



Physical  
health &  
wellbeing



Support for life

# How to choose a care home

*When it becomes necessary to look for a care home for you or your relative you will want to make sure that you find the right home that meets your needs and where you/your relative will be happy.*

## Care Quality Commission Inspection Ratings<sup>1</sup>

Outstanding – *service is performing exceptionally well*

Good – *service is performing well and meeting CQC expectations*

Requires improvement – *service isn't performing as well as it should and has been informed it must improve*

Inadequate – *service is performing badly and CQC has taken enforcement action against the provider of the service*

No rating/under appeal/rating suspended – *some services can't be rated, while some might be under appeal from the provider*

## Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and social care in England\*. For information on the rest of the UK see below.

These bodies monitor, inspect and regulate services to make sure they meet standards of safety, effectiveness, caring, responsiveness and leadership, and publish their findings, as well as performance ratings.

## Finding a care home

To find a care home in your area, you can obtain a list of homes from the CQC, ask friends and family for recommendations, find out from your local social services department or complete an online search.

When you've selected suitable care homes, contact them and ask for details including costs, explaining whether you/your relative is self-funding or local authority funded. Once you've made a shortlist based on costs, general care home details, ratings and recommendations, visit the homes by making an appointment with the care home manager.

## Types

There are a number of different types of care home available and it depends on your needs and funding which home would be suitable. It's important to choose the one that's right for you or your loved one.

### Types of care home

#### Residential

Care homes that provide living accommodation and help with personal care, such as washing and dressing. They may also offer social activities.

#### Nursing

Everything a residential care home provides as well as assistance from qualified nursing staff

#### Specialised care homes

These are designed to deliver care to people with specific needs, such as dementia, young adults with learning difficulties, children with physical disabilities and more

#### Dual registered care homes

These are care homes for residents with either personal or nursing care. Those who need personal care can move into the nursing section when needed without having to move care homes

## What to look for

Before your visit to the shortlisted care homes sit down and make a list of needs and important points to you/your relative. This might be location, facilities, social activities, specialist care, communication with family/advocates, ability to deal with religious, social, ethnic or dietary requirements, arrangements for visitors.

When you visit, request a guide usually called a Statement of Purpose which explains what is offered to residents and their families. Observe whether the staff are engaged, well trained and are friendly and respectful.

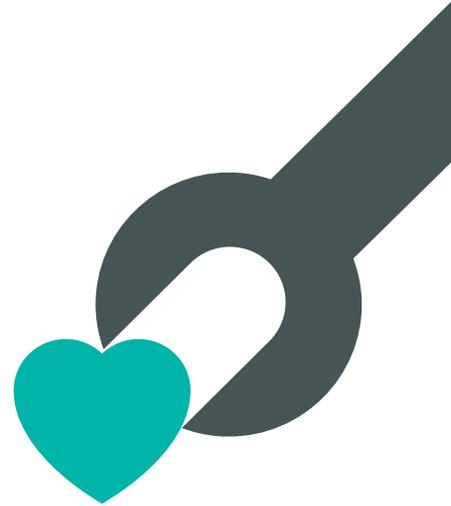
- *Does the home involve residents, family and carers in decision-making?*
- *Does the home provide a clean and safe environment with social activities, nutritional meals?*
- *Do they respect their residents' dignity, wishes and privacy?*

Use your eyes and ears when you are visiting to check whether residents look well-cared for, are they engaged in social activities or just sitting in one room in front of the television. How do staff interact with residents and you/your relative as a potential new resident? Do the rooms/bathrooms smell clean?

Also, find out about waiting lists and how soon you'd have to move in when a place becomes available.

## Funding

The choice of care home is dependent on the available funding. It may be that you are a "self-funder" (you can pay for your own care) or you may need support from the Local Authority or NHS. It's worth checking whether you're eligible for means-tested support from your local authority through a care needs assessment. Please see our Paying For Care and Benefits fact-sheets for more information.



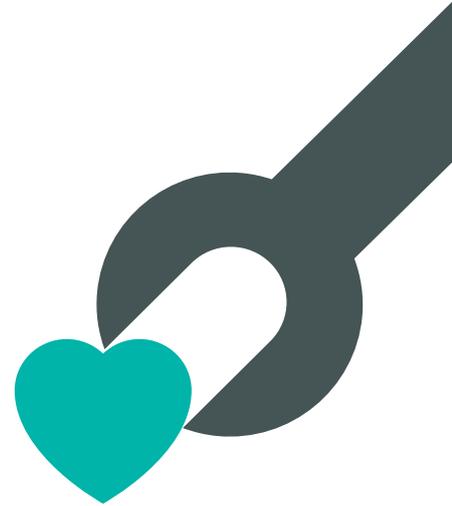
## Moving

Moving can be very stressful at the best of times, so try and plan to make the move as comfortable as possible. Generally you'll be moving from a home with lots of possessions, so discuss with the care home what furniture, bedding, etc. can be taken into the home. Having personal items around at a time of change can make a huge difference. Ask whether furniture is provided and make sure you are able to measure the room if you need to provide any furniture.

Before admission, a care needs assessment will take place and a care plan will be

drawn up. Make sure you see this and are able to agree or make any changes you feel are necessary. Provide as much information as possible to ensure the home knows exactly how you need and want to be cared for.

Notify all important authorities and providers of your move. Certain benefits, such as Attendance Allowance will be affected by a move into a care home, so seek advice on these matters as soon as possible. Let your family and friends know your new address and what the visitor arrangements are.



## Further sources of help

\* In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the regulators report on their inspections, but don't give a rating. For Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland regulators see below:

- Scotland: Care Inspectorate
- Wales: CSSIW – Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales
- Northern Ireland: RQIA - The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
- Age UK  
[www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/care-homes/finding-a-car-home](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/care-homes/finding-a-car-home)
- Alzheimer's Society  
[www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)  
Selecting a care home (Publications)

1 Care Quality Commission – what our icons mean

[www.ben.org.uk](http://www.ben.org.uk)

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**Free, confidential helpline:**  
**08081 311 333**

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