

Choosing a care home

It can be difficult to know where to start when choosing a care home. This factsheet explains the types of home available, as well as what to look for and consider. Making a choice is easier if there's time to consider what you or your relative needs, what's available and the costs involved.

Types of care home

All establishments providing accommodation with personal or nursing care are now described as '**care homes**'. The main types of care home are residential and nursing homes.

'**Residential homes**' provide accommodation and help with personal care such as washing, dressing and using the toilet.

'**Nursing homes**' provide personal care and there will also be one or more qualified nurses there at all times. These are sometimes referred to as 'care homes which provide nursing care'.

Some homes have dual registration and provide both residential and nursing care. Some care homes cater specially for people with learning disabilities, sensory disability or specific physical or mental illnesses. Homes for elderly people with some form of dementia are sometimes referred to as '**EMI**' homes – EMI stands for 'elderly mentally infirm' or 'elderly mentally ill'.

The **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** has responsibility for the registration and inspection of care homes. CQC Inspection Reports are available for most care homes. CQC contact details are on page 3.

Funding

Depending on your needs and financial status, the local authority and/or NHS may partly or fully fund your care. Contact Social Care Services who will arrange an assessment to decide what type of care you will need and how it will be funded. With additional help and support in place, it may be possible to remain at home. Your views must be considered during this process.

If the local authority is likely to help with funding a care home for you, your choice may be limited – for example, the funding may not be enough to cover the cost of more expensive homes. Always contact Social Care Services to clarify your position.

If you are paying the full cost yourself, you do not have to go through the local authority. However, if there's a chance that you may need help with fees in the future, it's best to have your needs assessed before making private arrangements.



What should I look for when choosing a care home?

Location

- Are you familiar with the area?
- Is it near to facilities such as shops, parks or places of worship?
- What about transport? Can it be reached by relatives and friends?

Appearance

- Is it too big or too small for you? A large home may offer a wider range of social activities, a small one may feel more homely.
- Does it seem friendly and welcoming?
- Is it well cared-for? Does it look comfortable and smell clean?
- Is it accessible? Is there a lift? Is it wheelchair friendly?
- Is there a sitting-out area or garden?

Personal needs

- Is there a choice of rooms? Are all the rooms en-suite?
- Can residents bring their own furniture and belongings?
- Can residents choose what to wear and what time they bathe, get up and go to bed?
- Will it be necessary to change GP or your local hospital for treatment? How are medical appointments and travel to them organised?
- Do services such as hairdressers, chiropodists and health professionals such as dentists and opticians visit the home regularly?

Life in the home

- Do residents seem happy, well cared for and occupied?
- What are the meals like? A visit at mealtimes will give an idea of the quality, quantity and service of food.
- Is there a choice of menu? Are special diets catered for?
- Are there any restrictions on visiting times or numbers of visitors? Can visitors have meals or stay overnight?
- What leisure activities are available? Does the home offer outings?
- Can pets be accommodated? Can pets visit?

Staff

- How are you greeted? What is your first impression?
- How do staff talk to residents – are they friendly and polite? How do residents respond? Are there staff who speak your language?
- Do staff respect privacy - knock/ask permission before entering residents' rooms?
- What are the staffing levels at day and at night?
- Are residents escorted to appointments by staff?
- How are staff trained to deal with particular conditions such as dementia or sensory impairments?
- Can residents choose if they have a male or female carer?



Further questions

- Does the home have a waiting list? If you really like a home, it's worth joining the list, or if necessary join several waiting lists to get a place.
- Are there any extra charges for outings, laundry, hairdressing etc?
- Are there trial stays? If so, for how long?
- What happens if someone becomes more dependent through illness or becomes incontinent, for instance?
- What support does the home provide in relation to end-of-life care?
- Do they provide copies of their specification for care or written contract for residents? (If a local authority provides funding, they would have the contract with the home).
- How much notice is needed if someone wants to leave?
- Is it mandatory to get a Covid-19 vaccination in the care home?
- What does the care home do if a resident or staff member has a positive Covid-19 test?
- Can you read or look at the IPC (Infection Prevention and Control) policy of the home?

Further information

National organisations which can provide information on finding and paying for care include:

Age UK Advice Line	0800 678 1602	ageuk.org.uk
Care Quality Commission (Monitors, inspects and regulates care homes)	03000 616 161	cqc.org.uk
Independent Age	0800 319 6789	independentage.org

Disclaimer

Please note: inclusion on our list does not imply recommendation or endorsement by Carers' Resource.



If you need further information or would like to discuss any aspect of your caring role, please contact Carers' Resource:

Bradford 01274 449660

15 Park View Court, St Paul's Road, Shipley, BD18 3DZ

Harrogate 01423 500555

Unit 3, Grove Park Court, Grove Park Terrace, Harrogate, HG1 4DP

Skipton 01756 700888

Ronaldsway House, 36 Brook St, Skipton, BD23 1PP

info@carersresource.org

www.carersresource.org

We can provide this information in another format. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Date of information: July 2022; revise by July 2023

