



BARCHESTER

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# Selecting your ideal care home

With helpful support from Barchester Healthcare on things to consider and the right questions to ask.



How many homes should I visit?

What do I need to look for when visiting a home?

Who should I meet when visiting?



When should I visit a care home?



# Choosing a care home

There's a lot to consider when choosing the right care home, so we've created this useful guide designed to help you to ask the right questions, and support you in selecting the ideal home for your loved one.

## How many homes should I visit?

Ideally you should visit as many homes as possible that offer the care you require and are in a suitable location, so that you can make comparisons and find the right home for you.

## When should I visit a care home?

Book an appointment with the home at a time that suits you. As part of your visit you should experience what life is like in the home. You can usually visit in person, or may be offered a chance to look around via video call.

## How do I know the care needs of my loved one?

When searching for a care home, you need to know what type of care your loved one will need. We help by carrying out a full assessment of your loved one's needs which will help you find the right care home for them. Alternatively you can request a care needs assessment from the adult social services department of your local council.

## What do I need to look for when visiting a home?

It is sometimes hard to remember all the things you want to ask when visiting a care home. The checklist on the following pages will be a helpful guide, with different areas to consider what's best for your loved one.

## Who should I meet when visiting?

Try to ensure you meet the General Manager as well as the Head of Department for the type of care you are interested in. You should also try to meet the Activities Coordinator and some of the care and/or nursing staff.

Look online at their website and at reviews on carehome.co.uk or Google to get a feel for the home and what others say about it.

Our friendly teams are always here to support you, find your local Barchester care home at [www.barchester.com](http://www.barchester.com) or call us on 01917 317 664



# Asking the right questions



Here you'll find useful questions to consider and ask when visiting a care home. You can add a ✓ or ✗ in the checklist boxes to easily refer back to.

Care home name:

Date:

## Before visiting

The right home should offer the expert care your loved one needs, in a convenient location for family and friends to visit. You can start by researching online or by giving the home a call before visiting.

- Does the home meet your loved one's care needs? .....
- Is it set in the right location for you and easy for family and friends to visit? .....
- Is it in a setting your loved one will enjoy? .....   
(e.g. close to shops or attractions, in a rural or city location, has landscaped gardens)

## First impressions

Whether it's the friendly welcome you receive, the homely and warm atmosphere you experience or the home-made treats you're offered as you arrive, first impressions can make all the difference.



- Is the home well-presented? .....
- Does the home feel loved and well cared for? .....
- Is the home tastefully decorated and beautifully furnished? .....
- Is the home designed with residents' comfort in mind? .....   
(e.g. plenty of natural light and comfortable seating, a mixture of spaces to socialise and be active in but also quiet spaces to enjoy time alone)

## Personalised care

Reassurance that your loved one will be well cared for and in good hands is so important, and it's not just about the care the home provides but how it strives to improve well-being and quality of life too.



- Are personalised care plans created for each resident? And do they focus on social, personal and health care needs? .....
- Are the care plans reviewed a minimum of every 6 months, or as care needs change, so that residents' needs and preferences are always known? .....
- Do staff take interest in your loved one's life history, their achievements, the people who are closest to them and their likes and dislikes? .....
- Are there dedicated environments and communities to support individuals with different care needs? .....

## Looking for specialist dementia care

If your loved one is living with dementia, they may require specialised care and support in a dementia-friendly environment with trained teams that recognise the types of dementia and understand the person and their feelings.

If you are looking for specialist dementia care, there are some additional things to consider when selecting your ideal care home:

- Does the home have a dedicated, dementia-friendly environment? .....
- Do all staff members receive specialist dementia training? .....
- Does the home promote independence where possible? .....   
(e.g. themed corridors to assist with orientation and alleviate anxiety, different colour bathroom doors for easy identification, and opportunity to continue every day tasks such as setting the table.)
- Does the home invest in sensory environments that improve well-being and engagement and aid relaxation? .....   
(e.g. light projection games, sensory rooms, rummage boxes and robotic pets)

## Home comforts

The quality of care for your loved one is a top priority, but you also want them to feel comfortable and at home in their new surroundings.



