

Introduction

Carehome Selection has produced this guide to choosing a care home to help people going through this challenging and often stressful process. We have been supporting people through this process since 1995 and help more than 200 people every month. We understand what is involved better than anyone.

We recommend you visit at least three homes before making your decision. Homes vary widely in terms of the services they provide, their atmosphere, size, environment, ethos and facilities.

This checklist may seem very long and some questions may be more relevant to you than others. A Carehome Selection adviser can accompany you during visits and ensure all your questions are covered. Every month, we help more than 200 people choose a care home, so we understand the process better than anyone.

The rooms

- Ask to view the actual room that your relative would be moving into or at least one very similar.
- Is there any choice of rooms to accommodate preferences such as sun, shade or quiet?
- Are there call bells in the rooms and are they working?
- Can a resident have a telephone in their room?
- Do the rooms have en suite facilities or basins?
- Will you be able to bring your own possessions such as pictures, plants and furniture?
- Are televisions provided in the rooms? If not can residents provide their own?

The facilities

- Ensure you see lounges, dining areas, toilets, bathrooms, kitchen and garden.
- Is there a garden the residents can use? Is it easily accessible?

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The facilities (continued)

- Will you be comfortable meeting your relative in the social areas?
- How good is access to the building?
- Is there a lift? Will you be able to easily move between different floors and rooms?
- What is the overall atmosphere of the home? Is it homely and welcoming?
- Are external doors locked and secure?

Daily routine

- Ask to look at meal menus and activity programmes
- Are there trips out?
- How much control can your relative have over the routine? For example, going into the garden when they want some fresh air?
- Is there an activities coordinator and what activities are on offer?
- Will the home arrange appointments with a physiotherapist, optician, chiropodist and dentist?
- What are the charges for these services?
- Is the food cooked on the premises?
- Can residents drink alcohol in the home?
- Can residents smoke?
- When can visits to residents be made?

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Daily routine (continued)

- Can visitors share meals with residents?
- Is residents' laundry done on site? Is there a charge for this?
- What about wool or delicate fabrics?
- Who is responsible for labelling clothes and personal belongings?
- What are the arrangements for managing a resident's pocket money if they do not have the capacity to do this for themselves?
- Are children made welcome when they visit?
- Is there accommodation for visitors to visit overnight?

Nursing and services questions

- What sort of facilities such as pubs, parks and places of worship are within easy reach?
- For palliative care, are there facilities for families to stay overnight if needed?
- For palliative care, does the home offer any extras, for example aromatherapy and hand massage?
- What numbers of carers/nurses do you have on duty by day and by night?
- Are all the night staff awake, or are any of them 'sleepers' (on call if needed)?
- What percentage of your staff are NVQ trained?

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Location of the home

- Will relatives and friends be able to visit easily?
- What sort of facilities are nearby? What is important to your relative? Perhaps a place of worship, a pub with good food or a park

Essentials

- Confirm top up or total cost of home.
- What is not included in weekly fee?
- How does a self-funder pay the home?

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