

Choosing a care home

How to independently find a care home

You may already know the care home you want to enter, perhaps through personal experience or a friend's recommendation. If you do not have a home in mind and are not sure of how to find one, the following may help:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) gives details of registered care homes in each area. You can see copies of their recent inspection reports on its website. Social workers at your local authority social services department or the hospital may be able to provide a list of local homes. You can raise any questions about going into a home with them Age UK factsheet 29 April 2016 Finding care home accommodation Page 7 of 28.

Some charities and placement agencies help people to find homes, especially people who wish to find a place quickly, or who live some distance away. The Yellow Pages or the telephone directory will contain addresses of homes and some websites can assist you to find care homes and other care services.

The charity WHICH? has a care home directory at <http://www.which.co.uk/elderly-care/directory> The charity Lasa has a website that helps you find your local authority's social care offering at www.socialcareinfo.net It is always advisable to check the 'About us' section on other websites to see who they may be tied to or owned by, in terms of the independence of their information.

Choosing the right care home is important. It will become your home, and moving can be difficult and disruption increased if you subsequently have to another care home. You can visit beforehand It can be tempting to accept the first vacancy that arises, particularly if there is a shortage of care home places in your area. It is worth taking time to find the right home

If possible, consider more than one home. Try to visit the home to have a look round and talk to the staff and person in charge. Some homes may invite you to spend the day at the home, or perhaps to visit to share a meal – ask if this is possible.

If you have difficulties travelling to visit care homes, contact your local Age UK or Citizens Advice Bureau to see if they have details of any transport schemes in your area. Talk to the existing residents and see what they are doing. Are they involved in activities and the running of the home? Is there a homely, warm and busy environment? Do staff members seem interested and caring? The care home must produce a brochure or service users' guide setting out its aims and objectives, the facilities and services offered to residents. Make sure that the reality matches the brochure and check all charges, including those for extra services or unforeseen events such as short absences.

The Age UK Factsheet 29 April 2016 "Finding care home accommodation" is a useful document to help make decisions. The section on the assessment for your needs can help you plan. If you have a local authority needs assessment, you can use it to identify the personal, practical & nursing assistance you need, together with specialist equipment, for example a hoist for transfers to and from a bed or chair. You can also ask the care home if they can meet these needs. Collect the fullest possible information on a prospective home and then make your decision.

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