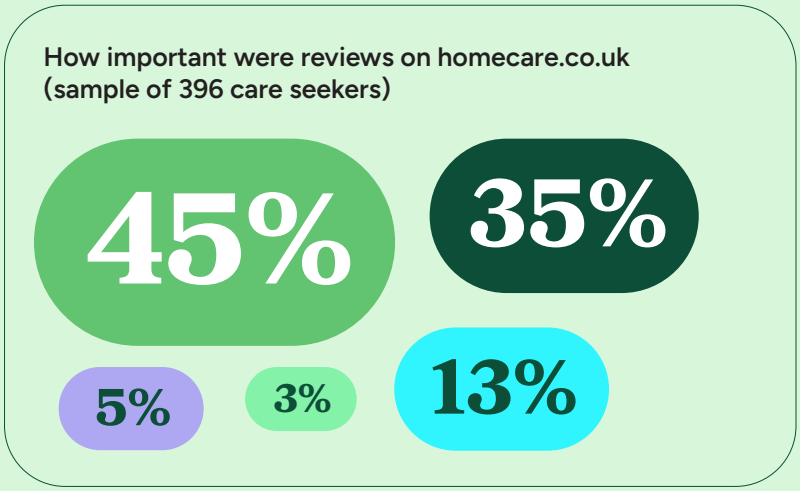
Why reviews matter

Choosing a home care provider means placing a great deal of trust in someone. You are inviting a carer into your home, often at a time when you or someone you love is vulnerable, and trusting them to provide personal and sometimes intimate care with dignity, kindness and respect.

Most families come to home care with little to go on, and many are arranging it for the first time. Home care is often the first formal care a person receives. Many people start with support at home and only move into a care home later, when their needs increase.

Reviews can help to fill this gap. In polling of people looking for home care, 80% said reviews on homecare.co.uk were extremely or very important to their decision. For care homes, the equivalent figure was 76%.





Reviews do not replace regulation or a conversation with a provider. What they offer is a first-hand account of care from the people who receive it and their loved ones. They show whether carers arrive when expected and take time to talk, and whether the same familiar face returns each week. Families want to know these details before they commit to care, and they rarely find them in a brochure or a regulatory rating.

Building trust and reputation

Reviews also play an important role for home care providers, helping them demonstrate the quality of their services and build trust with prospective clients. This can be particularly valuable for providers expanding into new areas where they have yet to establish a local reputation.

Anna Potgieter, Head of Brand and Marketing at CareYourWay, said:

"When you enter a new area as a growing care provider, earning the trust of local families is everything. At CareYourWay, reviews have become one of the most powerful ways we do that.

"We hear 'we saw your reviews' remarkably often when families first enquire. While we generate feedback across multiple platforms, homecare.co.uk is consistently the one families mention when they have researched us and independently verified the quality of our care. We have even had families tell us that, after reading our reviews, they simply did not want to speak to another provider.

"That reputation has to be earned. Our teams deliver exceptional care every day, and homecare.co.uk gives the experiences of those we support a trusted, independent platform to tell that story.

Our franchise partners see enormous value in that locally, particularly when establishing themselves in a new community. Having been recognised as a Top 20 Home Care Group for four consecutive years, we have seen first-hand how that credibility helps build trust, generate high-quality enquiries and accelerate local growth.

"As the way families find care continues to evolve, including through AI-assisted search, having a strong and credible digital reputation will only become more important.

"For us, homecare.co.uk is one of the most valuable tools in our toolkit. It gives the quality of our care an independent voice and gives families confidence in CareYourWay before they have even picked up the phone."

Reassurance when families need it most

For families, home care is often arranged following a sudden change in a loved one's health or circumstances. Reviews can provide reassurance at a difficult time, helping people make more confident decisions by learning from the experiences of others.

Toni Wood, Chief Customer Officer at Helping Hands, said:

"When a family starts looking for home care, it is often because something has changed quickly. They may be worried about a parent or loved one, and trying to make the right decision at what can be a very emotional time.

"We know that many families begin their search online, and reviews on trusted sites such as Homecare.co.uk are today's equivalent of word of mouth. They can feel like a recommendation from someone who has been in their shoes, giving people an honest sense of what home care is really like. Alongside a conversation with one of our local teams, they can offer real reassurance when families are deciding what is right for them.

"For us, every review means something. Our carers, branch and support centre teams care deeply about helping people live well in the homes and communities they love, so it is incredibly special when a family takes the time to share their experience.

About the research

The data in this report is drawn from verified reviews published on homecare.co.uk between September 2025 and August 2026. Where a data set covers a different or shorter period, this is noted alongside the relevant figures.

homecare.co.uk is the UK's top home care reviews website which helps people find home care for themselves or someone they love, bringing together provider information, guidance and reviews in one place.

homecare.co.uk

Headline findings

80% of care seekers say reviews matter

Four in five people looking for home care said reviews on homecare.co.uk were extremely or very important when choosing a provider.

