



## A checklist for choosing a care home

When you go to visit a care home either for yourself or for a relative, take someone with you for another opinion and for moral support. Trust your gut feelings – you'll know what you like when you see it and if the home is for a relative, try to put yourself in their shoes and think what they might prefer. It may be the little things that sell the home to you like being able to have a microwave in your room or a telephone line.

You will have lots of questions when you visit. We have put together this list to help you remember the queries you may have and you can print it out as many times as you need and take it to each home you visit.

### Name of home

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### First Impressions

- Were you met when you first arrived?
- Do staff seem warm, friendly and polite?
- Do the residents seem happy, active and sociable?
- Does the home feel homely and welcoming?
- Is the home fresh, clean and comfortably furnished?

### Location

- Is the home in the locality or community you've been used to?
- Is the home easy to get to for relatives and friends? Is it on a bus route? Does it have car parking?
- Is the home close to public transport and local amenities such as shops, churches or pubs?
- Is there a park nearby?
- Is it a noisy or quiet area?
- Are there interesting things to see outside?
- Are the views pleasant?
- Does the home have its own transport?

### Notes/Comments:

## Accommodation

- Is the home well decorated, bright and cheery?
- Can you decorate and re-arrange the room to suit yourself?
- Does the home smell fresh and airy?
- Does it feel safe and secure or can people wander into the home?
- Are there handrails in hallways and corridors?
- Do residents have their own or shared room and washing facilities? Is there a choice?
- Are there both showers and baths?
- Are bathrooms adapted to help people in and out of the bath?
- If sharing, is this organised to your satisfaction?
- Are bathrooms located conveniently for the rooms?
- Is the call bell system flexible and accessible?
- Is there a pleasant outlook from the bedroom window?
- Can you adjust the heating or open the windows in the room?
- Can residents take their own furniture and personal items into the home?
- Can residents take a pet with them?
- Are there enough sockets in the room, including telephone and television sockets?
- Are there communal lounge areas both with and without televisions?
- Are there toilet facilities within easy reach of the communal facilities?
- Is there a separate dining room? A bar?
- Can you lock your room and is there a secure place for valuables?

### Notes/Comments:

## Facilities

- Are there facilities for people with hearing/visual difficulties?
- Does the home have the right adaptations and equipment to meet your needs?
- Are all areas accessible for wheelchair users?
- Does the home have extra wheelchairs and walking aids?
- Is there useful equipment such as lifts and specially equipped bathrooms?
- Are personal possessions insured?
- Are the arrangements for laundry and room cleaning satisfactory?
- Is sufficient medical help available?

- Can residents have their own GP?
- Does a chiropodist/physiotherapist/hairdresser/dentist/optician visit regularly?
- Are residents accompanied on visits to the GP or hospital?

**Notes/Comments:**

### **Activities**

- Can you continue to pursue your hobbies and interests?
- What sorts of activities and entertainment are organised?
- Are outings and holidays arranged? How much do they cost?
- Are staff available to escort residents for hospital appointments etc. if necessary?
- Is a library service available?
- Can you have your own flower bed or help in the garden?

**Notes/Comments:**

### **Catering**

- Can you join residents for a meal as part of your visit?
- Is there a choice of menu? Can residents choose what they eat?
- Are special diets catered for?
- Is the choice of food interesting, varied and good quality?
- Can you choose to take meals in your room if desired?
- Can residents eat with guests or on their own if they wish?
- Can you have snacks and drinks at any time of the day or night?
- Is alcohol available if you would like it?

**Notes/Comments:**

## Daily living

- Do you know some of the existing residents?
- Do residents look happy and well cared for?
- How are residents involved in decisions about life in the home?
- Can you have your own telephone with a separate number? – Can residents use the telephone in private and in comfort?
- Does each resident have their own personal care plan?
- Are there any rules and restrictions e.g. going out, time to return etc?
- Are there set times for, getting up, going to bed, or having a bath, or can you choose?
- Are there smoking and non-smoking areas?
- Is there somewhere you can get privacy and peace and quiet, other than your bedroom?
- Can you help in the garden, help prepare meals, do your own laundry or help clean your own room if you want to?
- Can you follow your religious practice eg attend church services or observe kosher principles?
- Can you handle your own money? If not what arrangements are in place?

**Notes/Comments:**

## Type of care

- Does the home offer the level of care you need?
- Can you see the CSCI Inspection report?
- If it's a nursing home, how many of the staff are trained and to what level?
- Is an increased level of care, or nursing care, available should you need it in the future?
- If you have a particular condition, does the home have the right experience and staff?
- What's the staff turnover? (If it's high it may suggest that there's staff dissatisfaction with the running of the home)

**Notes/Comments:**

## **Fees**

- How much are the fees?
- Is it clear exactly what is included in the weekly charges?
- Under what circumstances will fees alter or be reviewed? Eg. Annually or according to increasing needs?
- Are the fees affordable on a long term basis?
- Are the fees payable in advance?
- Will you have to make up the difference after state contribution?
- Will the home accommodate you on state support?
- Will the home provide a written contract of the care provided?

**Notes/Comments:**

## **Contract Terms**

- Can you retain your own room if away?
- Can you have a short-stay or trial period?
- Will you be given a statement of terms on admission?
- Are all procedures, such as complaints, clearly spelt out?
- Is the notice to terminate the contract reasonable?

**Notes/Comments:**

## **Staff**

- Are the staff friendly and caring?
- Do staff receive training?
- Are there adequate staff on duty day and night?
- Do the staff appear clean, cheerful and respectful?
- Do the staff talk to residents and how do they talk to them?

**Notes/Comments:**

## Visitors

- Are visitors welcome at all times or are there set visiting hours?
- Is there somewhere to see visitors in private?
- Can visitors stay overnight?

**Notes/Comments:**

## Gardens

- Is there a garden and can residents use it?
- Are the grounds/gardens attractive?
- Are all areas safe and accessible?
- Is there somewhere quiet to sit?
- Are the grounds/gardens quiet?

**Notes/Comments:**