

August 2021

Choosing a Care Home

We realise that the decision to choose a care home can often be one of the most difficult decisions that a family can make together. This guide is to give you a few useful suggestions about what to look out for when visiting care homes to help you decide which care home is the right one for you.

Key considerations

- 1) Does the home provide the level of care you need, or that you might require in the future?
- 2) Take a look at the most recent report on the care home from the CQC (Care Quality Commission), which is the governing body in England that regulates and inspects care homes.
- 3) Does the care home have any current vacancies? If it does not, ask how long the waiting list is so that you are able to decide if you can wait, or if you need to consider somewhere else that you can move into sooner.

Home details

Name of home _____

Address _____

Telephone number _____

Email _____

Date of visit _____

Your care

Does the home give you a full healthcare assessment before it accepts residency?

Encore Yes No

Do the current residents seem to have a similar level of care requirements to you?

Is the home a specialist in Dementia?

Does the home have a partnership with a GP practice for residents?

Are residents helped to the toilet if necessary when they need to go?

Is there a policy on when incontinence pads and catheters are used?

How often is a healthcare assessment done once you're a resident?

How quickly does the GP practice respond with a visit once called out?

How often do other healthcare services visit the home (opticians, dentists, chiropodists etc)?

Encore Care Guide—Choosing a Care Home Checklist

What are the travel arrangements for regular hospital and clinic visits and do staff accompany residents?

What happens if your needs change or increase?

How does the home support those with sensory impairments or dementia?

How does the home let friends and family know if a resident is taken ill?

What support can the home provide for end-of-life care?

What security arrangements are in place to ensure residents are kept safe?

Comments:

Staff

Encore Yes No

Were the staff friendly?

Did the staff appear to treat the residents with respect and kindness?

Were the staff engaging with residents at all times?

Did the staff appear professional and courteous when passing them in corridors?

Were staff that showed you around helpful?

Are there members of staff who speak your preferred language?

Is there a manager in position and a senior member of staff on duty at all times?

How are staff trained? How often and by whom?

How does the home ensure staff get to know about a resident's life and experiences?

How many nurses to residents?

Day shift: _____

Night shift: _____

How many carers to support nurses?

Day shift: _____

Night shift: _____

Comments:

Facilities

Encore Yes No

Do the buildings and grounds appear to be well-maintained?

Is there a garden or courtyard and is it well-kept?

Does the home and garden area feel welcoming and homely?

Is the home clean?

Does the home smell fresh?

Are the rooms at a pleasant temperature?

Are the bedrooms attractive and well-decorated?

Does the home use signs / pictures to show where things are and distinguish between individuals' rooms?

Does every bedroom have a private en-suite bathroom?

Are accessible toilets available in all parts of the home?

Encore Care Guide—Choosing a Care Home Checklist

- | | Encore | Yes | No |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Do toilets have handrails, raised toilet seats and other mobility aids? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are there modern movement-triggered lights in the bathroom? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are there touch-sensitive bedside lamps? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is there a 'hub' area (perhaps in reception) where relatives and residents can sit comfortably and have a cup of tea and cake? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is there movie area facilities? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is there a hair / nail salon on site? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is there sufficient parking at the home? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How often do beauticians attend the home? | | | |

Comments:

When is the main meal of the day?

Where do residents usually eat?

What types of food?

What timings do they serve dinner?

How are resident's preferences or special diets catered for?

Comments:

Food and beverage

- | | Encore | Yes | No |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Can residents eat when they feel like it? (later/earlier than scheduled?) | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are visitors able to visit during meal times and can they have meals? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Can residents and visitors make themselves a drink? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is there a sample menu you can look at? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are you allowed to keep food in your room? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Hot and cold options every day? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Locally sourced? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is food prepared on the premises? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How often does the menu change?

How many hot food options each day?

Social activities

- | | Encore | Yes | No |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Do they have a designated Activity Coordinator? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Do they invite outside entertainers? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are residents encouraged to stay active and do as much as they can for themselves? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Would you feel comfortable socialising in the home's common areas? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are there plenty of residents you feel you could socialise with? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| If you have pets, can you take them with you? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Does the home have its own pets? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How often do they have activities?

What types of activities do they have?

How many lounges or social areas are there?

Are residents sitting around the walls or in small groups?

Does the home have (please tick):

- A radio
- A quiet lounge or reading room
- A piano
- A TV room
- Newspapers
- Books or a mobile library
- Private phone facilities
- Shared phone facilities
- Mobile phone reception
- Shared computers
- Internet reception in the bedrooms
- Hairdressing services
- An outdoor seating area
- Music or singing activities
- Reminiscence groups
- Physical activities such as aerobic movement classes
- Gardening activities
- Celebrations for special occasions
- Outings to shops, entertainment venues, places of worship or places of interest

Comments:

Visitors

- | | Encore | Yes | No |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Are they completely flexible on visiting times or numbers of visitors? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Can visitors stay overnight? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are young children welcome? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Where can residents spend time with visitors?

Comments:

Daily considerations

- | | Encore | Yes | No |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Can residents choose their daily routine, such as when they get up, go to bed, have meals or go out? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Can residents choose which clothes to wear? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Can residents bring their own furniture and belongings and is there enough space in the bedroom to put them? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Would it be possible to change rooms at a later date? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are there safes or locked drawers in the bedrooms? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Can residents choose whether they have a bath or shower and how often? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

What is the usual ratio of female to male patients?

What are the laundry arrangements?

Comments:

Home Fees

- | | Encore | Yes | No |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Can you see a copy of the home's contract and terms and conditions? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is it clear how the fees are structured and calculated? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Can you stay for a trial period? | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

What happens if you decide the home is not for you once you move in?

What are the home's fees?

Is it necessary to pay an advance payment or deposit?

How frequently are fees reviewed?

How are NHS nursing care payments accounted for in the fee structure?

How are fees collected?

Is a top-up payment required if you're being placed by the local authority?

What are the terms for keeping your room if you have to go into hospital?

What are the notice conditions in the contract?

Are any fees payable after a resident's death and how soon do personal belongings need to be removed?

Comments:

Notes:

Age UK

Advice and information for people in later life

Age UK Advice:

Tel: 0800 169 65 65

www.ageuk.org.uk

Care Quality Commission

Responsible for regulating health and social care services in England.

Tel: 03000 61 61 61

www.cqc.org.uk

Cinnamon Trust

Specialist charity for older people and their pets.

It can help to rehouse your pet if you're unable to take it with you into a care home.

Tel: 01736 757 900

www.cinnamon.org.uk

The Relatives and Residents Association

Supports care home residents and their relatives.

Operates a helpline and has a network of local groups.

Tel: 020 7359 8136

www.relres.org