



Choosing a Care Home

Use this checklist when you're visiting a care home for the first time. The more information you have, the more confident you'll feel about making the best choice.

Name of Home: _____

Date: _____

Contact Information: _____

Tips For Viewing A Care Home

- Make a shortlist in advance of the key questions you'd like answered as a priority.
- Try to visit with a family member or friend: one of you can focus on talking to staff/having the official tour, and the other can have a look around the place and talk to residents.
- Don't be afraid to ask lots of questions: the more information you have, the more confident you'll feel about making the right choice.
- Make a list of any follow-up questions you'd like to ask later on. It's helpful to discuss this sort of thing with someone else after the visit.
- Pay attention to what you see, hear and smell during your visit, and how the experience makes you feel. This is just as important as what you're told by the home's staff.

Y N

Location

- Is it easy to reach the home by car or public transport?
 - Are there adequate and accessible parking spaces?
 - Is there good wheelchair access into and around the home?
 - Are there useful facilities nearby, such as shops, parks and places of worship?
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First Impressions

- Are the home and gardens well maintained?
 - Is the temperature comfortable throughout the home?
 - Is the home clean and does it smell fresh?
 - Is there plenty of activity and conversation among staff and residents?
 - Did you receive a warm welcome upon arrival?
 - Do the residents look happy and well presented?
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Care and support

- Can the home meet the specific care needs of your loved one 24 hours a day?
- What procedures will the home follow to assess your loved one's care needs?
- Will there be an assessment of their needs?
- Can the home provide in-house nursing care if required?
- Are there other residents with similar care needs to your loved one?
- Are residents and their families involved in decisions about their care?
- If your loved ones needs change can the home still meet their needs?
- What other health care services can be arranged – optician, dentist, physio or chiropodist, for example?
- What procedures does the home follow when dealing with accidents and emergencies, or when taking residents for hospital appointments?
- What technology is available to keep residents safe, such as alarms and monitors?
- What support is available for end of life (palliative) care?
- Does the home have a GP that visits regularly?

Y N

- How does the home support someone on a dementia journey?
 - Can you accompany my relative on a hospital appointment and would there be a charge?
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Communal areas and facilities

- What security procedures are in place to keep residents safe and secure?
 - Are all rooms, corridors and other spaces accessible for someone using a walking frame or wheelchair?
 - Is the home well laid out, with clearly signposted areas? Is it easy to find your way around?
 - Is there a garden or other safe outdoor space that residents and guests can use? Are outdoor spaces easily accessible?
 - Is there a communal lounge with or without TV?
 - Is there a quiet area or library where residents can relax, without music or TV?
 - Is there a café or similar place where residents can meet with guests?
 - Are residents allowed their own pets, or can pets be brought to visit?
 - Is there a hair salon and how often does the hairdresser visit?
 - Is there a gym with a visiting physiotherapist?
 - Does the home have a bar and is alcohol complimentary?
 - Does the home have a cinema?
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The Room

- Can you view the room your loved one might be offered?
- Does the room have a nice view?
- Will someone help you unpack and put pictures up?
- Would it be possible for them to move rooms later, if they wanted to?
- Can they bring their own furniture and possessions?
- Is there adequate storage space for clothing and other belongings?
- Are there private/en suite bathroom facilities?
- Is the room suitably adapted, including the bathroom?
- Is there an emergency call system available in the room?

- | | Y | N |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Is there wi-fi in the room and in public spaces around the home? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there a good mobile phone signal in the room? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is the room equipped with power sockets, a TV or a telephone? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there somewhere secure to keep money and valuables? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Can residents lock their own room? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Day-to-day living

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| • Can residents go to their room if they want to be alone? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Will staff knock before entering a resident's room? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is the home happy for you to be actively involved in your loved one's life – for example, could you do their hair or take them out to a café? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • How flexible is the daily routine? Can guests choose the times they prefer to get up or go to bed? Are meal times flexible? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • How does the home support residents to practise their religious or spiritual beliefs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • What steps does the home take to identify and respect the residents' cultural preferences? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there a mix of female and male residents? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Activities and social life

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|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Do residents seem occupied and happy? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there a regular programme of activities to keep your loved one occupied, such as music therapy, arts and crafts, exercise or gardening and can you see a copy? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • If not already available, can the home arrange activities that suit your loved one's interests? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are there any regular social activities that residents can take part in, such as trips and outings or family days? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are residents' life stories and interests recognised and celebrated – through photos, personal effects or paintings and drawings, for example? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there an additional cost for any of the activities on offer? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does the home have active links with the local community? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does the home have its own transport services? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are newspapers provided? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Staff

- What is the ratio of care workers to residents, both by day and at nights and on weekends?
 - Is there a supervisor on duty at all times?
 - Is the Home manager accessible and approachable?
 - What training do staff members get, including any specialised training for dementia, visual/hearing impairments and so on?
 - What's the turnover of staff? How many of the staff are long-serving?
 - Does the home use agency staff?
 - Are the staff friendly? Do they make time to talk to residents?
 - Will your loved one be allocated a dedicated staff member who's responsible for their care?
 - Can residents choose to have a male or female carer?
 - If your loved one is not a native English speaker, is there anyone who can speak their language?
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Guests and visiting

- Are there set visiting times?
 - Are children and pets welcome to visit too?
 - Can visitors stay overnight?
 - Are there any private rooms, other than bedrooms, where residents can meet with visitors?
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Food

- Do residents eat together in a dining room or can they choose to eat in their rooms?
- Is there a charge for room service?
- Is there a choice of food and can you see sample menus?
- How often does the menu change?
- Can the home meet your dietary needs?
- If you don't like something on the menu can you order something else?
- Are snacks available during the day or at night?
- Can you order alcohol with meals and is there a charge?

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| • Can residents and visitors make their own drinks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Can visitors join them for a meal and is there a charge? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Fees and contracts

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| • How are fees calculated? What do they include and exclude? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • When are fees collected? Are they paid in advance or in arrears? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • What payment methods are accepted? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are there any additional charges, such as a management fee? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is it necessary to make an advance payment or deposit? Is it refundable? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • If relevant, how are NHS-funded nursing care payments accounted for in the fee structure (they should be deducted from the overall fee)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are residents tied in to the contract for a minimum period? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • How much notice must a resident give if they want to leave? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Can you have a copy of a contract to read in advance? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Other practical issues

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| • Is there a waiting list? When would a room be available? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • What would happen if the resident is a self-funder and they ran out of money? Could they stay at the home if the local authority were paying for the room? Would they stay in the same room? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • What is the home's quality rating and when was their most recent inspection? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does the home have a food hygiene standard rating? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there a residents' committee? How often does it meet? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there a family support group or regular relatives' meetings? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • What is covered by the home's insurance policies? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

