

# CHECKLIST

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 towards residents who should be involved in the life of the home.

- Do the residents appear happy and well cared for?
- Are they treated with respect by the staff?
- How do staff relate to one another?
- 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 warm and have enough floor space.

- If you are considering a particular room, 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 personally adjust the heating?
- Are rooms sunny and well lit, with an outside window?
- Are toilets close by and easily accessible?
- Is there easy access between areas?

## 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?
- 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

An activity programme should consider the needs of all residents.

- What qualifications does the activities coordinator hold?
- 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.

- 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.

- 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 a resident has an accident, how is this managed?
- 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?
- 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.

- 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?
- Do staff make sure that the things are important to you are maintained e.g. applying makeup for some women, shaving for men etc.?
- How often can you shower?
- Can you have your own telephone/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?
- 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

When considering specialised care options there are other extra issues to consider:

- Do staff regularly interact in a respectful, warm and caring way with residents?
- Does the home operate a specialised dementia programme e.g Eden Alternative, Spark of Life etc.?
- Is there a collaborative relationship with family e.g. are they involved in making or revising care plans?
- Are residents engaged in meaningful activities? How do staff oversee these?
- Do staff manage behaviour that bothers them or other residents in a skilled and sensitive way? What do they do if they can't manage? (There should be a policy to minimise the use of restraint.)
- Are staff members qualifications displayed? (Staff should be well qualified and their training ongoing.)
- Is there a plan for how the service will manage the person's changing needs over time?
- Is there free and easy access to parts of the building and grounds?
- Is the home designed to help residents orientate themselves and decrease anxiety? e.g. Are there visual cues (e.g. common symbol of toilet on toilet door) and few locked doors and 'dead-ends'?

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

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