

Care homes checklist



Things to look out for
and questions to ask

Making the most of your checklist

We've put this checklist together to help you find the best care home for you.

The first section (page 3) covers some of the things it's worth thinking about when you're considering a move. It suggests questions you might like to ask when you're visiting care homes.

The second section (page 13) is there for when you've picked a care home that's suitable for you. It covers some of the things you might need to do before making the move. We've also included space for you to jot down a plan for moving day (page 15).

Visiting care homes

First impressions

Are the buildings and grounds well maintained?

Is there an accessible garden or courtyard?

Do the home and garden feel inviting?

Are there pleasant views surrounding the home?

Do the staff seem welcoming?

Is the home clean and does it smell fresh?

Are the rooms a comfortable temperature?

Accessibility

Are friends and family able to get there easily?

Are there enough parking spaces?

Are facilities such as shops, parks and places of worship within easy reach and accessible?

Is there good wheelchair access into and within the building, including side doors?

Staff

Are the staff welcoming and interested?

Do the staff get to know about residents' likes and experiences?

Is there a manager in post and a senior member of staff on duty at all times?

Is there a suitable ratio of staff to residents during the day, at night, and at weekends?

Can residents choose if they have a male or female carer?

How are staff trained, how often and by whom?

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Are all staff trained in caring for residents with dementia, if necessary?

Do the staff have care qualifications?

Is there a high staff turnover? (If so, this could be a sign of low staff morale.)

Meeting care needs

Does the home assess new residents' situations and needs before accepting them?

Do staff have experience of caring for any particular health conditions?

Do residents have a named member of staff who is particularly responsible for their care?

Are residents and their families involved in decisions about their care?

Do residents seem to have a similar level of need to you?

If your needs change or increase, can they still be met in the same home?

Do the bathroom facilities meet your needs?

Are accessible toilets available and easy to get to?

Are residents helped to the toilet, if needed?

Do toilets have handrails, raised toilet seats and mobility aids?



Would you have to share a bathroom or bedroom?

Can residents choose whether they have a bath or shower, and how often?

Is there a mix of female and male residents?

Will your language needs be met (for instance, if English isn't your first language, or your sign language)?

Food

Do residents eat all (D)-EMCP ad (t s)5. (h)n,5 nT11e(p)41

Social life and activities

Are residents encouraged to start activities and do as much as they can for themselves?

Is there an activities co-ordinator?

Do residents seem happy and occupied?

Are there lounges or social areas with furniture arranged to allow small groups to socialise?

Are staff sitting and chatting with the residents?

Would you feel comfortable socialising in the home's common areas?

Do staff read to those with sight impairments?

Does the home have pets, or can residents bring their own pets?

Are there facilities such as: a radio, a reading room, a TV room, newspapers, books or a mobile library, a public phone, shared computers, internet, and hairdressing services?

Are there regular social activities such as: music or singing, reminiscence groups, exercise classes, gardening, celebrations for special occasions,

Contracts and fees

Can I see a copy of the home's contract and terms and conditions?

Can I stay for a trial period?

What happens if I'm unhappy with the home after moving in?

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Are all abilities covered by the home's insurance?

What are the terms for keeping the room if I have to go into hospital?

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Are the notice conditions to terminate the contract reasonable?

What are the home's fees?

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Is it clear how the fees are structured, calculated and collected?

Making the move

Sort out insurance

End any policies that are no longer relevant

Find out whether the care home has an insurance policy and whether you need to take out an additional cover, such as contents insurance

Set up any relevant empty house cover

Sort out what you'll bring with you

Set up or update any delivery services you might need

Arrange for any unwanted items to be sold or donated

Arrange storage for things you want to keep that you aren't bringing with you

Make necessary arrangements

Ask someone to collect any post for you

Cancel or amend any regular deliveries, such as meals or milk

Age UK Advice

0800 169 65 65