

eldernet

residential care

CHECKLIST- THINGS TO CONSIDER

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 thing 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 that as the purpose of residential care is to provide care, it is the philosophy and delivery of care that is the most important element.

Use this checklist to help you make the best decision. The list is not exhaustive. We suggest you shortlist from 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 care home 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 can 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 home 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?
- ☐ 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? Any 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 caregiver-to-resident ratio?
- ☐ Is there regular input from other health professionals, such as a physiotherapist?
- ☐ What qualifications do the caregivers have?
- ☐ What are the conditions relating to having your own GP? Is it practical? If you keep your own GP, you may find this costs more.
- ☐ Is there a house GP on call at all times?
- ☐ If your level of care changes, will you have to move to another room/care home?

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 you to be more involved in the activities of the home, such as serving up your own meals or being involved in the planning of activities. 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?

MEALS

Meals should be varied, interesting, nutritious and appropriate. A daily menu should be on display.

- ☐ Are the meals nutritious and appetising? Are the quantities sufficient for you?
- ☐ Can you help yourself to drinks, fruit, or snacks at any time?
- ☐ Are there choices at meal times?
- ☐ 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 care home 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?
- ☐ Are the building/s and grounds secured at night?
- ☐ How often are fire and emergency drills held?
- ☐ How do staff keep the emergency contact details of next of kin updated?
- ☐ 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 care home 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 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 & INDEPENDENCE

- ☐ Who controls your personal finances?
- ☐ How well is your privacy managed?
- ☐ Do staff knock and wait for an invitation before entering your room?
- ☐ How well are individual preferences catered for? Are bedtimes flexible?
- ☐ Do you choose what to wear for the day?
- ☐ Are your sexual preferences, ethnic, cultural and spiritual values, and beliefs and lifestyles respected and upheld?
- ☐ How often can you shower?
- ☐ Can you have your own telephone, computer or TV in your room?
- ☐ Do residents have a collective voice, such as a residents' committee?

DEMENTIA CARE & PSYCHOGERIATRIC CARE

If specialised dementia or hospital care is required, the need will be determined by a psychogeriatric assessment 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 issues to consider:

- ☐ Do staff regularly interact in a warm and caring way with residents?
- ☐ How accessible are staff? How often are Registered Nurses on duty?
- ☐ How is the resident's dignity maintained? How is respect shown?
- ☐ Are key relatives/former carers involved in making or revising care plans?
- ☐ Are residents engaged in meaningful activities? How do staff oversee these?
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Are any restraints used? If so, ask the provider to explain their policy.
- ☐ How will the service manage the resident's changing needs over time?
- ☐ Is the physical environment such that residents can move about freely?

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CHECKLIST

AUDITS AND REPORTING

The Ministry of Health now provides all audits online for the public to view. You can find these on www.eldernet.co.nz.

- ☐ 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?

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).

NOTES

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