



## Checklist

# Is this home right for me?

Care home:

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Manager or contact:

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Date of visit:

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## 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 care home should be somewhere that family, friends and current residents would recommend. It should 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?

Is there a rating from a care home regulator displayed at the home?

### Ask

Is it easy to get here by public transport?

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Where is the nearest bus stop or train station?

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How frequent is the bus or train service?

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What local amenities are there and how can I get to them – for example, shops, place of worship, park or pub?

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

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

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## Buildings and communal areas

A care home should welcome visitors at all times, and be well-maintained. It should make you feel safe and protected but also give you freedom to do what you want to do, whatever your needs.

### Notice

Is it clean and homely?

Is there a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere?

Does it have a neutral or pleasant smell?

Is the temperature comfortable for you?

Is the level of noise right for you?

Is it easy to find your way around?

Is it well-lit?

Are there pleasant and inviting spaces throughout? Is there a garden?

### Ask

Are there visiting hours? Can my visitors stay overnight?

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

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Are there communal lounge facilities with and without TV?

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Who is responsible for maintenance? Are all areas safe and accessible?

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

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

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## My room

A care home room should be clean and hygienic. It should be big enough for you to live in comfortably, and should meet all your care needs.

### Notice

Is it clean and attractive or well-decorated?

Does it have a nice view?

Is it big enough?

Is there enough space for storage?

Are there private or en-suite toilet facilities? Will I be able to use them in the future if my needs change?

Is the emergency call system easy to reach?

Are there enough sockets?

### Ask

Can I decorate or rearrange my room? Can I bring my own furniture?

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Where can I keep my valuables? Do I need my own insurance?

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

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Can I have my own phone with a separate number?

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Do I have to pay extra for internet access?

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

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## Daily life

A care home should have a full and meaningful range of activities on offer every day. It should provide access to entertainment – such as newspapers, books, and the internet – and should celebrate special events.

### Notice

Do the residents look interested in what's going on or what they're doing?

Are they interacting with staff and each other?

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 or shared computer?

### Ask

What social activities are there? Are there any exercise classes or outings?

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

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

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Can I bring a pet? Can my pet visit?

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Can I have snacks and drinks at any time?

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Are there any rules about going in and out?

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

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## Healthcare

Care home staff should know your health needs and keep care plans up to date. They should speak with healthcare professionals and take the right action at the right time to protect your health. You should 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 and corridors?

### Ask

How will you assess my needs and review my personal care plan?

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What medical help is available?

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Can I still see my own GP? What mental health support is available?

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

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

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Can residents choose to have a male or female carer?

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## Independence

A care home should allow residents and families to get involved in decision-making in the home. Staff should know the residents' personal background and interests and understand what they can do. There should be 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?

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Can I make snacks and drinks for myself?

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

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Can I come and go as I please? Can I lock my room?

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

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

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Is there a residents' committee? How are they involved in decisions about the care home - for example, entertainment, meal options and outings?

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## Staff

Care home staff should be knowledgeable and experienced, and should be offered regular training and development opportunities. A care home should have a registered manager in post, a 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?

Can you easily identify them 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 and at weekends?

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

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

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Do they have any special training or experience – for example, in dementia care?

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

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## Coping with changing and specialist needs

A care home should meet residents' changing needs, and understand their wishes for the future. Staff should respect residents' cultures and religions and meet their particular needs.

### Notice

Do the residents seem happy and responsive?

Are they stimulated?

Are there themed common rooms, areas for reminiscence or 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 or cater for my specific condition?

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

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

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How do you support residents who are living with dementia?

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

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

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## What did you think?

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

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## 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.

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