More than half of providers have no reviews

57% of home care providers have no homecare.co.uk reviews, creating a significant information gap for people comparing care.

38% of English home care providers have no current CQC rating

4,552 providers analysed had no regulator rating, meaning some families may have limited information available when making a choice.

People receiving home care have a stronger voice

28% of home care reviews are written by clients themselves, compared with just 4% of care home reviews written by residents.

Dignity comes first

Being treated with dignity is the highest-rated aspect of home care at 4.83 out of 5, ahead of care and support and staff.

Reviews are rapidly moving online

Two-thirds (66%) of home care reviews are now submitted online rather than on paper cards, up from just half (50%) in 2021.

Reviews are emerging as an important signal in AI search

95% of providers appearing among the top three providers in the AI searches analysed had reviews on homecare.co.uk.

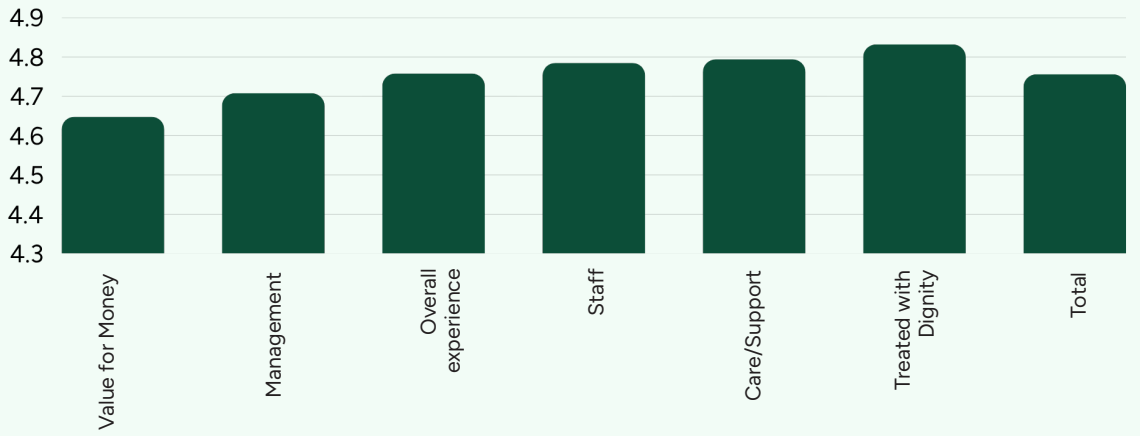
Section 1

What matters most to home care users and their families

The strongest message in our review data is the importance of the relationship between carer and the person receiving care. **Being treated with dignity is the highest rated category, at 4.83 out of 5.** Dignity carries particular weight when care takes place in someone's own home. Carers often help with personal tasks such as washing and dressing, in a space that is deeply familiar to the client. How a carer acts in that setting shapes whether someone feels respected in their own home.

Care and support (4.79) and staff (4.78) follow closely behind. This is a subtly different picture to care homes, where staff receive the highest rating of any category. In home care, dignity, personal support and staff quality all sit within a few hundredths of a point of one another, suggesting families more often judge the care they receive and the person who provides it as part of one holistic experience.

Review scores by review category (Sep 2025 to Aug 2026)



The language used in positive reviews reinforces this picture. “Carers” is the most frequently used positive term in homecare.co.uk reviews, followed closely by “service”, “good” and “care”. Words describing the manner of carers, such as “helpful”, “happy”, “excellent”, “friendly”, “caring”, and “kind”, also feature prominently. Some words point to what sets home care apart from residential care. The use of the words “punctual” and “reliable” reflects the rhythm of home care.

In a care home, staff are always nearby. In home care, a client waits for a carer to arrive, and families often plan their own day around those visits.

A late or missed visit can unsettle both, which helps explain why reliability features so strongly in how people judge their care.

“Polite” is another word that stands out in home care reviews, but does not appear among the most common words in care home reviews. The difference lies in the fact that a care home is a shared space where staff and residents spend the day together, while a home care worker is a visitor in someone’s private home. Courtesy matters in this setting, and reviews show that clients and families value carers who treat their home, and their routines, with respect.

Most common positive words in homecare.co.uk reviews (Sep 2025 to Aug 2026)



As with care homes, value for money is the lowest rated category, at 4.65. This is likely to reflect pressures felt across the whole social care sector. Home care providers are facing rising operational and staffing costs, while families are faced with a significant financial commitment. Home care also makes cost unusually visible. Families often pay by the hour, and they can see exactly how this time is spent. While care home fees cover accommodation, meals, activities and round-the-clock support, home care fees typically cover a set amount of a carer's time. When a visit feels rushed, clients and families can notice this directly. Clear communication about fees, visit lengths and what each visit includes can help families understand what they are paying for and feel confident in the value of their care.

