

Choosing a care home

What's important and a guide to help you decide

Where do I start?

At the Priory Group we understand that choosing a care home can be an emotional decision, therefore we would recommend that before deciding on the care homes you would like to visit that you speak to:

- Your friends and relatives, for their recommendations
- Your local social services department, which should be able to provide a list of registered homes in your area. To find out more visit www.directgov.co.uk
- Your local GP
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) visit them online at www.cqc.org.uk to view the latest care home inspection reports in England
- The Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (SCRC) visit them online at www.carecommission.com to view the latest care home inspection reports in Scotland
- The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) visit them online at www.rqia.org.uk to view the latest care home inspection reports in Northern Ireland
- The Relatives' and Residents' Association can also offer advice and support 020 7359 8136 or online at www.relres.org



Questions to ask the care home team before you visit

Whilst our checklist will prompt you to ask questions when you visit a home, you may wish to ask the following questions when deciding which homes to visit:

- What types of care are offered?
- What activities and choice of food are available?
- When was the home built eg has the home been purpose built to meet the needs of older people?
- Does it meet the 'National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Older People'?
- What was the home's rating in their last inspection report by the Care Quality Commission?
- Will visitors be welcomed at all times?

To help you compare the homes you visit we have produced the following checklist to enable you to quickly note down your thoughts on each care home. These notes will act as a reminder to allow you to compare homes. We know you will need to find the place that feels best for your relative or yourself and we understand that sometimes this 'special quality' will not be found on a checklist.

Questions to ask the care homes you visit

The checklist on the next page will help you to compare each home you visit. Please remember that how you feel when inside each home should be a deciding factor in your decision, so do follow your first impression and own instincts.

You may wish to score the home(s) against each criteria and/or make notes about what you like and any concerns you may have.

Care home checklist Things to ask and to consider Rank homes visited using 1 to 5 (5 being the best)	Name of home	Name of home	Name of home	
	The manager's name	The manager's name	The manager's name	
Home telephone number:	Home telephone number:	Home telephone number:		
First Impressions				
How easy is the home to get to for relatives and friends?				
Is there car parking?				
Does the home feel welcoming and comfortable?				
Is the home manager friendly and helpful?				
Have you been offered refreshments?				
Is the home clean and well furnished?				
Do the residents appear happy and relaxed?				
Is there good outside space? Garden, terrace, social areas				
The Home				
Does the home offer a suitable standard and type of care for your needs?				
Is there easy access for wheel chairs and walking frames?				
Is there more than one lounge area for residents to enjoy?				
Is the home well decorated?				
Bedrooms				
Is there a lockable drawer or cabinet in the bedroom?				
Does each room have a call system?				
Are all the bedrooms en-suite?				
Can residents bring their own belongings?				
Visitors				
Are there set visitors times?				
Can a visitor stay overnight?				
Can children visit the home?				

Catering			
Are special dietary requirements catered for?			
Are snacks available?			
Are the menus rotated?			
Does the chef consult the residents about the menu?			
Ask to see a copy of today's menu			
Can friends and family eat with residents?			
Activities			
Is there a weekly plan of activities on display?			
Are residents consulted on hobbies/interests they have?			
Are special occasions such as birthdays celebrated at the home?			
Does the home have access to transport for trips out?			
Does the home support all religions?			
Staff			
Were the staff caring and approachable?			
Does each resident have a member of staff assigned to their care?			
What training have the staff undertaken or received?			
Did you feel the home treated residents as individuals?			
Quality, Fees and Access			
What was detailed in the homes last report?			
What's included in the weekly fee?			
Can a trial stay be arranged?			
Is there a waiting list?			
Other			
Totals			
Add up your scores			

If one or more of the homes score the same, choose the criteria which are most important to you and add up the scores for these criteria.



What do I do next?

When you have visited local homes and completed the checklist, the next step is to consider funding:

- If you will be paying the care home fees privately you can contact a home directly and arrange a needs-based assessment for yourself or a loved one. This is usually undertaken by the home manager or a registered nurse from the home
- If the local authority will be paying the fees, depending on your circumstances you will need to speak to your relevant social services team who will undertake an assessment and produce a care plan for you or your loved one. This will detail daily living and nursing care requirements. Please note, if your local authority is assisting with funding, it doesn't mean you have to choose one of their homes. You can request any home that accepts residents funded by the local authority

For more information on Priory's care home services and locations please call:

0845 2 PRIORY (0845 2 774679)

Or send an email to carehomes@priorygroup.com

Alternatively you can visit our website at:

www.priorygroup.com/carehomes