

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CARE HOME GUIDE

Choosing a Care Home



Taking the decision that it's time for someone else to care for your loved one can be difficult and you want to be sure that the home you choose is the right one for them. It is important that the person you are caring for agrees with this decision, unless they do not have the mental capacity to make this choice.

Where do I start?

Whether you are funding the care home privately or through the local authority you are likely to be given the responsibility of finding a suitable home. This can seem daunting, so we have prepared the below information to help you navigate this process.

The first thing you need to do is some research so that you can build a list of homes to visit.

Things to consider when doing your research:

- Be clear on what needs you have and that potential homes can meet these needs. For example, you may need nursing care or staff that understand dementia.
- If you need to find a home quickly then check if they have vacancies early in the conversation and if they don't have any, whether there is a waiting list.
- Research the home through its website and any CQC reports it has. (CQC stands for the Care Quality Commission, and they help make sure care is being provided to a high standard)

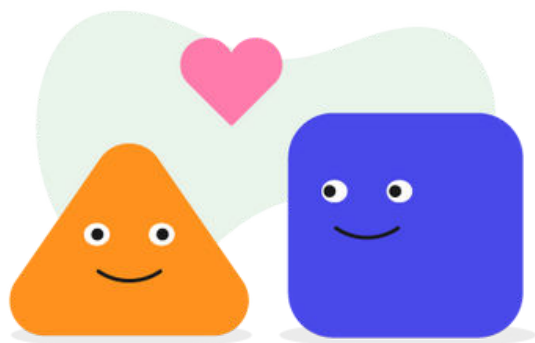
What is the next step?

You should now have a list of homes that you can book an appointment with to visit. Care homes are very much used to this.

When looking around it's a good idea to make notes as you go so you can remember what you have seen. This is particularly useful if you are visiting several homes in one day. Below are our top tips on what to ask or look out for when looking around:

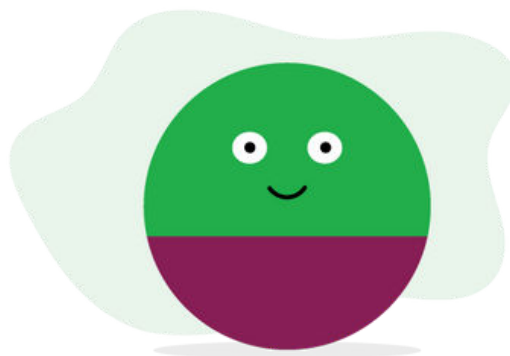
The local Council Website has a directory which gives information and contact numbers for support services and care homes:

<https://www.carechoices.co.uk/publication/bedfordshire-care-services-directory/>



"Remember: you are still a carer even if your loved one lives in a care home."

Be kind to yourself, this is a very difficult time. We are always here for you if you need more support.





What should I look out for when I visit?

What does it feel like when you arrive?

- Do the grounds seem well maintained
- Is there outside space that the residents are using?
- Would it be easy to park if you visited?
- Is it in a nice area with amenities that residents can access?
- Do you feel welcome?
- Does the house smell clean?
- Would you like to live here?

Staff

- Do the staff feel welcoming?
- Did you have an opportunity to meet the manager and what did you think?
- Is there a suitable ratio of staff to residents during the day, at night and at weekends?

What should I look out for when I visit?

Staff continued...

- Do residents have choices in who they are supported by?
- How are staff trained, do the staff have care qualifications?
- Is there a high staff turnover? (If so, this could be a sign of low staff morale)

Meeting needs

- Does the home assess new resident's situations and needs before agreeing to accept them?
- Do residents have a named member of staff who is particularly responsible for their care?
- How are residents and their families involved in decisions about their care?
- Do the other residents seem to have similar needs?
- Can the home cope if your loved ones needs increase?
- Does the home link with a specific GP practice for residents?
- Do specialist health staff such as opticians and chiropodists visit regularly?
- How does the home communicate with family and friends?
- Can the home offer support for end-of-life care?

What should I look out for when I visit?

Eating

- How do residents usually eat? (all together, in their rooms)
- Is there a choice of food and can you see sample menus?
- Are snacks available during the day or at night?
- Is food prepared on the premises?
- Can residents and visitors make their own drinks?
- Can residents store food in their room?

Staying Active

- How are residents encouraged to stay active and retain their independence?
- Can you see an activity schedule?
- Do residents seem happy and occupied?
- Are there lounges or social areas with furniture arranged to allow small groups to socialise?
- Would you feel comfortable socialising in the home's common areas when you visit?
- Does the home have its own pets, or can residents bring their own pets?
- What facilities are there to encourage residents to entertain themselves? (newspapers, TV, radio, computers etc.)

What should I look out for when I visit?

Visiting

Are there any restrictions on visiting times or numbers of visitors?

Are there facilities for visitors to stay overnight?

Are young children welcome?

Is there a space for residents to spend time with visitors?

Fees

What are the home's fees?

Is a deposit or advance payment required?

How often are fees reviewed?

Are extra items or services not covered by the basic fees clearly identified and accounted for?

Are any fees payable after a resident's death?

Feedback

Is it obvious how residents or family members can give feedback?

Does the manager feel approachable?



**"Remember: we are
only a phone call
away."**