Ownership models

Review scores for home care also differ by ownership. Both private and not-for-profit providers achieved strong average ratings, with the former having only a slight edge over the latter. **Whereas private providers have an average review rating of 4.82 out of 5, not-for-profit providers sit at 4.77.** This is very different to care homes, where not-for-profit providers receive higher ratings.

Review scores by ownership (L12m reviews)



Review scores are rated out of 5.

Section 2

The voices behind home care reviews

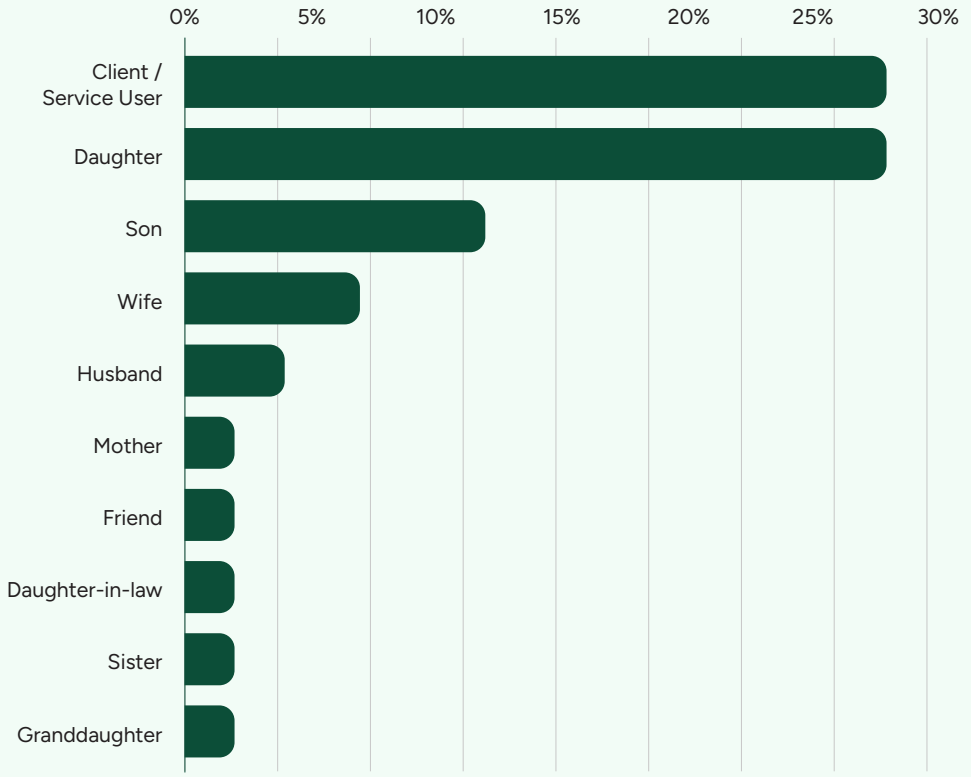
Families are the most important source of reviews of home care providers, generating 72% of home care reviews. **Out of family members, daughters leave the most reviews, accounting for 28% of all reviews published on homecare.co.uk, and nearly half of those written by family.** This reflects the burden that continues to fall on women in arranging and overseeing care for their loved ones. Our previous research found that nearly two thirds of people seeking care for a parent are daughters, in line with Carers UK research showing that women provide a disproportionate share of unpaid care.

They are followed by sons, who leave 12% of reviews, and then by wives (7%) and husbands (4%). Mothers, daughters-in-law, sisters and granddaughters make up most of the rest.

In addition to family members, the people receiving care themselves also leave a significant proportion of reviews, at 28%, on par with daughters. This compares to only 4% of care home residents, reflecting the different nature of home care. People who receive care at home often have less advanced or complex needs than care home residents, so many are able to leave reviews themselves, and more feel comfortable with using technology. Additionally, the close one-to-one relationship that people form with their carer, who visits them regularly or even lives with them, can prompt them to share their experience in their own words. Many want to thank a particular carer by name, or describe the difference that carer has made to their daily life.

Whether reviews come from families or from clients themselves, both offer home care providers a valuable view of the care they deliver. Providers should encourage both groups to leave reviews, and explain how much each one helps. A review guides other families choosing care, and it gives carers recognition for work that often goes unseen.

homecare.co.uk reviews published by connection



How reviews are collected:

The way people leave reviews is changing, and faster in home care than in care homes. In 2021, half (50%) of home care reviews arrived online. By the first half of 2026, this share had risen to 66%. For care homes, online reviews rose more slowly, from 45% to 49.5% over the same period.

