



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

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The future of Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston

New updated
consultation
information pack
from 26 June



To complete an online version, please visit consult.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/adult-social-care/grisedale-croft or scan the QR code



This consultation information has been updated and the consultation period extended by two weeks. Return your completed survey by 19 August 2026 to Grisedale Croft Consultation, Freepost WESTMORLAND AND FURNESS COUNCIL



What this consultation is about

This consultation is about the future of Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston - and includes consideration of an option for the continued provision of care in an alternative building in Alston.

We know the valued place Grisedale Croft has in the community and the longstanding role the home has played in supporting local people for more than 50 years. The home is rated “Good” by the Care Quality Commission and we are proud of the quality of care our current and past staff have continued to provide.

We are looking at the future of Grisedale Croft because the building is costly and not fit for the future of modern care. Permanent resident numbers have declined in recent years to as low as three, currently four, making operating costs per resident very high.

No decisions have been taken about the final outcome. The purpose of the consultation is to gather views, understand impacts, and ensure that any future decision is informed by the experiences and priorities of those most affected.

However, the council’s Cabinet has already recognised that Alston is an isolated community with little alternative provision available, so for this consultation it has indicated from the outset that its preferred option is to provide alternative accommodation in a suitable building in Alston, if one could be acquired, and it is financially viable.

We understand that even the start of a consultation on options for the future may be worrying for residents, families, and staff. These are people’s homes and places of work, not just buildings, and we are approaching this with care, openness and respect.

This consultation is about listening. We want to hear directly from residents, loved ones, staff and local communities so that any decision we make is informed and focussed on people’s wellbeing, dignity and safety.

Throughout the consultation period, residents and families will receive individual support, and staff will be kept fully informed, with trade unions engaged as part of the process. The council will ensure that any future changes prioritise safety, continuity of care and quality of life.

Following the consultation period, all feedback will be carefully analysed and the Director of Adult Social Care will make final decisions later in 2026.

Thank you for taking part in this consultation. You will find more details below about the background to this consultation, our wider vision for the future of care, and how to take part in the consultation and find out more at community information events.

Information about the consultation will be updated throughout the consultation period at **consult.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/adult-social-care/grisedale-croft**.

If you have any questions or need additional support to take part in the consultation please email **care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk** or call **0300 373 3301**.

Nikkie Phipps – Assistant Director of Care Services,
Adult Social Care, Westmorland and Furness Council

A Place Called Home: our vision for care

Westmorland and Furness Council, which owns and runs Grisedale Croft along with eight other care homes, is planning the future of its care services for older residents for the coming decades.

We want to meet the expectations of an ageing population who consistently tell us they want to live their lives independently in their own homes, in their own community, for as long as possible.

Residential care homes will still be needed for people who are no longer able to stay in their own home or move to specialist housing where support or care is on-hand. This can include people living with advanced dementia or people with complex needs.

Our staff provide excellent care, but the age and layout of our building environments, and particularly the size of many of our rooms, is increasingly limiting the care we can provide.

Sometimes this means we have to turn people away who we are not able to provide care for. In particular, the number of people requiring the support from two people on discharge from hospital is increasing. We are sometimes unable to accommodate these needs because the available rooms are too small for a bed to have space on each side for two care workers.

The council's vision for Adult Social Care

Our vision for Adult Social Care is 'people living in a place they call home, with the people and things they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing the things that matter to them.'

This vision drives a shift toward home-based support rather than residential care, independence rather than dependency, and strong community connection rather than isolation.

To achieve this we are prioritising:

- **adaptations, technology and personal support** to help people remain in their own home,
- **reablement support and intermediate care beds** to help people return to their own home after a spell in hospital, to support people to retain or regain independence in the community, or to prevent the need to go into hospital
- **local access to affordable, specialist housing offering support and care**, preventing or delaying the need for residential care
- **modern residential care, with facilities and services that are fit for the future**, and specialist support for people living with advanced dementia.

Your living choices in later life

In March the council launched a "Community Conversation" on the future of care called 'A Place Called Home: your living choices in later life'. We asked residents to think about their future living and care preferences if their need for support and care increased.

Overwhelmingly respondents preferred being supported to remain independent at home, or in specialist housing in their own community, with their own front door. Living in a residential care home, however good the quality of care, was seen negatively and only as a very last resort.

Why is the future of Grisedale Croft being reviewed now?

Residents' views and preferences from our 'A Place Called Home' survey are supporting our long-term planning for all aspects of the future of care in the coming years.

As part of this, analysis of all our care home buildings, occupancy rates and operating costs, has identified at an early stage two residential care homes where there are urgent and compelling reasons to consider their future immediately.

