



advice and support for older age

**Independent  
Age**

## Is this home right for me?

Care home

Manager or contact

Date of visit

### My key questions

Everyone's priorities and needs are different. Use this space to write down the key questions that you want answered during your visit. These are the things that really matter to you when choosing a home.

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# Location and surroundings

## A good care home should:

- Be somewhere that family, friends and current residents would recommend
- Display its rating from the Care Quality Commission
- Have good links with the local community

## Notice:

- Is it easy for family and friends to get there?
- Is there anywhere to park?
- Is the area noisy or quiet?
- Does it seem like a nice area?
- Do the grounds and building look well-maintained?
- Are there pleasant views?

## Ask:

Is it easy to get here by public transport?

Where is the nearest bus stop / train station?

How frequent is the bus / train service?

What local amenities are there and how can I get to them – eg shops / church / park / pub?

Does the home have its own transport? What is it used for?

What links does the care home have with the local community?

# Buildings and communal areas

## A good care home should:

- Welcome visitors at all times
- Be well-maintained
- Make you feel safe and protected but give you as much freedom as possible to do what you want to do, whatever your needs

## Notice:

- Is it clean and homely?
- Is there a comfortable / relaxed atmosphere?
- Does it have a neutral / pleasant smell?
- Does it feel hot and stuffy?
- Is it noisy?
- Is it easy to find your way around?
- Is it well-lit?
- Are there pleasant / inviting spaces throughout?

## Ask:

Are there visiting hours? Can my visitors stay overnight?

Are children welcome? What facilities do you have for them?

Are there communal lounge facilities with and without TV?

Who is responsible for maintenance?

Are all areas safe and accessible?

What are the security arrangements? Can visitors go in and out?

Is there somewhere I can get privacy / peace and quiet other than my bedroom?

# My room

## A good care home should:

- Be clean and hygienic to prevent infection

## Notice:

- Is it clean and attractive / well-decorated?
- Does it have a nice view?
- Is it big enough?
- Is there enough space for storage?
- Are there private / en-suite toilet facilities? Will I be able to use them in future if my needs change?
- Is the emergency call system easy to reach?
- Are there enough sockets?

## Ask:

Can I bring my own furniture?

Can I decorate or rearrange my room?

Where can I keep my valuables? Is there a safe?

Does the home's insurance policy cover my possessions?

How many people do I have to share the bathroom with?

Can I have my own phone with a separate number?

Is there internet access? Do I have to pay extra for this?

Can I change rooms later if a better one becomes available? What's the process and cost for this?

# Daily life

## A good care home should:

- Have a full and meaningful range of activities on offer every day
- Provide access to newspapers, books, the internet
- Celebrate special events

## Notice:

- Do the residents look interested in what is going on or what they're doing?
- Are they interacting with staff / each other?
- Are they sitting around the edge of the room?
- Can the furniture be rearranged easily so people can socialise?
- Is there laughter and conversation?
- Are there books, newspapers and magazines?
- Is there a television / radio / shared computer?

## Ask:

What social activities are there? Are there any exercise classes? Outings?

Can visitors stay for a meal or make themselves a drink / something to eat?

Who does the catering? Can I see a sample menu? Do you cater for special diets? Is there a choice of menu?

Can I bring a pet? Can my pet visit?

Can I have snacks and drinks at any time?

Are there any rules about going in and out?

How will you support me to practise my religion / faith?

# Healthcare

## A good care home should:

- Know your health needs and keep care plans up to date
- Speak with healthcare professionals and take the right action at the right time to protect your health
- Have regular access to a GP and other visiting health services

## Notice:

- Do other residents seem to need the same level of care?
- Are the staff attentive – especially if a resident is unwell or distressed?
- Are there accessible toilets in all parts of the care home?
- Does the home have specially-equipped bathrooms?
- Is it wheelchair accessible throughout and are there adaptations – such as handrails – in halls / corridors?

## Ask:

How do you assess residents' care needs before moving in?

Does each resident have their own personal care plan and how is this reviewed?

What medical help is available?

Can I still see my own GP?

How will I get to hospital or my GP? Will anyone help me / come with me? Do I have to pay for this?

What access is there to other health services – eg a chiropodist / physiotherapist / dentist / optician? Do they visit? How often? How much does it cost?

Can residents choose to have a male or female carer?

# Independence

## A good care home should:

- Allow residents and families to get involved in decision-making in the home
- Know the residents' personal background and interests and understand what they can do
- Provide opportunities for residents to enjoy activities independently

## Notice:

- Is privacy respected?
- Do staff knock before entering a resident's room?
- Have residents' rooms been personalised?
- Do the activities on offer relate to residents' interests?
- Do staff seem to know residents' preferred routines and interests?

## Ask:

How flexible is the daily routine? Can I get up and go to bed when I like?

Can I make snacks and drinks for myself?

Can I choose whether to have a bath or shower and how often?

Can I come and go as I please?

Can I lock my room?

Can I help in the garden / have my own flower bed?

How do the staff get to know about a resident's life and experiences?

Is there a residents' committee? How are they involved in decisions about the care home?

# Staff

## A good care home should:

- Have a registered manager in post
- Have knowledgeable, experienced staff who are offered regular training and development opportunities
- Have low staff turnover and enough staff on duty during the day and night

## Notice:

- Do there seem to be enough staff?
- Do they have enough time to support residents and family?
- Do they have time to sit and spend time with the residents?
- Can they respond quickly to requests for help?
- Are they friendly and respectful?
- Are they identifiable by role and name?
- Do they seem to know the residents well?
- Do they introduce themselves and others?
- Do they speak your language?

## Ask:

How many staff are on duty – during the day / at night / at weekends?

How long have the staff and manager been here / what is the turnover of staff and managers?

What training do they get? How often? Who trains them?

What qualifications do they have?

Do they have any special training / experience – eg in dementia care?

Do you use agency staff? How often? What's the ratio of agency to permanent staff?

# Coping with changing and specialist needs

## A good care home should:

- Meet residents' changing needs
- Understand residents' wishes for the future
- Meet residents' particular cultural or religious needs

## Notice:

- Do the residents seem happy and responsive?
- Are they stimulated?
- Are there themed common rooms / areas for reminiscence / sensory activities?
- Are there spaces that enable and support people living with dementia?
- Does the home have good signage and areas that are easily identifiable?
- Is it accessible for all levels of mobility?

## Ask:

Can you offer the level of care I need / cater for my specific condition?

What happens if my needs change or increase? Will you be able to provide more care if I need it in the future?

How do you support residents who have difficulty seeing or hearing?

How do you support residents who are living with dementia?

Will I have a member of staff particularly responsible for my care?

What support do you offer for end-of-life care?

## What did you think?

Use this space to note down your first impressions of the care home.

## Follow up

Was there anything you forgot to ask?

Make a note of your questions and call the home or drop in for another visit.