

CHOOSING A CARE HOME

A CHECKLIST FOR ENHANCED CARE

SETTINGS & LOCATION

- What is the surrounding area like?
- Is the care home easily accessible by public transport and car for visitors?
- Is the care home easy to find and well sign posted?
- Is the care home close to local amenities?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- Does the care home appear clean and well kept?
- Were you warmly welcomed at Reception?
- Did the residents seem happy and engaged? Are they well groomed, clean and appropriately dressed for the season or time of day?
- Is the care home free from unpleasant odours?
- Is the temperature of the care home comfortable for residents?
- Does the care home have good lighting?
- Did the home look comfortable and feel homely?
- Are the noise levels in the common areas such as dining room and other areas comfortable? Are there quiet areas?
- Does the furniture appear in good condition, sturdy, comfortable and attractive?

STAFF

- Does there appear to be sufficient staff on duty? Are they friendly? Do they make time to talk to individual residents?
- Do the staff wear name tags?
- Do they refer to residents by name?
- Do the staff receive appropriate and regular training?
- Is there a licensed nursing staff 24 hours a day, including a Registered Nurse (RN) present at least 8 hours per day, 7 days a week?
- Does each resident have one member of staff in particular who is responsible for their care?
- What staff are available overnight?

PERSONAL CARE & HOME ENVIRONMENT

- Do the residents get preventative care, i.e. yearly flu shots?
- Are hearing and sight tests offered?
- Can residents still see their personal doctor? Does the care home help in arranging transportation for this purpose?
- Does the care home arrange for visits from/to, for example, opticians, dentists, chiropodists, physiotherapists etc.? How often do they come and what are the charges for this? And, if the services are provided externally, will staff accompany the resident on these visits?
- How is medication handled?
- What are the arrangements for laundry?
- Can residents help with ordinary activities such as making a cup of tea?
- Is smoking allowed? If so are there designated smoking areas? Can the residents smoke in their own bedrooms?
- Is there a hairdresser based at the home or one that visits on a regular basis?
- If assisted bathing is required, is assistance available on a daily basis?
- Are residents able to come and go, get up and go to bed when they want, within reason?
- Are there restrictions on making and receiving phone calls?
- Is alcohol served or permitted?
- How are residents involved in the decisions about life in the home? Is there a residents committee?
- Do residents handle their own money? If not, what arrangements are in place?

BEDROOMS

- Is it possible to view the room your relative might be offered?
- What is the overall impression of the bedrooms?
- Is it possible to move rooms at a later date?
- Can they bring their own furniture and possessions? How much space is there?
- Can you rearrange the room to suit yourself?
- Are there en-suite bathroom facilities?
- Is there a telephone point in the room, or somewhere that phone calls can be made in private?
- Is there a television?
- Is there internet access in the room or it is offered elsewhere in the care home?
- Are there plug sockets?
- Can you control the heating in the bedroom?
- Can you lock your room?
- Is there an emergency call system available in each room?
- Are there rooms available for couples? Can residents share rooms?

COMMUNAL AREAS

- Is there a garden/outdoor space for residents?
- Is there a communal lounge? With or without TV?
- Are all areas easily accessible for residents with reduced mobility?
- Are there toilet facilities within easy reach of the communal facilities?

MEALS & DINING

- Who provides the food?
- Is the food freshly prepared? On the premises?
- Is it possible to see a menu or even sample a meal while you are there?
- Are mealtimes flexible?
- Where is food served? Can residents eat in their rooms if they prefer?
- Are residents involved in meal planning?
- Is there a choice of food items at each meal?
- Can the care home provide for special dietary requirements?
- Is a selection of hot and cold drinks, snacks and fresh fruit served throughout the day?
- Do the staff help residents eat and drink at mealtimes if help is needed?
- Can residents make drinks for themselves?

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

- What social activities are on offer for residents to take part in?
- What are the charges for various activities and outings?
- Is there a weekly calendar of activities displayed in the home?
- Do staff organise activities outside the home?
- Are residents involved in planning the activities and outings?
- Do the staff arrange for entertainers or groups of interest to visit the home?
- How are special events, such as birthdays and religious holidays celebrated in the home?
- If you have religious needs, are they met?
- Is there a library service available?
- Can residents continue to pursue their own hobbies and interests?
- Are individual activities available for residents who are not able to, or do not wish to participate in group activities?
- Are there regular exercise opportunities available?

VISITORS

- Are there set visiting times for guests?
- Is there an option for guests to for meals?
- Is there a private room or area, other than the bedroom, where residents can meet guests?
- Does the care home allow pets to visit?
- Does the care home allow children to visit?
- Can visitors take part in activities?
- Can visitors stay overnight if necessary?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Does the home currently have available space?
- Is there a waiting list?
- Does the care home provide the right type of care needed for your relative?
- Is the care home's latest inspection report available to read?
- Is there a complaints procedure?
- Does the care home undertake customer satisfaction research with its residents? If so, can you see the highlights/results?
- Are pets allowed?

TYPE OF CARE OFFERED

- What level of care is available?
- Can special care needs be met, even during the night?
- Should the resident's health deteriorate (for example if they needed nursing care rather than just personal care) can the care home provide this?
- Does the home have suitable equipment and facilities to assist such as bath hoists, electrically operated beds and wheelchairs?

SAFETY & SECURITY

- What checks are in place to stop unwanted people coming in, or residents wandering out?
- Is there somewhere safe and secure for residents to keep their valuables?
- Are the contents of the resident's room covered by the care home insurance or would they need to get their own policy?
- Are exits clearly marked?
- Does the care home have smoke detectors and sprinklers?
- Does the care home have an emergency evacuation plan and hold regular fire drills (including for bed-bound residents)?

CONTRACT & FEES

- What are the monthly/annual fees?
- What does this include/not include i.e. laundry, toiletries, activities etc.?
- Are fees paid in advance or arrears?
- What happens if a relative is away, for example in hospital, for a period of time?
- What additional costs are to be expected?
- What are the charges for phone calls or broadband?
- Would the resident be liable for their own TV licence (if they are under 75 years old)?