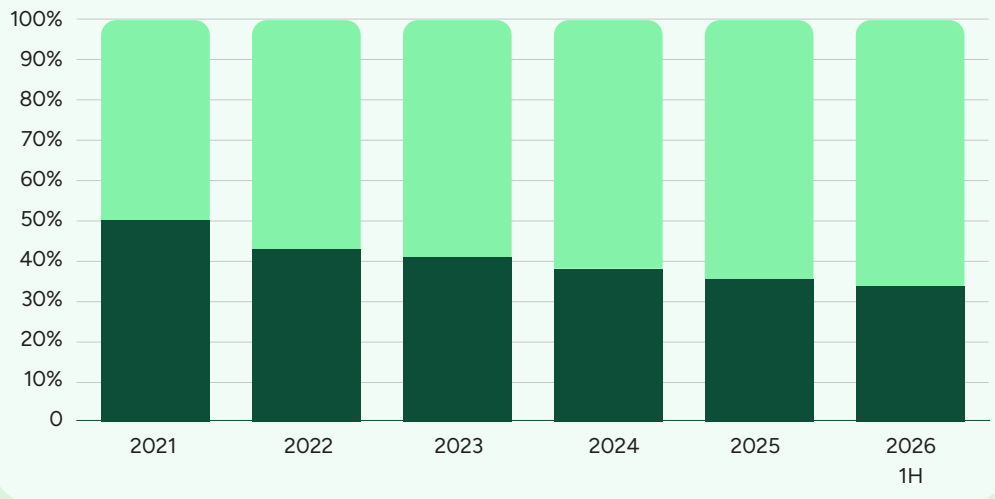
A few factors are likely to explain this. Service users are often more confident using digital technology. On a practical note, home care has no reception desk or communal space where a visiting family member might pick up a paper review card.

But the move online does not mean cards have had their day. A third of home care reviews still arrive by card, and for many clients and families, a card handed over in person is the simplest way to give feedback. The two routes reach different people, and both remain important.

The home care providers that collect the most reviews do not rely on one route. They build both into their everyday processes, so that asking for feedback becomes a routine part of delivering care rather than an occasional extra.

Carers are often the people clients know and trust most, so a card handed over at the end of a visit is one of the most effective prompts there is. Our new QR code review cards are designed with this in mind. They come in a smaller, business card format that carers can carry with them and hand out easily, and they bridge the two routes by giving people the choice to review online.

Proportion of reviews collected by collection method



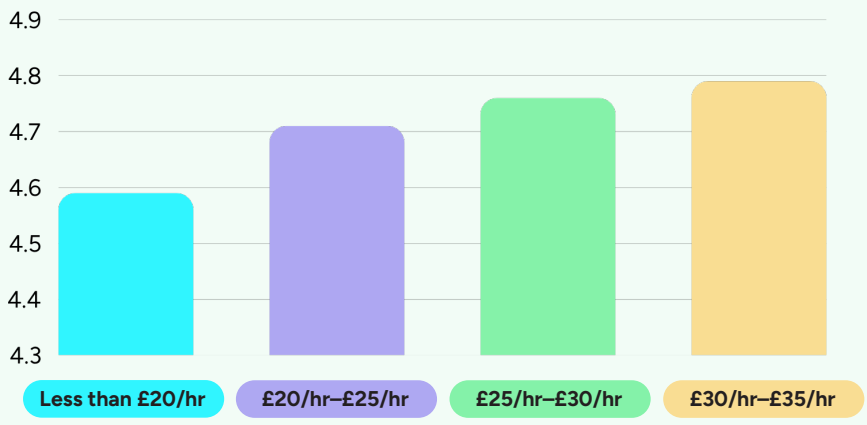
Section 3

The cost of home care and impact on reviews

The cost of care inevitably influences ratings. Our data shows that higher-priced home care providers tend to receive higher review ratings. Providers charging less than £30 an hour achieve an average rating of 4.76 out of 5. Providers charging more than £35 an hour achieve 4.88.

Ratings rise steadily across every price band, going from 4.79 for providers charging between £20 and £25 per hour to 4.8 for those charging £25 to £30, and 4.84 for those charging £30 to £35.

Average review score by price point of homecare provider (visiting care, from price)



The biggest perceived difference between the highest and lowest priced services is in care and support. **Ratings for this category rise from 4.73 among providers charging less than £30 an hour to 4.91 among those charging more than £35.**

This differs from care homes, where the largest gaps were in facilities, rooms and activities – the parts of the offer families can see on a visit. Home care has none of these to compare, so the perceived difference shows up in the care itself. Management also scores better among providers charging more than £30 an hour.

Value for money, by contrast, rates slightly higher among the lowest-priced providers, at 4.73, but stays almost level across every price band, falling only to 4.71 among the highest-priced. This reflects a similar pattern to care homes, where value for money ratings also held steady across price bands, and was lowest among the highest-priced home. In both settings, families judge value by whether the care meets their loved one's needs, not by the price alone. For providers, clear communication about pricing and about what each hour pays for is the best way to help families and service users understand the value of care and build trust.

