

Choosing an aged care facility – the essential checklist



When it comes time to organise aged care services for a family member, we may find ourselves confused by the options available and under pressure to make the best choice.

With this checklist, you can be sure you note down your first impressions and have a list of questions close at hand to help you make an informed choice. Print out as many as you need so you have a record of each community and facility you visit.

Name of aged care community/facility: _____

Contact person: _____

First impressions

- Does it feel clean and inviting?
- Do the bedroom and living areas feel spacious?
- Do the staff seem friendly?
- Do the residents appear happy and well cared for?
- Is there some activity in the common and outside areas?
- What community facilities are available?
- Did you feel welcome and at home when you were walking around the community?
- Did you feel comfortable asking questions and that these questions were well answered?

Questions to ask

Aged Care delivery, staffing and quality

- Do you provide all levels of care?
- Do you have personalised care plans for each resident?
- Does the resident and family have involvement in the care plan process?
- Do I get to keep a copy of the care plan?
- How often is the care plan assessed and updated?
- What happens if my care needs change?
- Will I need to move if my care needs change?
- Can residents keep their chosen doctor and specialists?
- Can I access health services such as GPs, podiatrists and physiotherapists on site?
- Do you provide support for palliative and end of life care?
- How do you ensure there's the right amount of staff available?
- Is there continuity of staff offered?
- Can residents choose their own morning and evening routines?

- What happens in the event of an emergency?
- What role do registered nurses have in care/service delivery?
- How can family and friends be involved in care delivery?
- Can my family provide some of the services for me if I choose? Will this reduce my costs?
- Do you have a 24-hour emergency call system?
- Are staff available on-site 24/7?
- What is your approach to supporting individuals and couples where one or both are diagnosed with dementia?

Food

- What food is provided?
- Are meals cooked fresh on premises?
- How often does the menu change?
- How do you cater for particular dietary requirements?
- Do residents have alternatives if they don't like what's on the menu?
- Does every resident have to attend meal service in the dining room?
- Can family members join in for meals?
- Are there special meal events for special occasions?
- Is alcohol available?

Accommodation

- What are the conditions of my accommodation (free-hold, rent, lease, bond, government funded) and what are my rights and responsibilities?
- What is included with the room/apartment? (furnishings, television, whitegoods, internet, phone and pay TV services)
- What kind of adapted furnishings or equipment can be supplied?
- Is there airconditioning and are there individual controls?
- What security is there available?
- What design or safety elements are fitted or can be used in the room/apartment?
- Can residents bring their own furniture and personal items?
- Are all rooms/apartments wheelchair accessible?

Lifestyle and community

- What lifestyle activities are available?
- What special services do you offer such as hairdresser, chapel, café, transport or internet access?
- Are activities mandatory or do you have a choice of what activities you do?
- If a resident chooses to stay in their room/apartment, how often are they checked on?
- How do you encourage physical activity and exercise?
- Are residents encouraged to make suggestions for or run their own lifestyle programs?
- Can you bring pets?
- Is the building equipped for easy mobility?

Visits and communication

- What is your policy about complaints and concerns?
- What is your preferred form of communication with family members?
- Do residents have a phone?
- Who is my best point of contact to enquire about a resident?
- When can I visit? Are there any restrictions on visiting hours?
- Can family, including grandchildren stay over and for how long?

Payments

- What is my upfront cost?
- What is my weekly payment?
- How and when is this charged?
- How is my care funded? What is the upfront or ongoing cost for this?
- What other costs will I need to cover in addition to these fees?
- What fees do I need to pay on exit?
- Do any penalty fees/interest apply?

Notes
