

# What to look for when choosing a care home

This checklist is designed to help you find a care home for your loved one. It gives suggestions about what to look for and ask about. You might want to highlight or tick the questions that are important to you before you start, as some will probably matter to you than others. You can use the boxes to give 'yes/no' answers or to score each home in the different areas.

Home 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Home 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Home 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Location	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Will it be easy for friends and family to get to the home?				
Is the home convenient for shops, public transport, etc?				
Do the surroundings suit your loved one?				
First impressions	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Did you receive a warm and friendly welcome?				
Were refreshments offered during your visit?				
Is the atmosphere homely and welcoming?				
Is the home clean and pleasantly furnished?				
Does the home smell pleasant?				
Do residents seem happy and well cared for?				
Care	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Can the home offer care that meets your loved one's needs?				
Does each resident have their own personal care plan?				
How often will your loved one's care needs be reviewed?				
Will the home be able to meet your loved one's needs in the future?				
Will your loved one/you be involved in decisions about care?				
Does the home offer/arrange complementary therapies?				
Which doctor can a resident see?				
Are there visiting dentists and opticians?				
How often does the hairdresser visit the home?				
Can the home provide other services such as chiropody, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, if required?				
Does the home have suitable assisted bathing facilities?				
Can residents get up and go to bed when they want to?				
Will relatives be advised as soon as a resident is taken ill?				
Communal areas	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Is there more than one room where residents can sit or see visitors?				
Is there a quiet lounge without a television?				
Is there somewhere safe to sit outside?				
Is there a bar?				
Are there arrangements for people who wish to smoke?				
Is there easy access for wheelchairs and walking frames?				
Are there toilets within easy reach of all parts of the home?				
Are there handrails in the toilets and corridors?				

Bedrooms	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Did you see the room that is available?				
Can residents bring their own possessions and furniture?				
Was it bright and well decorated?				
Are en-suite facilities available?				
Do bedrooms have a television?				
Do bedrooms have a telephone point?				
Can residents use a telephone in privacy?				
Can residents lock their room?				
Is there a lockable drawer or cabinet in the room?				
Does each room have a call system?				
Can residents keep pets in their room and can they go in other parts of the home?				
Meals	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Can residents eat when they want to?				
Can meals be taken in a resident's bedroom?				
Is there a choice of menu for each meal?				
Can special diets be catered for?				
Can residents make themselves a drink?				
Are snacks available at all times?				
Are copies of current menus available for you to look at?				
Are the menus rotated?				
Does the chef consult the residents on their preferences?				
Can residents choose who they sit with in the dining room?				
Can relatives and friends have a meal with residents?				
For residents who need help with eating, are staff trained to do this sensitively?				
Activities	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Is there a weekly plan of activities?				
Did you see an example?				
Are residents consulted on what hobbies/interests they have?				
Are special events, eg birthdays celebrated in the home?				
What form of exercise, if any, are residents encouraged to take?				
Does the home take residents on trips outside the home?				
Does the home have access to transport?				
Is it possible to take part in activities outside the home?				
Would the care home be able to help with transport to these?				
Are daily newspapers available for residents?				
Does the home have access to a library facility?				
Can residents be taken to places of worship?				
Can residents take part in the daily activities within the home, if they wish, eg cleaning, gardening, cooking?				
Is there a residents' committee?				
Can relatives/friends help with activities?				
Did you see any photographs of activities in the home?				

Staff	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Did you observe staff being friendly and caring towards residents?				
Does each resident have a member of staff particularly responsible for their care?				
Do staff look as though they've got time to spend with residents?				
What training do staff receive?				
How do staff get to know about a new resident's background, likes, dislikes?				
Did you feel that individual needs and preferences could be met by the home when you visited?				
Visitors	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Are there set visiting times or are visitors welcome at all times?				
Can children visit?				
Can visitors stay overnight if they have travelled a long way or a resident is ill?				
General	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3	Notes
Was the home's statement of purpose made available?				
Was the home's latest inspection report available?				
Can a trial stay be arranged?				
Is there a waiting list?				
Is there a complaints procedure?				
What's included in the weekly fee?				
What's charged as 'extras'?				
Does the home insure a resident's personal possessions?				
What's the regulator rating?				