

Factsheet 10b – 06 October 2010 (2 Pages)

Choosing a care home – what should I ask?

Part of the care home series

Fact sheet 10a, **Is a care home right for me?**

Fact sheet 10c, **I've chosen a Care Home – what happens next?**

Fact sheet 10d, **Paying for Short Term/Respite Residential Care**

Fact sheet 10e, **Paying for Long Term Residential Care**

If you have been finding it difficult to manage at home you might be thinking about moving into a care home. Whether you are arranging your support/care yourself or with help, the care home you choose should meet your needs and be somewhere you want to live – even if it's only for a short while. We also understand that deciding to move into a care home is a very difficult decision to make and you may want to consider other options.

If you'd like to think about your options some more before deciding on whether a care home is right for you, read **Factsheet 10a: Is a care home right for me?**

You can also talk to **Care Direct on 0845 1551 007** who can help you.

If we have jointly decided that a care home is right for you and you are seeking financial assistance from us then we will provide you with a list of suitable homes which meet your care needs. To make sure you choose one you are happy with, it's important to ask questions and to visit the homes you are interested in. In this factsheet, we have put together a list of things to think about before you decide.

- **Visiting a home before deciding.** We advise that you visit any home that you're interested in before you make any decision. Visit as many homes as you need to be sure.
- **Is any decision final?** You can't be sure whether you'll truly be happy in a home until you've stayed there. That's why the **first four weeks** of your stay are considered a trial period. If you're not happy, you could try another home, or you even go back home to rethink your options.
- **Your stay in a care home must be paid for in some way.** We carefully consider each request for financial support by following the government's rules on charging CRAG (Charging for Residential Accommodation Guidance).
- **If you have savings over the capital threshold (currently £23,250) you will not be eligible for financial assistance.**
- **Your contribution will depend on your financial circumstances.** A financial assessment will be conducted to establish how much you will have to pay towards the cost of your support/care. This is a means tested assessment which takes into account your capital resources and income.
- **How you will be treated.** Your care home will respect your privacy, maintain your dignity and offer you ways to find fulfilment and encourage your independence.
- **Sleeping arrangements.** You will usually be given a single room, but shared rooms are also available. You should find out how many personal items you can take with you including your furniture, pictures and plants.
- **Communal areas.** What would you look for in a communal area? What are the TV rules? Can you make yourself a snack when you feel like it? Think about the things you like to do at home.
- **Eating arrangements.** The home should give you a choice of what and where you want to eat. In many homes your visitors can eat with you.

- **Visitors and pets.** You should be able to have visitors whenever you like and they should be made welcome. Some homes may let you bring a small pet to live with you.
- **Using the phone.** Can you make calls in your room or has the home got a quiet place for calls?
- **Going out.** You can go out at any time, but your home will ask you to let them know when you're going out and roughly when you'll be back.
- **Local facilities.** What facilities are in the home and what facilities are available locally? What about local transport?
- **Your GP.** You can keep your own doctor if it is practical or the home could arrange for a local GP to provide your medical care.
- **Worship.** Some homes have close links with a local church and have services in the home.
- **Voting rights.** You still have the right to vote while living in a care home. The home must help you to exercise your right to vote in all elections.
- **Services.** Most care homes have a brochure about additional services they offer for example hairdressing. These will often incur an additional charge.
- **Activities and entertainment.** The home should organise these and should encourage you to do as much for yourself as you can or want to.
- **Your views.** Some homes have suggestion boxes and homes are also required to hold residents' meetings - which your friends or relatives should be able to attend too. 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 and to make a formal complaint to the home owner. Your relatives or friends can complain for you if you prefer.
- **Further reading** The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has an excellent booklet: ***Social Care – choosing the right service for you***. You can order this by calling 03000 616161 or you can order it from the website www.cqc.org.uk where you can also download the latest inspection reports on individual homes.

If you have any further questions please contact **Care Direct 0845 1551 007**

Further factsheets can be found online at www.devon.gov.uk/factsheets

A large print version of this factsheet is available on www.devon.gov.uk/largeprint-factsheets but if you would like it 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.

Factsheet 10b – 06 October 2010 (2 Pages)