Average review rating by price point and review category (visiting care, fee from 31st July 2026)



Review ratings are out of 5. Axis starts at 4.3.

Section 4

Regulator ratings and reviews

The missing picture of care quality

Regulator ratings and reviews play different but complementary roles. Regulators assess whether providers meet required standards. Reviews show what receiving care is actually like, including changes between inspections.

However, homecare.co.uk analysis reveals gaps in regulator information across Great Britain. In England, 38% of home care providers (4,552) have no current CQC rating. In Wales, 19% (68 of 367) are not yet rated by Care Inspectorate Wales, and in Scotland, 8% (64 of 754) have not yet been inspected by the Care Inspectorate.

These figures are not directly comparable. Wales only introduced published ratings in April 2025. Scotland has a long-established grading system. England has faced an inspection backlog, with the CQC introducing measures in 2026 to prioritise unrated services and those with outdated assessments.

Even a published rating may be several years old, and staffing, management and care quality can change in that time. Reviews help fill this gap. They offer recent insight into carer consistency, visit reliability, communication and responsiveness, and help unrated providers show the quality of their care.

Regulator ratings provide an independent assessment of care quality, while reviews offer insight into people's everyday experiences. For families, they provide reassurance when choosing someone to care for a loved one. For providers, they help demonstrate quality and build trust.

How reviews can boost confidence

Margaret Hern, who lives in Oxfordshire, used a home care provider to help care for her husband who had Parkinson's. She said:

"It was really important to read other people's reviews before I chose a home care provider to help me with my husband's personal care. Not only because I had to trust someone to take care of him, but I was inviting them into our home. Listening to the experiences of other care users gave me the confidence I was choosing the right company."

Reassurance when choosing care

When Sarah Brown's 84-year-old mother needed home care after a hospital stay, reviews helped her compare providers.

"They all promised compassionate, personalised care, but how could I know what they were really like? Reading reviews from other families made a huge difference."

Sarah added: *"You're trusting someone with a person you love. Hearing from other families who have been in the same position is incredibly reassuring."*

Helping providers demonstrate quality

Oliver Stirk, managing director of Carefound Group, said reviews help families feel confident about inviting carers into their homes:

"Most families choose to purchase home care services from Carefound Home Care directly rather than through a local authority or NHS contract, so trust matters enormously.

"Actual reviews from our clients on homecare.co.uk help families find a provider they can rely on, and gives them the confidence to invite our team into their home at a time when they're often at their most vulnerable.

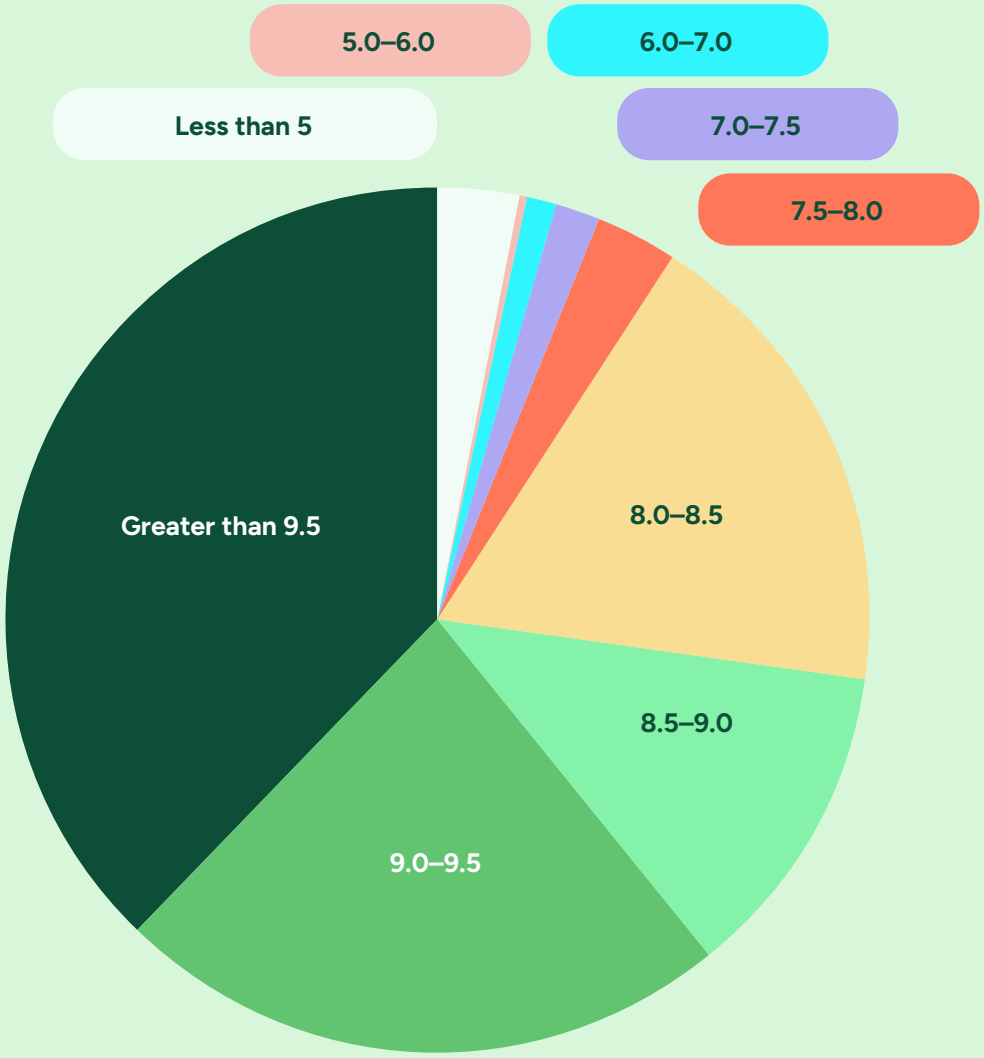
"We're very proud to have consistently won the Top 20 homecare.co.uk award. It's not only a brilliant reflection of the highly personalised home care services our local teams provide, but also a valuable guide for families looking for outstanding home care for themselves or a loved one."

