

Care Direct
0845 1551 007

factsheet

Devon
County Council 

What to look for in a care home

Factsheet 10a – 20 August 2009 (5 Pages)

Part of the care home series (10a, 10b, 10c and 2b)

Whether you are arranging your care yourself or with the help of Adult & Community Services you need to make sure that it meets all your needs and will be somewhere that you enjoy living. We understand that making the choice to move into a care home is a very difficult one and you may want to consider other options. Support to help you stay in your own home or in sheltered accommodation, can be arranged if this is appropriate and safe. Speak to Care Direct on 0845 1551 007 for advice on your options.

Questions to ask and information to find out

Can I visit the home before I decide? Yes. Most homes prefer people to visit before making a decision and you can visit more than one home if you wish.

How do I know that I will like the home? It is never possible to be completely sure in advance, so the first four weeks of your stay will be a trial period. The trial period gives you time to get used to the home

and see if it meets your needs. You may feel that an alternative home would be more suitable, or you may wish to return home.

Privacy, dignity, choice, fulfilment and independence: The home should aim to give you as much choice and independence as possible. You have a right to have privacy and be treated in a dignified way at all times. Staff should be polite and courteous, and call you by the name of your choice. You should be offered as much as choice as possible in all aspects of your care and daily living routines.

Your room in the home: You will usually be given a single room, but shared rooms are available. You will need to know how many personal possessions you can take with you and whether you can take some of your own furniture, pictures and plants.

Communal areas: What are the sitting rooms and communal areas in the home like? Can you prepare food or drink for yourself if you get hungry or thirsty in the night? Is there somewhere that you can relax with friends or enjoy your hobbies? If you smoke, what facilities are there for smokers?

Meals and drinks: Does the home provide varied meals? You should be able to have some choices in your meals and where you eat them. In many homes your visitors can eat with you for a small charge. Are you able to have alcoholic drinks and are there facilities for you to make hot drinks?

Visitors and Pets: The home should let you have visitors at any time convenient to you. Your visitors should be made welcome and offered refreshments. Some homes may let you bring a small pet to live with you. Check this with the individual home first.

Telephone: Can you make calls in your room or has the home a quiet place available for calls?

Going out: What facilities are there in the home and what facilities are available locally? Ask about the location of the library, shops and post office - what transport is available to get to them? You can go out at any time, but you must inform the home when you're going and roughly when you'll return.

Your doctor: You can keep your own doctor if it is practical or the home should arrange for a local GP to provide your medical care.

Religious worship: Some homes have close links with a local church and have services in the home. Find out what places of worship are near the home and what transport is available to get to them.

Voting: You still have the right to vote while living in a residential or nursing home. The home must help you to exercise your right to vote

in all elections.

Hairdressing, chiropody and visiting services: Most care homes produce a brochure. This will tell you what services are available at the home and if you have to pay for them out of your personal allowance.

Activities and entertainment: In order to make your stay in the home as comfortable and interesting as possible, the home should organise a range of activities and entertainment. Ask what the home has arranged during the last month. If an activity that you are particularly interested in is not provided, ask the home owner or put it in the suggestion box.

The home should always encourage you to do as much for yourself as you can or want to. It is always useful to ask other residents or their relatives about the home and what it offers.

Your views on the home: Some homes have suggestion boxes that you can use to give your views. Homes are also required to hold residents' meetings to which your friends or relatives should be able to attend. The home should seek your views on a regular basis. The home must have a written complaints procedure that must be given to you when you move in. You have the right to express your views at residents' meetings and to make a formal complaint to the home

owner if necessary. Your relatives or friends can complain on your behalf if you prefer.

Further reading

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have an excellent booklet entitled: **Social Care – choosing the right service for you** .

You can order this by telephone 03000 616161 or from their website www.cqc.org.uk where you can also download the latest inspection reports on individual homes.

You should also consider the cost of the care home and how it is going to be paid for.

Please refer to:

Factsheet 10b, Moving in to a Care Home

Factsheet 10c, Paying for residential care

Factsheet 2b, Charges for Residential and Nursing Home Care

If you would like this factsheet in a different format such as Braille or audio, or in a different language, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0845 155 1015 or email customer@devon.gov.uk.

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