

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CHOOSING A RESIDENTIAL OR NURSING HOME

The choice of a Nursing or Residential Home needs careful consideration. You need to have confidence in the people delivering the care and can feel a happy and warm atmosphere. As the choice of home is often made at a vulnerable time, this leaflet has been written to help you.

Type of Home

Nursing or Residential – which would suit my needs best?

Residential Homes

These are for people who can no longer cope with their daily activities in the home and may need help with washing, dressing, toileting and bathing.

This type of home maybe provided by the local Authority or a private or voluntary agency. All the private and voluntary homes are registered with the National Care Standards Commission.

Nursing Homes

These are for people whose frailty requires Nursing Care on a regular basis by or under the supervision of a qualified nurse. A nursing home cares for people who have limited or no mobility, severe mental confusion or faecal incontinence.

This type of home is provided by a voluntary or private agency and is registered and regularly inspected by the National Care Standards Commission.

To Make a Choice

You or you friend or relative should visit more than one home so that you are able to make a comparison. Always ask for a brochure so you can take it away and browse at your leisure. Visit the homes more than once so you can sense the atmosphere.

Consideration

Travel

- Is the home close to my relatives and friends?
- Is it easy to park the car close by?
- Is it well served by public transport?

Accommodation

- Will I have my own room?

- If I have to share a room, do I have a choice of who I share it with?
- Is there a toilet close by and has it easy access?
- Are there communal sitting areas?
- Are there private areas where I can be with my visitors?
- Is the home warm and well aired?
- Are there any unpleasant smells?
- Can I bring personal mementoes for my room?
- Are the fire regulations addressed and is there provision for wheelchairs in the event of a fire?
- If there is more than one floor, is there a lift?
- Are the rooms well decorated and clean?
- Is there a garden for the residents to use?
- Can I have a telephone installed in my room?
- Are there plenty of bathrooms and are there hoists available to help me into the bath?
- Can I have my own television in my room?

Care

- Are there plenty of staff about?
- Are the staff friendly and do they smile?
- Are the beds of variable height with adequate pillows and linen?
- Is there a variety of chairs or would I be able to bring my own chair with me?
- Are foot stools available?
- If I needed a specialist mattress would it be available at no extra cost?
- Is there an activity programme that I could join if I wished?
- Would I have the choice of when I got up in the morning and when I went back to bed?
- Can I bathe when I please?
- Is there a choice of bath or shower?
- Can I choose whether I go to the communal areas during the day or stay in my room?
- Can I wear my own clothes?
- Is there a laundry for personal clothing?
- Is there someone I could speak to in confidence if I am unhappy?
- Will I have easy access to a doctor and can I keep my own doctor?
- Can I receive visitors at any time?
- Can I remain in the home if my mental or physical condition deteriorates?
- Can the home care for me until I die?
- Does a hairdresser attend the home regularly and what are the charges?
- Will I have access to:
 - A dentist
 - An optician
 - A chiropodist

- A physiotherapist
 - What would their charges be?
- Does the home make a pre-admission statement?
- Could I come for a trial period?
- Can I have a pet?

Nutrition

- Are there interesting and varied meals?
- Can I see a daily menu?
- Can I have an early morning cup of tea?
- Can I have breakfast in bed or do I have to go to the dining room?
- Is lunch and supper served in the dining room or can I eat in my room if I prefer?
- Can I get drinks at any time of the day?
- Is there special catering for special diets and would there be any extra cost?
- Would my family and friends be able to join me for a meal occasionally?

Finances

- What are the home's fees?
- Can I afford the fees on a long term basis?
- How often do the fees increase?
- What is included in the weekly charges?
- Are the fees payable in advance?
- Is there a percentage of the fees payable in the case of a temporary absence?
- Do I pay the fees by cheque or direct debit?
- Is there a residents' contract?
- Do I have to give notice if I decide to move from the home?
- What happens if I run out of money and can no longer pay for my care?
- Will anyone collect my pension for me?
- Is there a complaints procedure?

Do Not Forget

No two people have the same likes and dislikes.

Although you may feel apprehensive, your move to a nursing or residential home need not be difficult.

You will be secure, you will be looked after and have companionship and new friends.

The people caring for you have training and expertise and can offer help and guidance.

Try not to give up your hobbies just because you are moving to a new home. Ask carers if they can help you with them. You may find another resident has the same interest.

Always remember that you are the consumer and you have your rights. You can go to a home of your choice in any part of the country near to family and friends.

Make sure that in the home you choose:

- Information on each resident is stored in a confidential way.
- You had an opportunity to talk to other residents in private to hear their views.
- The proprietor or manager understands your financial situation.
- The home maintains standards set out in the Residents Charter of Rights.
- The home produces a brochure of information sheet accurately describing its facilities, services, aims and objectives.

You may even have other questions you need to ask, these should be answered with no secrecy or evasiveness.

Your Questions are Answered, Your Decision is Made – What Now?

Contact the residential or nursing home to tell them of your decision. They will either give you an admission application form or arrange to carry out a pre-admission assessment or both. If you are funding your own care, seek independent financial advice.

Notify your Care Co-ordinator or Social Worker (if you have one) of your decision.

If you are moving from a hospital to a new home, the hospital will make arrangements for your move. If you are moving from your home to a nursing or residential home, ask a friend or relative to help you pack your possessions and organize transport. If you have no-one to help you, your local Social Services department, Health Visitor, Help the Aged or Age Concern maybe able to suggest someone to assist you.

We hope you settle quickly into your new environment and that this brochure helped you to make a positive decision.