Number of home care providers by regulatory rating (11th September 2026) (England, Scotland & Wales)



Of providers in England that have a CQC rating, the picture is positive, with 89% being rated Good or Outstanding. This reflects the picture on homecare.co.uk, where 90% score over 9 out of 10. However, 57% of home care providers have no homecare.co.uk reviews. Families searching for one of these providers may find only a regulatory rating, and in some cases nothing at all. At an already difficult time, this leaves care seekers making a significant decision with very little to go on.

We would encourage all home care providers to invite their clients and families to share their experiences. It is one of the simplest ways to give families more information, and to make sure good care is seen and recognised.



Number of home care providers by review score on homecare.co.uk (11th September 2026)

1,614

999

510

63

137

778

10

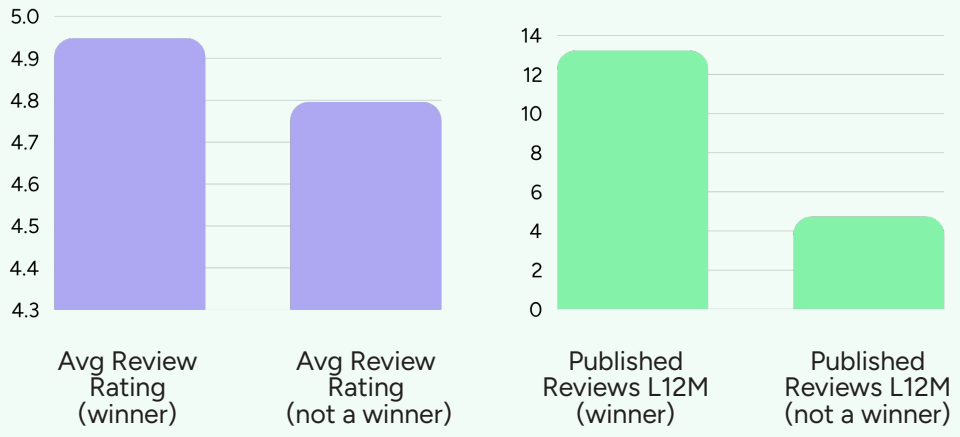
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Award-winners vs the rest

At the other end of the scale are the winners of this year's homecare.co.uk awards. **The 2026 winners are rated an average of 4.95 out of 5, compared to 4.8 for other providers. They also collect nearly three times as many reviews a year, 13.2 on average compared with 4.7.** As the awards are based on verified reviews, this is partly to be expected, as award winners need a large number of exceptional reviews to win, but it shows how closely strong ratings and regular feedback go together. Recent reviews also give providers another way to show the quality of their day-to-day care between inspections.

Award winners vs rest: review rating and average number of reviews



Recognising good care and learning from feedback

For award-winning providers, reviews are not just a measure of satisfaction. They also recognise the work of care teams and provide valuable feedback to help improve services.

Ruth Brown, Managing Director of Home Instead UK & Ireland, said:

"The Top 20 homecare.co.uk awards are particularly meaningful to us because they are based on the experiences and feedback of the people who know our care best, our clients and their families. For our local teams, that recognition is a powerful reflection of the relationships they build and the quality of care they provide every day.

