

Questions to ask a care home: Care home checklist

carehome.co.uk has a checklist of questions to ask a care home that you are visiting, areas to consider and what you may like to ask before making a choice.

What are your first impressions of the care home?

- ☐ Does the home feel inviting, uplifting and homely?
- ☐ Is the care home and its grounds clean and well maintained?
- ☐ Are the rooms attractive, clean and well decorated?
- ☐ Does the care home smell fresh?
- ☐ Does the care home have a garden and is it accessible?
- ☐ Are staff welcoming and approachable?
- ☐ Are staff well presented?

Find out about the care home's location and accessibility

- ☐ Is the care home in a convenient location?
- ☐ Is the care home easily reached by public transport?
- ☐ Does the care home have places to park vehicles?
- ☐ What is the noise level like in the care home's surroundings?
- ☐ What are the views surrounding the home?
- ☐ Are there any shops, parks, places of worship, areas of natural beauty or other amenities close by?
- ☐ Is CCTV fitted in the care home?
- ☐ Is the care home designed to support all individuals, including those with an illness or disability?
- ☐ Is there wheelchair access throughout the care home, including sufficient space and wide doorways for wheelchair access?
- ☐ Is there a lift?
- ☐ Are accessible toilets available in all parts of the home and easy to get to?
- ☐ Do toilets have handrails, raised seats and other mobility aids?

What is the standard of care at the care home?

- ☐ What type of care does the home provide?
- ☐ Are members of staff trained in specific areas of care?
- ☐ Does the care home have suitable equipment and facilities for people with an illness or physical, learning or mental disability?
- ☐ Does the care home have access to other services, such as community mental health teams, chiropodists, opticians and dentists, and how often do they visit?
- ☐ Does the home link with a specific GP practice for residents to use?

- ☐ What happens if a resident becomes unwell or requires medication?
- ☐ Can a relative stay overnight if a resident is unwell?
- ☐ Are changes in medication discussed with the family?
- ☐ Are staff tactful, respectful and supportive in helping a resident with their personal needs?
- ☐ Will you be able to support my loved one if their needs change?
- ☐ What support is given to family members?

How are the care home's staff?

- ☐ Are staff available at all times throughout the care home?
- ☐ Is there a manager in post and a senior member of staff on duty at all times?
- ☐ What is your resident to staff ratio?
- ☐ Do staff interact well with residents?
- ☐ Do staff respect the privacy and dignity of the residents in their care?
- ☐ How will staff get to know residents personally?
- ☐ Can staff speak additional languages?
- ☐ Do staff take into account cultural and religious beliefs?
- ☐ How often do staff receive training?
- ☐ What training do staff receive?

How is daily life at the care home?

- ☐ Can residents choose their daily routine, such as when they get up, go to bed, get dressed, have meals or go out?
 - ☐ Can residents decide whether they have a bath or shower and how often?
 - ☐ Can residents choose which clothes they wear?
 - ☐ Can residents go outside for fresh air when needed?
 - ☐ Are residents' pets allowed in the care home?
 - ☐ Do staff seem engaged and attentive?
 - ☐ Do residents appear happy and occupied?
 - ☐ Do residents have access to internet and telephone points around the care home?
 - ☐ How is technology and AI used to help residents stay connected with family and friends?
 - ☐ Do all rooms have a television and Wi-Fi?
 - ☐ Can areas and furniture be arranged to allow small groups to socialise?
 - ☐ Does the care home arrange activities and visits into the local community?
 - ☐ Can residents go to the local pub, shopping in town, a place of worship (if religious) if they wish.
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What is the care accommodation like?

- ☐ What is the overall impression of bedrooms?
- ☐ Do bedrooms have en-suite facilities. If not, are washing facilities close by?
- ☐ Are the facilities in the bedroom/bathroom accessible for residents, including those with a disability?
- ☐ Can residents bring their own furniture and personalise their bedroom?
- ☐ Do staff respect residents' right to privacy?
- ☐ Are there single-sex facilities?
- ☐ Can pets stay in the bedroom?
- ☐ Is there a double bed in the bedroom for couples?
- ☐ Does the bedroom have a Wi-Fi connection?
- ☐ Is there an emergency pull-cord available?
- ☐ How do staff know if a resident has fallen in the bedroom – e.g. is falls detection technology in the bedrooms?
- ☐ Is there adequate storage space?

How are the care home's communal areas?

- ☐ Are there a variety of communal areas to choose from?
- ☐ Is there easy access to all communal areas?
- ☐ Is there an accessible and safe garden?
- ☐ Do the lounges or other sitting rooms have pleasant views?
- ☐ What activities are held in the communal lounges?
- ☐ Do the communal areas have quiet areas?
- ☐ Are the communal areas arranged to encourage socialisation?
- ☐ Are toilet facilities within easy reach of the communal areas?

What is the care home food like?

- ☐ Is the food prepared on the premises?
- ☐ Is there an on-site chef?
- ☐ Can residents choose where they eat, whether it be in a dining room or in their own room?
- ☐ Do residents have a choice of menu?
- ☐ Does the chef/cook talk with the residents to discuss meal choices?

- ☐ How often is the menu changed?
- ☐ Can dietary and cultural requirements be catered for e.g. gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan, kosher, halal etc?
- ☐ Can residents receive assistance with eating if required?
- ☐ Do residents have access to snacks at any time?
- ☐ Can visitors visit during meal times and can they have meals?
- ☐ Can residents make food and drinks for themselves?
- ☐ Are there opportunities to eat out?

What care home activities take place?

- ☐ Is there a range of activities designed to support individual needs?
- ☐ Are residents encouraged to continue with their hobbies and interests?
- ☐ Do staff consult with residents on the types of activities planned?
- ☐ Does the care home have activity coordinators?
- ☐ Do staff give residents the opportunity to help with activities within the care home, such as gardening or cooking?
- ☐ Do staff arrange entertainers and groups of interest to visit?
- ☐ Can residents attend events/activities in the local community?
- ☐ Are there accessible vehicles to transport residents?
- ☐ Are special events, such as birthdays and religious holidays celebrated?
- ☐ Do staff give residents regular exercise opportunities?

How about care home visits?

- ☐ Does the care home welcome visitors at any time?
- ☐ Are there any restrictions on visiting times or number of visitors?
- ☐ Are there facilities for visitors to stay overnight?
- ☐ Where can residents spend time with their visitors?
- ☐ Are relatives encouraged to become involved in the daily activities at the home?
- ☐ Can visitors accompany residents on outings and trips?
- ☐ Can visitors dine with residents?
- ☐ Are children welcome to visit?
- ☐ Does the care home allow family pets to visit?

What are the care home fees and details of the contract?

- ☐ Can residents see a copy of the home's terms and conditions?
- ☐ What are the annual/monthly fees?
- ☐ Is there a membership fee payable for staying at the care home?

- ☐ What is included in the fee and what may be charged as 'extras'?
- ☐ Are fees paid in advance or arrears?
- ☐ How much notice will be given for fee increases?
- ☐ What arrangements are there for handling personal money?
- ☐ What happens if the money runs out?
- ☐ What happens if a resident is unhappy with the home once she/he has moved in?
- ☐ Can residents stay for a trial period?

How does the care home keep people safe?

- ☐ What safety and security measures are in place to keep residents safe?
- ☐ What measures are taken to reduce the risk of falls?
- ☐ What call systems are in place if a resident needs help?
- ☐ Is the care home secure inside and in the outdoor areas including the garden?
- ☐ What safeguards are in place for day trips?
- ☐ Is information readily shared with families?

Notes