In April 2026 Westmorland and Furness Council's Cabinet considered detailed reports outlining significant challenges facing Grisedale Croft, and Applethwaite Green Care Home in Windermere.

These included:

- buildings with layouts and room sizes that no longer meet modern care and regulatory standards, and which are costly to run and maintain
- declining occupancy rates, leading to very high costs per person
- workforce pressures, with difficulty recruiting staff and high spending on agency staff.

The Grisedale Croft building

Grisedale Croft was constructed more than 50 years ago and has now exceeded its original design life.

The layout does not meet the needs of modern person-centred care, and site-specific constraints add to complexity and cost of refurbishment.

Modernising Grisedale Croft would involve extensive structural remodelling and refurbishment, moving walls to create larger ensuite rooms, which would also reduce the capacity of the home. It would involve installing new plumbing and wiring, and updating mechanical and electrical installations. It is not routine maintenance and redecoration.

It would mean the home would have to close temporarily to residents during the building work. This would be highly disruptive to the current residents, who would need to move to alternative temporary or permanent residential accommodation for an estimated 12 to 24 months.

Indicative costs, based on similar council projects in Cumbria, were stated in April as being between **£2.5 million and £3.0 million, or higher**, with additional risk arising from the complexities of the constrained site and associated surplus buildings.

This range of indicative costs is subject to change due to geopolitical uncertainty and building costs rising by more than has already been allowed for

A complete rebuild would cost more, and current residents would need to move to alternative temporary or permanent residential accommodation for an estimated two to four years.

Grisedale Croft occupancy and running costs

Grisedale Croft provides residential accommodation across 13 bedrooms and has had declining and limited occupancy over the last six years, due to a combination of demand, room sizes and recruitment difficulties. It has been operating at a reduced level and, at the launch of this public consultation, on 14 May 2026, had four permanent residents.

It had an annual budget for 2025-26 of £755,000, but at December 2025 had a forecast overspend for the full year of £154,000 or 20%. This gives a total forecast operating cost of £909,000, plus centrally attributable overheads at an estimated 16.7%.

A registered care home needs a minimum number of staff to operate safely 24/7 and to meet regulatory standards, and so has high fixed costs which do not reduce as occupancy falls. Grisedale Croft had a budgeted staffing establishment for 2025-26 of 17.16 full-time equivalent staff.

This means that Grisedale Croft had very high total costs to the council in 2025/26 of £4,072 per resident a week *(based on a December 2025 full-year cost forecast and the occupancy at the time of five, which included two short-term residents)*.

This is the highest cost of any Westmorland and Furness Council care homes and is four times the cost to the council of a care home place at an independent provider or a council-run home which has full occupancy.

While the council recognises the longstanding role Grisedale Croft has played in supporting local people, in the current financial climate it would be irresponsible not to consider carefully whether such investment in refurbishment (consultation option 2 below) or a rebuild (option 3 below), is the best use of council tax payers' money and whether such high operating costs can continue.

What does consultation on the future of Grisedale Croft mean?

The council's Cabinet agreed in April to begin formal public consultations on the future of Grisedale Croft. The decision allows the council to consult residents, families, staff, and the wider community on options for the future, in line with its legal duties and in order to make informed future decisions.

The consultation was launched on Thursday 14 May and was planned to run for 12 weeks to Wednesday 5 August.

On Friday 26 June the consultation period was extended by 2 weeks to Wednesday 19 August so that this consultation pack and online information could be updated to ensure people had complete information and understanding of all of the options for the future of the home.

This has been done after it became apparent from responses received so far to the consultation survey, and after listening to questions and concerns raised at community information events, that the "Refurbishment" option was being chosen by some respondents as the preferred option because this would improve the home for the future while being least disruptive to current residents of the home.

While we had stated that Refurbishment would be "highly disruptive to current residents", we have now clearly spelled out that the extent of structural work required for a complete remodelling and refurbishment of the home would mean the temporary closure of the home and the temporary or permanent relocation of residents to alternative accommodation for an estimated 12 to 24 months.

We have also clarified in response to questions that "Option 5: Provide alternative accommodation in a newly acquired property in the local area" was intended to refer to the town of Alston.

Consultation information is available in formats that meet different communication needs. Care home residents will be supported to take part, with advocacy available where required. Drop-in information events will take place in Alston, Nenthead and Garrigill (dates on page 10).

A public meeting has also been arranged for Thursday 16 July, 6.00-7.30pm at Alston Town Hall.

