

Care Home Visit Checklist

Helpful questions to ask - and the little things worth noticing

Care home: _____	Date of visit: _____
Visited with: _____	Person looking for care: _____

You do not need to ask every question. Tick the ones that matter most to you, add your own notes and trust what you notice while you are there. A care home visit is about the answers you receive - but it is also about how the home feels.

1. Care and support

Start with what the person needs now and what they may need later.

- ☐ What types of care do you provide?

- ☐ How will you assess the person's individual needs?

- ☐ Can you continue to support them if their needs change?

- ☐ How often are care plans reviewed?

- ☐ How are residents and families involved in care decisions?

- ☐ How do you learn about a new resident's routines, preferences and life story?

- ☐ How do you work with GPs, community nurses and other health professionals?

- ☐ What happens if the home later feels it can no longer meet the person's needs?

2. Everyday life

Look beyond the timetable and ask what an ordinary day is really like.

- ☐ What activities and social opportunities are available?

- ☐ How do you find out what each resident enjoys?

- ☐ Can residents continue with existing hobbies and interests?

- ☐ Are there outings and opportunities to stay connected with the local community?

- ☐ What is available for someone who prefers quieter or one-to-one activities?

- ☐ Can residents spend time outdoors when they choose?

☐ How are birthdays, celebrations and important cultural occasions marked?

3. Choice and independence

The home should work around the individual wherever possible.

- ☐ Can residents choose when they get up and go to bed?
- ☐ Can they decide where and when they eat?
- ☐ What happens if someone does not want to join an activity?
- ☐ How are personal routines, beliefs and cultural preferences respected?
- ☐ Can residents safely come and go from their room and shared areas?
- ☐ How do you support residents to do as much as they can for themselves?

4. Bedrooms and surroundings

- ☐ Can we see the type of bedroom that may be available?
- ☐ Is the room en suite?
- ☐ Can residents bring furniture, pictures and treasured belongings?
- ☐ Is there enough space for visitors to sit comfortably?
- ☐ How does the call-bell system work?
- ☐ Can couples live together?
- ☐ Are the gardens and shared spaces accessible for people with limited mobility?

5. Food and drink

- ☐ Is there a choice at every mealtime?
- ☐ What happens if a resident does not like what is being served?
- ☐ Are snacks and drinks available throughout the day and night?
- ☐ How do you cater for allergies, medical diets, cultural preferences and smaller appetites?
- ☐ Can meals be served in a resident's bedroom or somewhere quieter?
- ☐ How are residents supported if they need help eating or drinking?

☐ Can relatives occasionally join their loved one for a meal?

6. The team and communication

- ☐ Who will be the main point of contact for our family?
- ☐ Will the resident have a named carer or key worker?
- ☐ How are staffing levels decided during the day and overnight?
- ☐ What training and ongoing support do team members receive?
- ☐ How do staff get to know each resident as a person?
- ☐ How and when will the family receive updates?
- ☐ How are changes in health, medication or wellbeing communicated?
- ☐ Who should we speak to if we have a question, worry or complaint?

7. Family visits and staying connected

- ☐ Are there set visiting times or can families visit more flexibly?
- ☐ Are children and pets welcome?
- ☐ Are there private spaces where families can spend time together?
- ☐ Can residents go out for family occasions, appointments or days out?
- ☐ Are relatives invited to activities, events and celebrations?
- ☐ How do you help residents keep in touch with people who live further away?

Notes from this page

8. Fees and practical details

It is fine to ask detailed questions. Families need clear information.

- ☐ What is included in the weekly fee?
- ☐ Which services or items cost extra?
- ☐ Are activities, laundry, toiletries and transport included?
- ☐ Are hairdressing, chiropody and accompanied appointments charged separately?
- ☐ How often are fees reviewed and how much notice is given?
- ☐ How have fees changed in previous years?
- ☐ Will the fee increase if care needs change?
- ☐ Is a deposit or payment in advance required?
- ☐ What happens to the fees if a resident is admitted to hospital?
- ☐ What notice period applies if circumstances change?

9. Before moving in

- ☐ Who carries out the pre-admission assessment?
- ☐ Can the assessment take place at home or in hospital?
- ☐ What information should the resident and family provide?
- ☐ Can the person visit again or spend time at the home before moving in?
- ☐ Is respite care available as a way to get to know the home?
- ☐ How will the team help the resident settle during the first few days and weeks?
- ☐ Can family members help prepare and personalise the bedroom?

Notes from this page

10. What to notice while you are there

Some of the most important answers may not be spoken aloud.

- ☐ Are you greeted warmly when you arrive?
- ☐ Do residents appear relaxed, comfortable and engaged?
- ☐ Do staff use residents' names and speak with warmth and respect?
- ☐ Do team members stop to chat, listen and respond without appearing rushed?
- ☐ Do staff knock before entering bedrooms and protect residents' privacy?
- ☐ Does the home smell fresh and feel clean without feeling clinical?
- ☐ Can you see signs of residents' personalities, interests and daily lives?
- ☐ Are managers and team members open when answering questions?
- ☐ Could you picture the person you love feeling safe and known here?

After the visit	Yes	Not sure
The home can meet the person's current needs.	☐	☐
The team explained how changing needs would be supported.	☐	☐
Residents appeared relaxed, comfortable and respected.	☐	☐
Staff were warm, patient and unhurried.	☐	☐
We received clear information about fees and next steps.	☐	☐
My overall instinct about the home is positive.	☐	☐

Overall feeling about the home

1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○

1 = not right for us 5 = very positive

What stood out? What would you like to ask next?