- Are the bedrooms tastefully decorated and do they include comfortable furnishings? Do they have en-suite facilities that meet your loved one's needs? ...
- Are residents welcome to personalise their rooms with their own belongings? ...
- Are there a variety of living spaces to choose from in the home? .....   
(e.g. lounges, quiet rooms, dining rooms, outside sitting areas)
- Does the home offer facilities to encourage positive well-being or to relax? .....   
(e.g. hair salon, beauty salon, spa bathroom)
- Are refreshments and freshly baked goods available daily in a café area to enjoy with others? .....
- Does the home have an outdoor space for residents to enjoy? .....

## The team

A caring and capable team of staff is not only important for your loved one's health and well-being, but is also a comfort to family and friends.



- Were the team knowledgeable and friendly? Did they make you feel welcome? .....
- Were you offered refreshments? .....
- Did you meet key team members including the General Manager as part of your visit? .....
- Were you informed of the ways the home keeps in contact with relatives? .....   
(e.g. resident and relative meetings, newsletters, Facebook page, surveys.)

## Dining experience



A choice of food that is as delicious as it is nutritious is important to your loved one's health and well-being, coupled with a dining experience that is enjoyable.

- Are residents offered a choice of seasonal menus each day? .....
- Are dishes freshly prepared on-site by trained chefs? .....
- Do the chefs meet with residents to discuss their preferences and ensure special diets are catered for? .....
- Are drinks and home-made snacks always available, even during the night?.....
- Can residents eat in their own rooms if they prefer?.....
- Do residents enjoy sociable, restaurant-style dining?.....
- Are visitors welcome to have a meal with their loved one? .....
- If the home offers dementia care, are staff well-trained to provide a supportive dining experience that isn't rushed and aids nutritional well-being? .....

## Gardens & outdoor spaces



Gardens can offer so many things – a spot to relax, a place to socialise and for green-fingered residents, a chance to enjoy independence and continue doing the things they love.

- Is the garden well-kept? .....
- Is there a choice of outdoor seating for residents to relax and socialise? .....
- Are the gardens accessible to suit your loved one's needs?.....
- Are the gardens used for activities, exercise and events?.....
- Is there opportunity for residents to participate in gardening activities? .....   
(such as planting bulbs and seeds, and growing fruit and vegetables)
- If you are considering a room on the ground floor, does the home have bedrooms with direct access to the gardens? .....

## Life-enriching experiences



It's reassuring to know that your loved one is enjoying new experiences and continuing to do the things they've always loved.

- Does the home take the time to understand the residents' interests and hobbies to ensure these are maintained, along with any connections outside of the home .....   
(e.g. the bowls club, a church service or a weekly visit to the pub)
- Does the home offer new activities, events, outings, community connections and experiences for residents to enjoy? .....
- Does the home organise a range of activities each week that are engaging and meaningful?.....
- Is there a choice of activities on offer, including group and one-to-one options? .....
- Are regular trips out of the home arranged to local places of interest and to suit resident choice? .....
- Does the home invite a range of professional entertainers and groups to the home for performances?.....
- Are there a mix of virtual and in-person events, performances and interactive demonstrations available? .....
- Does the home invest in technology for entertainment and to keep families connected? .....   
(From Smart TVs, to digital tablets for emails and video calls)

## Fees

It's always important to take care home fees and any additional costs in to account when selecting a home for a loved one.

- How much is the weekly fee? .....
- Is there a deposit to pay? If so, how much? .....
- Are there any additional costs? .....   
(e.g. for hairdressing, chiropody, staff accompaniment to medical appointments)

Mum was so happy today and felt very cared for. When we left I remarked to my brother that today really confirmed for us that mum was in the right place! Thanks to your wonderful staff.



When I visit the home it is clean, calm and organised. As a relative, this shows me that it's a homely environment for my dad to live.



For more information on homes in your area and details of the services we provide, please visit:

[www.barchester.com](http://www.barchester.com)

01917 317 664



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