The options being consulted on for Grisedale Croft are:

- **Option 1:** Do nothing
- **Option 2:** Refurbish Grisedale Croft
- **Option 3:** Demolish and rebuild at Grisedale Croft
- **Option 4:** Close Grisedale Croft without providing an alternative in Alston
- **Option 5 (preferred option):** Provide alternative accommodation in a suitable building in Alston, if one could be acquired

Following the consultation period, all feedback will be carefully considered and the Director of Adult Social Care will make final decisions later in 2026.

More detailed information on the different options and on how to take part in the consultation can be found overleaf.

What are the options put forward for Grisedale Croft?

The preferred option: alternative provision in Alston

The council's Cabinet met in April and carefully considered the options presented by council officers.

They recognised that there is little alternative provision available in Alston and the surrounding area, and therefore would prefer to provide alternative accommodation in a suitable building in Alston, if one could be acquired. This is Option 5 below.

As well as providing residential care for current residents of Grisedale Croft, the council's proposal is that the new provision would develop as a flexible service offering "intermediate" or "step-down" short-term care and rehabilitation for residents coming out of hospital, as well as long-term residential care.

At this stage, the council is seeking a suitable property for a modern, flexible, service with a minimum of four bedrooms, operating under an efficient, more sustainable staff and financial model than an ageing, underoccupied, larger care home.

The options in detail

The five options being considered, with some of the key factors which were considered by Cabinet are:

Option 1

Do nothing



- The building limits quality of care for residents and no longer meets regulatory standards.
- The building requires very high levels of capital investment to stay open.
- Declining demand shows the current model is not fit for future needs.

Option 2

Refurbish



- The building requires very high levels of capital investment – an estimated **£2.5 million to £3.0 million, or more**, to meet modern regulatory standards.
- Refurbishment would involve significant structural remodelling that would mean the home would have to close temporarily to residents during the building work. **This would be highly disruptive to the current residents, who would need to move to alternative temporary or permanent residential accommodation for an estimated 12 to 24 months.**
- Occupancy is low, with running costs significantly higher than other Westmorland and Furness Council care homes, and the demand does not justify the level of capital investment required.

Option 3**Rebuild**

- A rebuild would have a higher capital cost than refurbishment with no strategic benefit.
- There is insufficient demand to justify rebuilding a 13-room care home.
- Operating costs would remain significantly higher than the other care homes.
- A rebuild would be highly disruptive to the current residents, who would need to move to alternative temporary or permanent residential accommodation for an estimated two to four years.
- Building a large new residential care home does not align with the council's long-term strategy for supporting older people.

Option 4**Closure with no alternative provision in Alston**

- It would have a negative impact on continuity of social and health care and could impact residents' wellbeing.
- The rural and isolated nature of Alston, with the distance to alternative homes excessive
- Closing the only local provision conflicts with the council's priorities to support and strengthen local communities.

**Option 5
(the council's
preferred
option)****Provide alternative accommodation for residents
of Grisedale Croft in a suitable building in Alston**

This is the preferred option, provided a suitable, financially viable property can be acquired. A smaller, flexible, and more efficient, minimum 4-bedroom, model is proposed, substantially reducing unsustainable operating costs. This option would:

- Protect current residents' wellbeing and continuity of care.
- Retain long-term, high-quality, community-based care in the remote rural community of Alston.
- Provide new short-term intermediate care provision for the community.
- Resolve the building's non-compliance issues while avoiding large and disproportionate capital expenditure.

How to get involved in the Grisedale Croft consultation

We welcome and would like to hear your views. This is a public consultation and we welcome responses from any individual or group with an interest in this issue.

We will gather feedback in a number of ways, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to have their say, including:

- An online consultation information page with an online consultation survey
- A paper consultation pack and survey
- Information drop-in events in the community, and a public meeting
- Support for residents and their families to take part, with advocacy available where required.
- Consultation with potentially affected staff and Trade Unions.

Online consultation page and consultation survey

Our online consultation information page and consultation survey can be found at **consult.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/adult-social-care/grisedale-croft** or use the QR code:

The information page will be updated with information and relevant documents throughout the consultation period.

On the survey you have the chance to indicate your preferred option for Grisedale Croft and to comment further.



Printed consultation information and consultation survey

Printed versions of the consultation information and survey will be available to pick up at community venues in and around Alston Moor, including:

- Alston Library
- Garrigill Post Office
- Nenthead Village Shop

Paper surveys can be returned to Alston Library or posted to the council without a stamp to:

Grisedale Croft Consultation, Freepost WESTMORLAND AND FURNESS COUNCIL



Information boards

Consultation information boards in Alston Library will be updated with printed versions of any new or updated information that is posted online during the consultation period.



