Choosing a Care Home A Helpful Guide

The following guide to Choosing a Care Home lists out specific stages from a to z - covering everything from researching the best local care homes, sorting the finances to settling into a new home life.

The groundwork

When you decide a care home might be the best solution to meet the needs of your loved one, this will be the first of many tough decisions. This is the time for research, the thorough you are, the better.

- Search the internet to find care homes in your area. The local paper is a good place to start, as many homes advertise.
- Ask your local GP for recommendations, as well as friends and family. Word of mouth is powerful - a great home will have a good reputation.
- Call each home and visit their website to gather information, plus order a brochure.
- Broach the subject about finding a care home with your loved one. Keep them involved in the decision-making process.

Carebase can help you by...

giving you a good idea of the services it offers through a comprehensive website. It will answer many of your questions and will probably throw up many more. You can email or call any of our homes - our teams are happy to help.

Viewing homes firsthand

Once you've sifted through the literature, you will soon see what you like and dislike. Don't discard homes purely on the material itself. The only way to get a real feel of a care home is by paying a visit.

- Shortlist the best homes and make appointments to see the managers.
- Do your homework take a list of questions you want answered to the visit. It will ensure specific areas get addressed.
- Take in everything the décor, level of staff, quality of food, facilities, activities to occupy residents and how families integrate into the home.
- Go to the 'show round' without your loved one to ensure your first impressions our good before they visit.

Carebase can help you by...

having home managers on hand to show you around the home and answer your questions. You can visit and call the home whenever you like to ask any additional questions.

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Making the numbers work

Paying for the care of your loved one is a big commitment and will require sound financial planning. Keep on top of this from the start to ensure fees are within your budget and there are no surprises later.

- Check the literature you receive includes fees. If they are not clear, then clarify this at the initial meeting.
- Confirm whether the fees listed are the total amount, whether they increase on a year-by-year basis, and if so, by how much.
- Check whether your loved one is entitled to governmental benefits or funding to assist in paying for the care.
- Explore whether the home has payment options, and if so, which one works for you.

Carebase can help you by...

putting you in touch with the independent advisory service Care Awareness, an organisation we have teamed up with, to offer free advice on paying for elderly care. It will help you find out whether your loved one is entitled to any benefits, and related services.

The personal care plan

Every good care home should produce a comprehensive care plan detailing everything about the resident, from care to dietary needs.

- Check the care home will produce a personal care plan and ensure you are involved in the compilation of this.
- Give the care home as much information as possible, as this is incredibly valuable to ensure care is tailored to your loved one's needs.

Carebase can help you by...

creating a care plan for each individual which is regularly updated. This is a very detailed document which includes the resident's care and dietary requirements, as well as life history, favourite foods, interests, likes and dislikes.

Life at the home

The role of a care home should not just be to provide great care. It should be about creating new memories, having lots of fun and making friends for life.

- Find out whether the home has a varied and regularly updated activities programme.
- Check how the home settles new residents in and help them to get to know fellow residents.
- Make sure the home has access with the outside world, like regular outings or links with the local community.

Carebase can help you by...

providing a wide and interesting programme of activities to suit all tastes, which is pulled together by dedicated activities co-ordinators. We bring in entertainers and organise regular outings locally and further afield. Notes

Family life

Family time should be part and parcel of any care home. Considering you will be spending a great deal of time there, you need to ensure there are provisions made to do so.

- Check there aren't specific visiting times.
- Check how families are integrated into the home.
- Make sure there are designated spaces, so if and when you want some private time with your loved one, you can do so.

Carebase can help you by...

welcoming families into our homes at all times. We believe family is important and like to integrate them into our homes as much as possible. There are spaces for intimate gatherings and families are invited to the many events we host.

The right home

Now is the time to take your loved one and family to the shortlisted homes, before making a decision on the best one.

- Narrow down the homes to the one or two you are really happy with.
- Go with your gut instinct you will know when the home is the right one.
- Once you've decided on the one, visit them again and at different times of the day.
- Sample the menu.

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adopting an open door policy where you can visit as many times as you like, whenever you like, to help make your decision.

Moving home

Once you've chosen the right care facility, then comes the preparation to move your loved one out of their home and into the new one.

- Find out from the care home what belongings they can take with them and make preparations to organise this.
- Work closely with the home to help your loved one settle into their new surroundings.
- Make sure personal mementoes and prized possessions are integrated into the new environment.

Carebase can help you by...

ensuring that you and your loved one receives all the support you need. We understand this is an emotional time and are very experienced in making the transition as smooth as possible.



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