

GUIDE TO CHOOSING A PRIVATE NURSING HOME

If you are looking for nursing home care for yourself or a loved one, you will naturally wish to have access to as much information as possible about your options, or about a nursing home you may be considering. Up to 30th June 2009, The HSE was responsible for inspecting private nursing homes across Ireland and posted reports of its inspections on this site. From 1st July 2009, all designated centres, including Health Service Executive (HSE) run centres, private and voluntary centres are subject to independent inspection by Health Information and Quality Authority.

The guide is designed to help you make informed decisions about nursing home care, whether you are planning ahead or need to make an unexpected decision. Choosing a nursing home can be very stressful for you and your loved ones. It is helpful to plan ahead, consider all your long term options, and make good financial plans early. Planning ahead gives you and your family more control.

Before you get started

You may have other long term care options like community services or home care depending on your resources and needs. Before choosing a nursing home, see if one of these other choices might be better for you or if they might help after a short nursing home stay.

If you are helping another person

Helping another person choose a nursing home or make other long term care choices can be difficult. Your support is important and can help your loved one adjust to getting a new service or living in a new setting like a nursing home. Be sure to include the person you are helping when making decisions whenever possible. Always make decisions with their needs and preferences in mind.

Step One

Check the HSE/HIQA website for a list of nursing homes in your areas. Ask people you trust if they have had personal experience with nursing homes, they may be able to recommend one for you.

Step Two

Compare the quality of nursing homes you are considering. Look at the inspection reports. These reports should not be used in isolation as they reflect a moment in time but they can assist you in making an informed decision.

Step 3

Visit the nursing homes you are interested in or have someone visit for you. A visit gives you the chance to see the residents, staff and nursing home setting. Before you visit, consider what is important to you. Don't be afraid to ask questions, ask the staff to explain anything you see and hear that you don't understand, ask who to call if you have further questions. Visit the nursing home a second time on a different day and at a different time than when you first visited the nursing home. Try to visit during late morning or midday. This allows you to see the residents when they are in their daily routine, mealtimes and what activities are taking place. You may need to make an appointment in advance prior to your initial visit.

Take a copy of the Nursing Home checklist with you; this will give you as an observer a general idea of the quality of care in a nursing home.

Nursing Home Checklist

Name of Nursing Home: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Basic Information	Yes	No	Comments
The nursing home is registered with HIQA			
Is there a brochure available			
The nursing home has the level of care you need, Is there a bed available. Is there a waiting list.			
Can the nursing home provide care for those with special needs e.g. dementia, disability, residents who wander.			
The nursing home is located close enough for friends and family to visit.			
The nursing home appears clean and well kept			
Noise levels in common areas are comfortable			
The temperature in the nursing home is comfortable for residents			
What are the arrangements for visiting in the home			
Are there areas available for family members to visit privately?			
Care plan meetings are held with residents and family members at times that are convenient, whenever possible			
Are residents allowed to make choices about their daily routines			
Each resident has storage space			
The nursing home is free from overwhelming unpleasant odours			
There are policies and procedures to protect residents possessions			
Are there smoke detectors in the rooms and hallways			
Does the nursing home accept			

residents who smoke Smoking regulations are in place and are acceptable			
Clinical Care			
What is the management structure in the home?			
Does the nursing home have therapy services available?			
Is there access to chiropody services /optical services etc in the home?			
Is it near your relatives own GP and if not What medical arrangements are in place? Under what circumstances does the facility call the family or doctor			
How are medical emergencies handled			
Does the nursing home have a policy on self medication			
What are the arrangements for ensuring that assessed health needs are reviewed and met?			
Staff			
The relationship between staff and the residents appears to be warm, polite and respectful			
All staff wear name badges			
Are the staff visible and actively engaging with residents			
The nursing homes does background checks on all staff			
Are there adequate staff What is the staff to resident ratio			
The nursing home offers a training and continuing education programme for all staff.			
Menus and Food			
Residents have a choice of food items at each meal, Are special diets provided? Are there menus available for you to look at			
Staff help residents eat and drink at mealtimes if help is needed			

Is the dining room attractive cheerful and comfortable			
Social Activities			
Is there a variety of social, cultural and educational activities? Are residents free to choose to participate			
Does the nursing home offer the religious or cultural support you need, Are arrangements made to accommodate religious worship			
Does the staff offer individual, as well as group activities, to residents who are confined to bed			
The nursing home has outdoor areas for residents to use and staff help residents to go outside			
Are outside trips planned			
What is done for holidays and birthdays			
Is there a residents committee			
Finances			
What is and what is not included in the weekly or monthly rate			
Is a deposit required			
Are their payment plans available			
Make contact with your local HSE Nursing Homes Office for advice and application forms for subvention/Nursing Home Support Scheme.			

Making arrangements to enter a nursing home

After you choose a nursing home, you will need to make the arrangements for admission. When you contact the nursing home, it's helpful to have the following information ready.

- Information on medical history
- Information on current health status
- A list of current medicines
- A list of all your health care providers
- A list of family members to call in case of emergency
- Payment information for nursing home office staff

The nursing home should have assessed/met the client to ensure they can meet their needs.