"For us, feedback is also about listening and learning. Positive reviews are an opportunity to recognise the dedication of our Care Professionals and local teams, while all feedback helps us understand what matters most to clients and families and where we can continue to improve."

Why reviews and regulator ratings both matter

While reviews offer valuable insights into people's everyday experiences, they are most useful when considered alongside independent regulator assessments. Together, they give families a fuller picture of care quality, particularly when inspections may have taken place several years ago.

Vicki Gidalla, Director of Care and Quality at Bluebird Care, said:

"No single source of information can tell a family everything they need to know about a provider's standard and quality of care. Families are best served when independent regulatory oversight sits alongside the real experiences of the people receiving care and their loved ones.

"The regulator plays a crucial role in providing independent assurance and maintaining public confidence in the care sector. To be most effective, however, ratings need to be timely and reflect the care being delivered today, so that families can base their decisions on current information. Reviews complement this, offering insight into the difference care makes to people's daily lives in the time between inspections.

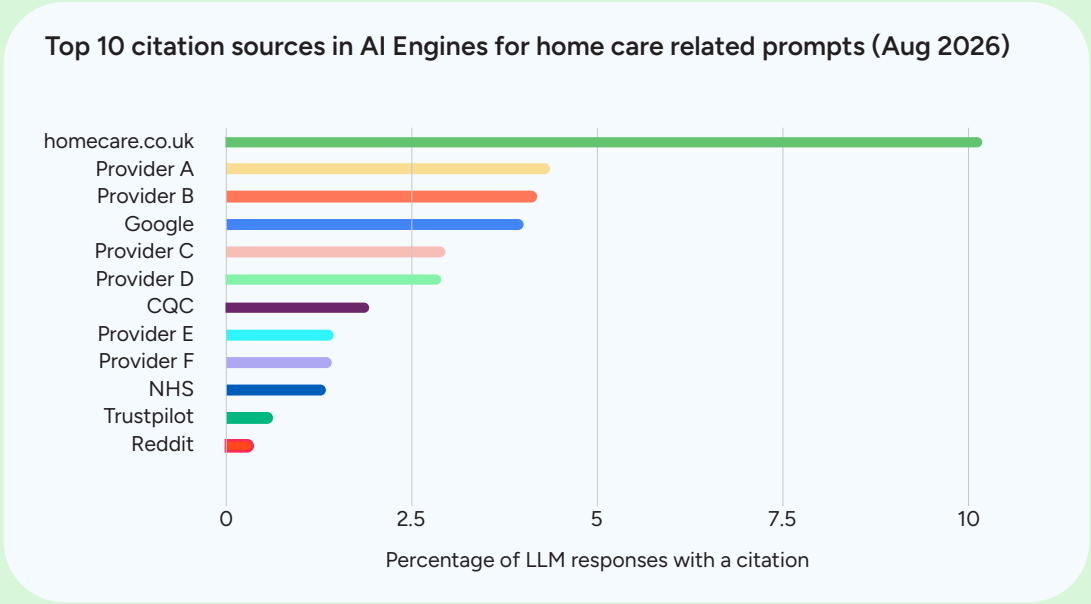
"The more high-quality, accessible information families can find, the more confident they can be when choosing care. The strongest providers welcome both independent scrutiny and feedback from the people they support and see each as an opportunity to improve and to demonstrate the quality of their care. At Bluebird Care, we believe that being open and listening to the voices of those we support are fundamental to delivering outstanding care. We are proud that this is reflected in both our regulatory ratings and our reviews on homecare.co.uk."

Section 5

A changing search landscape and the rise of AI

Families and care seekers are increasingly using AI tools such as ChatGPT, Google AI Overview, and Google Gemini to ask questions about home care and compare their options. This matters for providers. These tools can influence which providers families see, how they compare them and, ultimately, which one they choose, so visibility on these platforms is becoming increasingly important.

Our research into AI citations for home care related prompts, covering searches on 'help and advice on finding home care', 'home care by location', 'home care costs and funding' and 'home care reviews', found that homecare.co.uk is the most cited source. It receives five times more citations than the CQC, six times more than the NHS, and 17 times more than other review platforms such as Trustpilot.



When AI tools are asked to name the top home care providers directly, the pattern is even more pronounced. **95% of home care providers cited as a 'top 3 home care provider' in a given location collect reviews on homecare.co.uk,** reinforcing how much strong, verified reviews now matter in being recognised, not just by families, but by AI tools that families and other stakeholders are increasingly relying upon to gain information on a provider.

The growing use of AI tools in home care mirrors a similar trend in care homes, where more families are also turning to AI to find and compare care. However, providers should not treat AI visibility, or Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO), as a box-ticking exercise. Reviews still need to be earned and collected regularly, and they rest on good, consistent care and clear communication with clients and families. Providers that focus on these foundations are likely to build a strong presence on AI tools as a result.