Community information drop-ins and public meeting

The council will be holding a series of drop-in information sessions where people can find out more about the consultation, speak individually to council officers about the proposals, or be supported to fill in the survey on paper or online.



We are also holding a public meeting on Thursday 16 July, 6.00-7.30pm at Alston Town Hall.

Venue	Date and time
Alston Library	Wed 3 June 11.00am-1.00pm
Alston Library	Mon 15 June 5.00pm-7.00pm
The Hive, Nenthead	Fri 26 June 10.30am-12.30pm
Garrigill Village Hall	Fri 26 June 2.00pm-4.00pm
Alston Library	Wed 1 July 2.00pm-4.00pm
Public meeting: Alston Town Hall	Thu 16 July 6.00pm-7.30pm
Alston Library	Mon 20 July 11.00am-1.00pm

Residents of Grisedale Croft and their families

We are committed to involving all Grisedale Croft residents and their relatives at the centre of our decision-making. If you are someone who will be directly affected by the proposed options then you should already have been contacted directly by our Adult Social Care staff.



If you have not yet been contacted, then please let us know using the contact details above/below and we will be in touch as soon as possible to explain the support available.

All residents and their family members will be offered advocacy support from independent, professional advocates. We want to make sure that everyone affected has the chance to fully participate in this consultation. The advocacy organisation will produce a report for the council setting out their findings.

The council will also consult directly with staff and other local stakeholders.

As a resident or family member you can of course also let us know your views in the same way as all other members of the public, through the channels described above, (paper version only: and the questionnaire at the end of this form).

We look forward to receiving your views and comments.

How can I contact the council?

If you require any further information on this consultation you can:

email: **care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk** or tel: **0300 373 3301**

Grisedale Croft Consultation Survey

Privacy Statement

In submitting this form, you agree to your feedback and comments being used for the purposes of informing the Adult Social Care future of care project. Any feedback and comments used will be anonymised.

The information will be accessed only by necessary staff at Westmorland and Furness Council.

Your data will be held securely and will not be distributed to third parties. You have a right to change or access the information collected in this survey.

When this information is no longer required for this purpose, Westmorland and Furness Council will dispose of your data.

To read our full privacy notice, visit our website: **westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/your-council/data-protection-andprivacy/privacy-notice**.

Have you read our privacy policy and are you happy to proceed with this survey?

Yes, I'd like to proceed

☐

Is this an updated submission to replace an earlier consultation submission?

Yes, this replaces an earlier submission, which I would like to withdraw from the consultation
(Please ensure the name and contact details you supply are the same)

☐

1 Which of these five options for the future of Grisedale Croft Care Home do you prefer?

(Please note for clarity that both Option 2, Refurbish, and Option 3, Rebuild, would necessitate the temporary closure of the home to current residents, who would need to move to alternative temporary or permanent residential accommodation for an estimated 12 to 24 months or more.)

Option 1	Do nothing	☐
Option 2	Refurbish Grisedale Croft	☐
Option 3	Demolish and rebuild at Grisedale Croft	☐
Option 4	Close Grisedale Croft without providing an alternative in Alston	☐
Option 5 (the council's preferred option)	Provide alternative accommodation for residents of Grisedale Croft in a suitable building in Alston	☐

2 Please provide any additional information to explain your response (optional)

3 Any further comments or suggestions?

If you have any further comments or suggestions on any aspect of this consultation please provide them in the space below.

4 Please provide your name (required) and at least one contact method (required)

Name

Home address

Phone number

Email address

5 Which best describes you (the person completing this questionnaire)? Please tick one only

A member of the public (Alston/Alston Moor area resident)

☐

A member of the public (Westmorland and Furness resident)

☐

A member of the public (Outside Westmorland and Furness)

☐

A resident of Grisedale Croft

☐

A relative or friend of a resident of Grisedale Croft

☐

A member of staff currently working at Grisedale Croft

☐

A representative of an organisation

☐

Other (please state)

6 If you are responding as a representative of an organisation please state which organisation you represent and your role or job title.

About you

To help us ensure we have engaged with a cross section of residents, please complete the optional monitoring questions below.

To read our full privacy notice, visit our website: **westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/your-council/data-protection-andprivacy/privacy-notice**.

Why we ask for this information

As a public authority, Westmorland and Furness Council is subject to the public sector equality duty set out in the Equality Act 2010 which can be viewed here **legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/2/chapter/1**. This means that in exercising our functions we must work towards:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
- advancing equality of opportunity between those with and without protected characteristics
- fostering good relations between groups with and without protected characteristics.

One of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion aims is to strengthen the knowledge we have about our individual service users and residents.

