



# Checklist of questions to ask when looking for a care home

The care home selection process can at times seem a confusing and daunting task. Carehome.co.uk's checklist will help you think about the care homes you visit, areas to consider and questions you may like to ask before making a choice.

## First impressions

- Does the home feel inviting and homely?
- Are the care home and grounds well maintained?
- Are the rooms attractive and well decorated?
- Are staff welcoming and approachable?

## Location and accessibility

- Is the care home in a suitable location?
- Is the care home easily reached by public transport?
- Does the care home have places to park vehicles?
- Is there much noise surrounding the care home?
- What are the views surrounding the home?
- Are there any shops and amenities close by?
- Is the care home designed to support all individuals, including those with an illness or disability?
- Is there wheelchair access throughout the care home, including sufficient space and wide doorways for wheelchair access?
- Is there a lift?
- Are accessible toilets available in all parts of the home and easy to get to?
- Do toilets have handrails, raised seats and other mobility aids?

## Care

- What type of care does the home provide?
- Are members of staff trained in specific areas of care?
- Does the care home have suitable equipment and facilities for people with an illness or physical, learning or mental disability?
- Does the care home have access to other services, such as community mental health teams, chiropodists, opticians and dentists, and how often do they visit?
- Does the home link with a specific GP practice for residents to use?
- What happens if a resident becomes unwell or requires medication?
- Can a relative stay overnight if a resident is unwell? Are changes in medication discussed with the family?
- Are staff tactful and supportive in helping a resident with their personal needs?
- What support is given to family members?

## Staff

- Are staff available at all times throughout the care home?
- Is there a manager in post and a senior member of staff on duty at all times?
- Do staff interact well with residents?
- Do staff respect the privacy and dignity of the residents in their care?
- How will staff get to know residents personally?
- Can staff speak additional languages?
- Do staff take into account cultural and religious beliefs?
- How often do staff receive training?

## Daily life

- Can residents choose their daily routine, such as when they get up, go to bed, have meals or go out?
- Can residents choose whether they have a bath or shower and how often?
- Can residents choose which clothes to wear?
- Can residents go outside for fresh air when needed?
- Do staff seem engaged and attentive?
- Do residents appear happy and occupied?
- Do residents have access to internet and telephone points around the care home?
- Do all rooms have a television, telephone points and Wi-Fi?
- Can areas and furniture be arranged to allow small groups to socialise?
- Does the care home arrange activities and visits into the local community, including places of worship?

## Accommodation

- What is the overall impression of the bedroom?
- Do bedrooms have en-suite facilities, or bathing facilities close by?
- Are the facilities in the bedroom/bathroom accessible for residents, including those with a disability?
- Can residents bring their own furniture and personalise their bedroom?
- Are there single-sex facilities?
- Does the bedroom have a telephone point or Wi-Fi connection?

- Is there an emergency pull-cord available?
- Is there adequate storage space?
- Can pets stay in the bedroom?
- Do staff respect resident's right to privacy?

#### **Communal areas**

- Are there a variety of communal areas to choose from?
- Is there easy access to all communal areas?
- Is there an accessible and safe garden?
- Do the lounges or other sitting rooms have pleasant views?
- What activities are held in the communal lounges?
- Do the communal areas have televisions, Wi-Fi connections and telephone points?
- Do the communal areas have quiet areas?
- Are the communal areas arranged to encourage socialisation?
- Are toilet facilities within easy reach of the communal areas?

#### **Food**

- Which is the main meal of the day?
- Is the food prepared on the premises?
- Is there an on-site chef?
- Can residents choose where they eat, whether it be in a dining room or in their own room?
- Do residents have a choice of menu?
- Does the chef/cook talk with the residents to discuss meal choices?
- How often is the menu changed?
- Are there opportunities to eat out?
- Can dietary and cultural requirements be catered for?
- Can residents receive assistance with eating if required?
- Do residents have access to snacks at any time?
- Can visitors visit during meal times and can they have meals?
- Can residents make food and drinks for themselves?

#### **Activities**

- Are there a range of activities designed to support individual needs?
- Are residents encouraged to continue with their hobbies and interests?
- Do staff consult with residents on the types of activities planned?
- Does the care home have activity coordinators?
- Do staff give residents the opportunity to help with activities within the care home, such as gardening or cooking?

- Do staff arrange entertainers and groups of interest to visit?
- Can residents attend events/activities in the local community?
- Are there accessible vehicles to transport residents?
- Are special events, such as birthdays and religious holidays celebrated?
- Do staff give residents regular exercise opportunities?

#### **Visits**

- Does the care home welcome visitors at any time?
- Are there any restrictions on visiting times or number of visitors?
- Are there facilities for visitors to stay overnight?
- Where can residents spend time with their visitors?
- Are relatives encouraged to become involved in the daily activities at the home?
- Can visitors accompany residents on outings and trips?
- Can visitors dine with residents?
- Are children welcome to visit?
- Does the care home allow family pets to visit?

#### **Fees and contracts**

- Can residents stay for a trial period?
- Can residents see a copy of the home's terms and conditions?
- What are the annual/monthly fees?
- Is there a membership fee payable for staying at the care home?
- What is included in the fee and what may be charged as 'extras'?
- Are fees paid in advance or arrears?
- How much notice will be given for fee increases?
- What arrangements are there for handling personal money?
- What happens if a resident is unhappy with the home once moved in?

#### **Safety and security**

- What safety and security measures are in place to keep residents safe?
- What measures are taken to reduce the risk of falls?
- What call systems are in place if a resident needs help?
- Is the care home safe inside and in the surrounding areas, including the garden?
- What safeguards are in place for day trips?
- Is information readily shared with families?