

CHOOSING A RESIDENTIAL HOME

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If you are thinking of moving into residential care remember this may be your home for many years. Take your time before making a decision, don't be pressurised. Talk to friends, relatives, your solicitor, social worker or G.P. Consider all the alternatives, including:

- Staying in your own home, perhaps with assistance from social services, home helps, meals on wheels etc.; you may be entitled to a grant for handrails, adaptations to your home etc.
- Living with relatives
- Sheltered or warden-aided housing
- Moving to a more suitable property (such as a bungalow) - selling your home and buying a cheaper one to release capital and make it easier to run.
- Residential or nursing care (or a dual home combining both)

If Residential Care seems the best option:

- Contact Social Services and arrange an assessment of both your physical needs and finances. Even if you qualify for financial assistance this will not be paid above the level which you need
- Check your finances:
 - what additional benefits (if any) are available
 - will social services let you remain in your chosen home if your funds run out?
 - do you qualify for disability allowance
- Get a list of **registered** homes in the area from social services or consult a care homes directory at the library
- Draw up a short list of homes which seem most suitable; contact the Social Services' registration and inspection unit and ask to see the inspection reports for those which interest you
- Contact the homes you like and ask for a copy of their brochure, including current fees and terms of residence. Is there a vacancy, or a waiting list?

- Arrange a visit; take someone with you so you can compare notes later on. Take your time; have a good look round and talk to the owner, staff, residents and visitors
- Arrange a trial stay (3-4 weeks) in the home you like best
- Don't sell your house or give up your tenancy until you have a permanent place to stay and are sure you will be happy in your new home
- You are entitled to receive from the Home a formal contract setting out your rights and responsibilities. Ask for one if you are contributing towards your care fees. Staff at Larken & Co. will be happy to go through this with you if there is anything you do not understand

When visiting homes on your short list - do not be afraid to ask questions - the following notes may be of use:



Accessibility

- ◇ Is the home convenient for shops, churches, post office etc.?
- ◇ What is the public transport like?
- ◇ Is it a quiet neighbourhood, or near a busy road?
- ◇ How easy is it to enter, leave and move about inside the home?



Visitors

- ◇ Is there enough car parking space for visitors?
- ◇ Are visiting time restricted?
- ◇ Can visitors see you in private?
- ◇ Can they take you on trips?
- ◇ Can you make drinks for visitors in your own room?



Accommodation

- ◇ What is your overall impression - is it warm, clean and friendly?
- ◇ What is the policy regarding smoking, pets and alcohol?
- ◇ What is the garden like; how much can you use it?

- ◇ Are there handrails and lifts to help you manoeuvre corridors and stairs?
- ◇ What is the bedroom like:
 - will it be a single or shared room?
 - what facilities does it have?
 - is there enough cupboard space?
 - are the bed and chairs comfortable?
 - can you bring your own furniture, pictures etc.?
 - what is the view like?
 - will you have a key?
 - do the staff knock before entering?
- ◇ How easy will it be to get to and use the bathroom/toilet?
- ◇ What arrangements are there for the use of telephones - do you pay for calls you make? Will you be overheard?
- ◇ Is the furniture arrangement in the lounge relaxing:
 - do residents have their 'own' place?
 - are all the chairs arranged round the edge of the room or can you chat in small groups?



Meals

- ◇ Are meal-times rigid or flexible?
- ◇ Do people always sit at the same table?
- ◇ Can you sit on your own, or have a meal in your own room?
- ◇ Is there a choice of meals, and do they sound appetising?
- ◇ How often is the menu varied? Ask to see this week's selection
- ◇ Will your special dietary needs (if any) be catered for?
- ◇ Can visitors join you for a meal?
- ◇ What happens if you fancy a snack or drink at any time?



Care

- ◇ If your health deteriorates, will you have to change homes?
- ◇ Who is the doctor?

- ◇ How often do physiotherapists, chiropodists, hairdressers etc. visit - are these costs included in your care fees?
- ◇ Who looks after your tablets/medication?
- ◇ Are you free to choose when you get up/go to bed?
- ◇ Does the home have its own transport?
- ◇ What social activities and entertainments (inside and outside the home) are provided for residents?
- ◇ Will you be able to continue any of your own hobbies?



Finances

- ◇ Check the current fee rates and arrangements for payment
- ◇ When and how are fees reviewed?
- ◇ What services do they cover; what extras will you have to pay for?
- ◇ Do you pay a retainer whilst away on holiday or in hospital?
- ◇ What happens about fees when you die?
- ◇ Can you keep control of your pension book?
- ◇ What will happen if you are no longer able to pay the full cost of your fees?
- ◇ Are there safe-keeping facilities for personal valuables and cash?
- ◇ Do you insure your own personal possessions?



Residents

- ◇ Are the present residents happy?
- ◇ How many are physically frail or mentally infirm?
- ◇ Do residents have a say in how the home is run?
- ◇ Are you happy with the age range and ratio of male to female residents?



Management and Staff

- ◇ Who owns the home; will you be able to get on with them?
- ◇ Is it registered as a residential or nursing home, or both?

- ◇ Can you see a copy of their latest inspection report?
- ◇ Do the staff seem pleasant and smartly dressed?
- ◇ Do the staff treat residents with respect and dignity?
- ◇ Are staff constantly busy, or able to find time for a chat?



General

- ◇ Can you stay for a trial period, and on what terms?
- ◇ Do you have a written contract?
- ◇ How much notice do you have to give if you want to leave?
- ◇ Can the home owners ask you to leave?
- ◇ What is the procedure regarding complaints, breakages, etc.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY:
WILL YOU BE HAPPY IN THE HOME?**

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs D K Ryan, Mrs C M P Watson or Mrs K M Smith on Newark (01636) 703333



This pamphlet is intended as a general guide only. Our advice should be sought on specific issues.