

AGE
Concern



Care home checklist

Helping you to make the right choice

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Age Concern provides information free for older people, their families and those who work with them. If you would like to make a donation to support our work please visit www.ageconcern.org.uk

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How to use this guide

Choosing a care home is an important decision. Finding out as much as you can about a home will help you to make an informed choice.

This guide suggests what to ask with space on each page for your notes and on page 28 for questions of your own.

If you are not happy with something, ask the home for an explanation. If you need more information see pages 29–31.

4 Questions about location and building

Notes

- Where is the home?
- Will visitors be able to get there easily?
- Are there transport links near by?
- Are facilities such as shops, pubs, parks and places of worship within easy reach?

- How accessible is the home?
- Will it be easy for you to enter and leave the building, and move between rooms and floors?
- How good is the wheelchair access?
- Is there a lift?

6 Questions about location and building

Notes

- Does the home feel clean and inviting?
- Are there any unpleasant smells?
- Do the rooms feel hot and stuffy or cold and draughty?
- Is there a relaxed and friendly atmosphere?

- Will you feel comfortable chatting and socialising in the home's public areas?
- Are chairs arranged in groups or round the edges of the rooms?
- Is there a quiet living room for reading, as well as one with a television?

8 Questions about location and building

Notes

- Are the rooms a good size?
- Will you have a room to yourself?
- Is there any choice of rooms to accommodate preferences such as sun, shade or quiet?
- Do the rooms have ensuite facilities or basins?

- Will you be able to bring your own possessions such as pictures, plants and furniture?
- Does the home allow pets?
- Will you be able to settle into the home?
- Would you prefer a larger or smaller home?

10 Questions about day-to-day life

Notes

- Are there telephone facilities you can use in private?
- Can you access the internet, either in your room or on a shared computer?
- Are books and newspapers available?
- Does a mobile library visit?

- Does the home arrange outings to the shops, entertainment venues or places of worship?
- Are there any physical activities such as exercise groups or gardening?
- How will you be told about upcoming events?

12 Questions about day-to-day life

Notes

- Are you encouraged to stay active and do as much as you can for yourself?
- Are external doors kept locked?
- Can you go outside for fresh air when you want to?

- Are you allowed to make choices about your daily routine?
- Will you be able to rise and go to bed when you choose?
- Can you choose which clothes to wear each day?

14 Questions about day-to-day life

Notes

- Are there any restrictions on visiting times or numbers of visitors?
- Where can you spend time with your visitors?
- Are there facilities for visitors to stay overnight?
- Are young children welcome?

- Is the home right for your cultural and religious needs?
- Are there members of staff who speak your language?
- Can the home meet your dietary needs?
- Are there other residents from a similar background to you?

16 Questions about day-to-day life

Notes

- Is there a choice of food, and when and where it can be eaten?
- How are special diets catered for?
- Can you prepare food and drink for yourself?
- Do existing residents enjoy the food and can you try it?

- Are details of the complaints procedure readily available?
- Are you encouraged to give feedback?
- Is there a residents' committee?
- Do you have access to advocacy services?

18 Questions about your care needs

Notes

- Is the home registered to provide the level of care you need?
- Do the other residents seem to have a similar level of need to you?
- What will happen if your needs change or increase?

- Does the home have bathing facilities that meet your needs?
- If you need help with bathing, who will provide this?
- Can you choose how often you have a bath or shower?

- Are toilets available in all parts of the home?
- Are they equipped with handrails and other mobility aids?
- Are you helped to the toilet when you need to go, if necessary?
- When are incontinence pads and catheters used?

- Do you have your own GP and access to other health services such as opticians and dentists?
- Who decides when a check-up is needed?
- How will the home let friends and family know if you are taken ill?

22 Questions about your care needs

Notes

- How many staff are employed per resident?
- How are they trained?
- Is there a manager on duty at all times?
- What is the turnover of staff?

- Can you see a copy of the home's brochure?
- Can you see copies of recent inspection reports?
- Can you see a copy of the home's contract/ written conditions?

- What are the home's fees?
- Is it clear how the fees are structured and calculated?
- How are NHS nursing care payments accounted for?
- How are fees collected?

- Do self-funding and local-authority assisted residents pay the same rates?
- Is a top-up payment required for local-authority assisted residents?

- Are extra items not covered by the basic fees clearly identified and accounted for?
- What arrangements are there for handling your personal money?
- How are your valuables kept secure?

- What are the notice conditions in the contract?
- Are any fees payable after a resident's death?
- How quickly does the person's room have to be cleared out?

28 **Any other questions**

Useful contacts

Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)

Responsible for the registration and inspection of social care services in England.

You can read online or request copies of their inspection reports on care homes and domestic care agencies.

Helpline: 0845 015 0120 (lo-call rate)

Website: www.csci.org.uk

30 **Age Concern Information Line**

For a free information guide on how to find a care home, call us free on 0800 00 99 66 or visit www.ageconcern.org.uk/information

If you live in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, contact your national Age Concern.

Age Concern Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9024 5729 (national call rate)

Website: www.ageconcernni.org

Scottish Helpline for Older People (Age Concern Scotland)

Tel: 0845 125 9732 (lo-call rate)

Websites:

www.olderpeoplescotland.org.uk

www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk

Age Concern Cymru

Tel: 029 2043 1555 (national call rate)

Website: www.accymru.org.uk

Contact details for your local Age Concern may be in the box below. If not, contact your national Age Concern office (see pages 29–31).