Section 6

Review verification

homecare.co.uk exists to give families credible, reliable insight into home care. This is dependent on trust being built into every stage of the reviews process. Without careful verification, reviews lose their credibility and stop being useful to families or fair to providers.

By following these fundamentals, homecare.co.uk is able to ensure that families can make decisions based on information that is trustworthy and free from conflicts of interest. In addition, trusted reviews are just as important to home care providers themselves, who are able to act on genuine, authentic feedback to make improvements, rather than being wrongly led by reviews that are fraudulent or misleading.

Mandy Hopkins, Reviews Manager at homecare.co.uk, said:

"Every review submitted to homecare.co.uk goes through a verification process before it can be published. This starts with checking that the reviewer has a genuine connection to the home care provider, that the review is complete and that it meets our Review Policy and publishing standards.

"We then carry out a series of authentication checks to identify duplicate or suspicious information, including matching IP addresses, names, email addresses or telephone numbers. If we need further verification, our Reviews Team may contact the reviewer by telephone or email and ask for additional information to confirm that the review is genuine.

"Only reviews that successfully pass these checks are approved for publication. If a review does not meet our standards or we cannot satisfactorily verify it, it is not published."

Conclusion

Home care in Britain is highly rated by the people who experience it. Across thousands of reviews, clients and families consistently value the human qualities of care: dignity, kindness, reliability and the relationship they build with their carers.

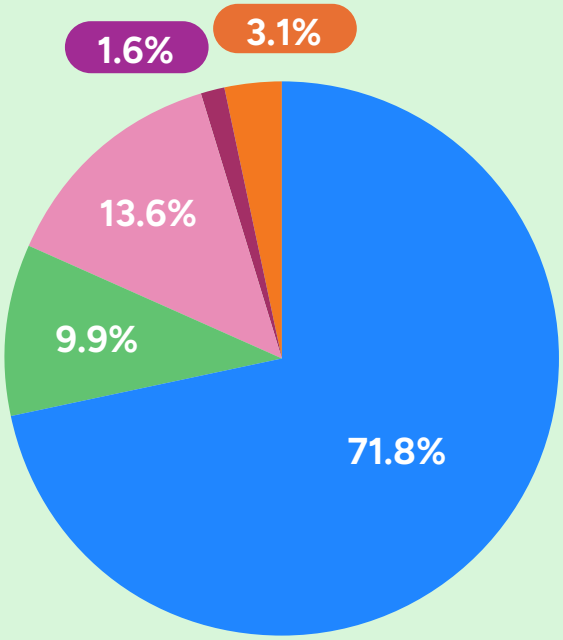
But this report also reveals a significant information gap.

More than a third of home care providers in England have no CQC rating, and more than half of providers have no reviews on homecare.co.uk. For those arranging care – many for the first time and often at short notice – this can mean choosing a provider with very little to go on. For good providers, it means their work goes unseen and more importantly, will be missing out on a vital tool for building trust with potential new clients.

Reviews are one of the simplest ways to close this gap. With more families now turning to AI tools to find care, a strong, verified review profile will increasingly shape which providers they see. We are calling on every home care provider to encourage the people they support, and their families, to share their experiences. Each review helps another family choose care with confidence, and helps bring the quality of home care into view.

About homecare.co.uk

homecare.co.uk is the leading reviews website for home care across the UK, helping families find and compare home care support for themselves or a loved one, bringing together provider information, practical guidance and verified reviews in one place. We focus on homecare providers who serve older person clients directly.



Share of time, older person care directories, Aug 25-July 26

carehome.co.uk

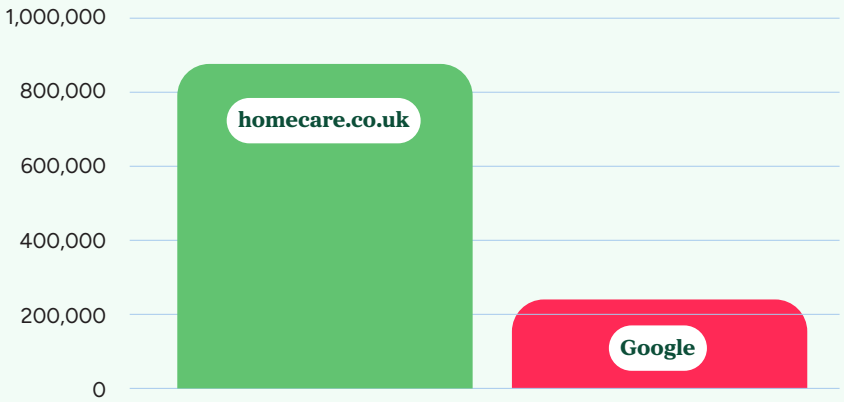
homecare.co.uk

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Autumna

Number of review datapoints vs Google (July 2026)



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