While sharing information about protected characteristics is not a requirement, having this information gives us more understanding of the experience and outcomes different groups of people have of our services, meaning we are better able to identify and tackle any inequalities.

It also makes it easier for us to work with individuals to develop services that are appropriate to them.

Data protection and privacy

The information you provide will be handled in line with the Westmorland and Furness Council privacy policy and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

We may use anonymised statistics and data to inform discussions and decisions, including to improve things. However, no information will be published or used in any way which allows an individual to be identified. All details are held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The information that we are asking you to provide is informed by our duties under the Equality Act 2010, and includes information about your age, race, sex and health.

What age are you?

- ☐ 16-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-59 ☐ 60-74 ☐ 75+
☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your legal sex (as recorded at birth)?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your gender identity?

- ☐ Female ☐ Male
☐ Non-binary ☐ Prefer not to answer
Prefer to self-describe

What is your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Bisexual ☐ Gay Man ☐ Gay Woman / Lesbian ☐ Heterosexual / Straight
☐ Prefer not to answer

Prefer to self-describe

What is your ethnic group

Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background

Asian or Asian British

- ☐ Bangladeshi ☐ Chinese
☐ Indian ☐ Pakistani
☐ Other Asian or Asian British background

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

- ☐ African ☐ Caribbean
☐ Other Black, Black British, Caribbean or African background

Mixed or Multiple ethnic group

- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
☐ White and Black African
☐ White and Asian
☐ Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background

White

- ☐ British ☐ English
☐ Welsh ☐ Scottish
☐ Northern Irish ☐ Irish
☐ Any other White background

Other ethnic group

- ☐ Arab ☐ British Rominghal
☐ Welsh Romany (Kale)
☐ Irish Traveller ☐ Scottish Traveller
☐ Eastern European Roma
☐ Any other ethnic group

Prefer to self-describe

- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your religion or belief?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ☐ Buddhist | ☐ Christian |
| ☐ Hindu | ☐ Jewish |
| ☐ Muslim | ☐ No religion |
| ☐ Sikh | ☐ Other religion/belief |

Prefer to self-describe

- ☐
- Prefer not to answer

What is your relationship status?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Civil Partnership | ☐ Co-inhabitants |
| ☐ Married | ☐ Partnership |
| ☐ Separated | ☐ Divorced |
| ☐ Single | |
| ☐ Widowed / surviving partner from a registered civil partnership | |

Prefer to self-describe

- ☐
- Prefer not to answer

Do you have a disability or long term health condition?

- ☐
- Yes
- ☐
- No
- ☐
- Prefer not to answer

If yes, how would you describe your disability or long term health condition? (please select multiple options if necessary)

- ☐ No Disability
- ☐ Autism
- ☐ Behaviour and Emotional
- ☐ Hearing
- ☐ Learn or understand (Learning Disability)
- ☐ Manual Dexterity
- ☐ Memory or ability to concentrate
- ☐ Mobility and Gross Motor
- ☐ Perception of Physical Danger
- ☐ Personal, Self Care and Continence
- ☐ Progressive Conditions and Physical Health (such as HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis, fits, etc)
- ☐ Sight
- ☐ Speech

Prefer to self-describe

- ☐
- Prefer not to answer

Do you identify as Neurodivergent?

- ☐
- Yes
- ☐
- No
- ☐
- Prefer not to answer

Have you ever been in care (e.g., foster care, residential care, or under the guardianship of a local authority)?

- ☐
- Yes
- ☐
- No
- ☐
- Prefer not to answer

Are you currently serving or have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces?

- ☐
- Yes
- ☐
- No
- ☐
- Prefer not to answer

Are you an immediate family member, partner, war widow / widower of someone who has served, or is currently serving, in the UK Armed Forces?

- ☐
- Yes
- ☐
- No
- ☐
- Prefer not to answer

What is your first language?

- ☐ English
- ☐ British Sign Language

Another language

- ☐
- Prefer not to answer

What is your national identity?

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ British | ☐ English |
| ☐ Welsh | ☐ Scottish |
| ☐ Northern Irish | |

Other, please describe

- ☐
- Prefer not to answer



Westmorland
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Council

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3301**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال 0300 373 3301

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 0300 373 3301 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

如果您希望通过母语了解此信息，
请致电 0300 373 3301

Jeigu norétumėte gauti šią informaciją savo kalba,
skambinkite telefonu 0300 373 3301

W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę
zatelefonować pod numer 0300 373 3301

Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua,
telefone para o 0300 373 3301

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde görmek istiyorsanız lütfen
0300 373 3301 numaralı telefonu arayınız

