

# CHECKLIST 2019

Eligibility into Residential Aged Care is determined by a Needs Assessment. Have you been assessed? If not, contact your doctor or the Assessment service at your District Health Board for further information.

There is no such as the ‘best’ rest home or hospital; what suits one person doesn’t suit another. All of the following are important when choosing a residential care facility and you will have your own priorities. Remember however, as the purpose of residential care is to provide care, it is the philosophy and delivery of care however that is the most important element.

Download and print the checklist below to help you make the best decision. The list is not exhaustive. We suggest you shortlist from [www.eldernet.co.nz](http://www.eldernet.co.nz) and visit at least three facilities before making your choice.

Name of Home or Hospital.....

Name of site guide/contact person.....

Contact number..... Date(s) visited.....

## Atmosphere

Staff should show warmth and empathy with residents. There should be a noticeable involvement in quiet conversation and/or busier activities rather than residents sitting around the edge of the lounge where it is difficult to connect with others. The home/hospital should have a comfortable, inviting and confident feel about it.

- Do the residents appear happy and well cared for?
- Are they treated with respect by the staff?
- Do staff ‘get on’ well? Staff dynamics reflect the ‘culture’ of the home.
- How are visitors greeted and treated?
- Do staff involve residents in the life of the home in a sensitive manner?
- Is the facility clean, warm, odour free?

## Rooms

Residents’ rooms should be clean, comfortable and have enough floor space. Consider how practical a full ensuite might be. It may not be essential, especially if you need full assistance with your personal care. Communal areas should be accessible for your dining, relaxation and activity needs.

- Is there space for your own furniture and other personal items?
- Is there an additional cost for the room you’re considering?
- Are you able to adjust the heating in your room to suit yourself?
- Are rooms sunny and well lit, with an outside window?
- Are toilets close by and easily accessible?
- Is there easy access between areas, e.g. no difficult stairs?

## Care

A current, regularly updated care plan for each resident should be kept by the staff.

- How will you and those closest to you be involved in your care plan?
- What are the Registered Nurse hours and the carer-to-resident ratio?
- Is there regular input from other health professionals, e.g. a physiotherapist?
- What qualifications do the caregivers have?
- What are the conditions relating to having your own GP? (If you keep your own GP, you may find this costs more.) Is it practical to keep your GP?
- Is there a house GP on call at all times?
- If your level of care changes will you have to move to another room/facility?

## Activities

There should be a range of activities for those who wish to be involved and alternatives for those who do not. Some homes provide opportunities for residents to be more involved in the activities of the home, such as serving up their own meals, being involved in the planning of activities, etc. A list of the week's activities, outings or events should be on display.

- What qualifications does the activities coordinator hold?
- How meaningful are the activities?
- Is there an activities programme displayed? Who decides on the programme?
- How frequent are the outings? Are there any associated costs?
- How well are individual interests catered for? What provision is there to pursue individual interests, e.g. gardening, woodwork or going to your club?

## Meals

Meals should be varied, interesting, nutritious and appropriate. (eg. some people may require a soft diet.) A daily menu should be on display.

- Are the meals nutritious, appetising and the quantities sufficient for you?
- Are there choices at meal times?
- Can you help yourself to drinks, fruit or snacks at any time?
- Can a relative/friend join you for morning/afternoon tea or main meals occasionally? If so, is there a cost?
- Can you have meals in your room?

## Safety

The facility should have systems and procedures in place to ensure resident safety. Staff should be confident with all emergency drills.

- Is the nurse-call button within easy reach? Is it answered promptly?
- Are the building/s and grounds secured at night?
- How often are fire and emergency drills held?
- Do staff have residents' emergency next of kin contact details? Where are these kept and can they be accessed if the building is evacuated?
- If you have an accident, how is this managed? (It should be recorded, next of kin informed, generally, and steps taken to prevent it happening again).
- What does the facility do to ensure safe medicine management?
- What are staffing levels like at night or over the weekend?
- Who fills in for staff when they are absent? (Good staff cover should be arranged)
- What is the staff training schedule? Is a quality programme used?
- What system do staff have for updating each other between shifts?

## Dignity, privacy and independence

Residents should be encouraged to retain their individuality and make their own decisions. The things that have been important to the person in the past, e.g. applying makeup, shaving, etc. should be maintained, wherever possible, as this helps them retain their dignity.

- Who controls your personal finances?
- How well is resident privacy managed?
- Do staff knock and wait for an invitation before entering residents' rooms?
- How well are individual preferences catered for, e.g. are bedtimes flexible?
- Do you choose what to wear for the day?
- How often can you shower?
- Can you have your own telephone, computer or TV in your room?

- Do residents have a collective voice, i.e. is there a residents' committee?
- How are residents' ethnic, cultural and spiritual values and beliefs respected and upheld?

## Audits and Reporting

The Ministry of Health now provides all audits online for the public to view.

- Do you know how long Certification has been granted for. (Longer periods i.e. 3-4 years generally indicate greater compliance with standards and requirements.) Ask about any audit shortfalls.
- Do you know what the complaints process is? Ask residents and their relatives about their experiences. (Residents have the right to make a complaint.)
- Does the service publish results from their in-house surveys? Can you view these?

## Costs

You are responsible to pay for your care. A subsidy may be available to those who qualify.

- Do you need to apply for a Residential Care Subsidy or Loan?
- Have you received the paperwork from your service/care coordinator?
- Have you agreed to any additional costs?
- Are these itemised on your Admission agreement and included in your budget?
- Are any additional charges separable (able to be stopped without affecting which room you have) or are there wider implications?
- Are there notice periods if you wish to stop paying for additional services?

## Extra questions for specialised dementia care facilities

If specialised dementia or hospital care is required, the need will be determined by a psychogeriatric assessment undertaken by mental health personnel. Family/whānau support will also be provided. The specialised nature of this service means that staff working in these areas should have had appropriate training. When considering specialised care options there are other/extra issues to consider:

- Do staff regularly interact in a warm and caring way with residents?
- How accessible are staff? What is registered nursing staff cover like?
- How is the resident's dignity maintained? Are key relatives/former carers involved in making or revising care plans?
- Are residents engaged in meaningful activities? How do staff oversee these?
- How is respectfulness shown to residents?
- How is restraint monitored? (There should be a written policy on restraint.)
- How are behaviours that challenge managed? (Such behaviour often indicates the person is distressed about something. Skilled care and management can often determine what this is and alleviate it.)
- How will the service manage the person's changing needs over time?
- Is the physical environment such that residents can move about freely?

## Finally

You may find it useful to rate the home or hospital on this scale. (Perhaps weight these factors differently according to your own priorities and add any other criteria that are important to you.)

Atmosphere	/10	Safety	/10
Rooms	/10	Dignity, privacy and independence	/10
Care	/10	Audits and reporting	/10
Activities	/10	Costs	/10
Meals	/10	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/90</b>