

## How to choose a Good Care Home for You or your relative

Often, the time you are asked to find a care home for yourself or a relative is a time already fraught with stress and uncertainty. By its very nature, it is a time when there has been a change, be it sudden or gradual, in the person's ability to continue to live their lives independently. Whatever the reason, finding the right care home is imperative. Most people have had no experience of the care homes sector, except all the horror stories in the media and so haven't a clue what it's important to look for, so I hope the following will be useful to some of you.

There are 4 Types of care homes for older people

- Residential Care Homes (Low dependency, no nursing needs, carers only)
- Care Homes with Nursing (Registered Nurses 24 hours a day)
- Residential Care Homes for the EMI (Elderly Mentally Infirm)
- Care Homes with Nursing for the EMI (Registered Mental Nurses (RMN) 24 hours)

What do you look for?

### 1) The Bumf – get it in writing!

A Service User's Guide - Each good Home should be able to give you one. From this you can get a good idea of what to expect day to day and the philosophy of care they operate under. Ask to look at the policies which are relevant and ensure a good, clear complaints policy.

Read the latest inspection report from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). A copy should be available at the home, or you can go on line to [www.csci.gov.uk](http://www.csci.gov.uk) and follow the links to the relevant home. This way you can read it at your leisure. This year, CSCI have started to award stars to homes,

0 – poor 1 – adequate 2 – good  
3 - excellent

The Care Plan - Ask how it works –

will they ask for your involvement in the care planning? Do they involve the resident in their care planning review? These things show a person-centred approach and should indicate a better quality home. Do they have any specially trained staff or accreditations (e.g. the GSF (Gold Standards Framework for excellence in terminal care)

The Contract – be sure to know what's included in the cost. If your relative qualifies for the Registered Nurse Care Contribution (currently £101 per week, paid directly to the nursing home) towards the cost of Qualified Nursing Care, make sure you know whether this amount is **discounted** from the fee or **added** to the fee.

### 2) The Visit -

**Just turn up.** If you want to see how the home works 'warts and all' just turn up.

Look out for:-

- A warm welcome
- Personal touches in rooms
- Privacy, and a clean but homely environment
- NO bad smells
- Do the residents look well cared for and comfortable?
- Do the staff seem to be professional and team orientated?
- Is there a happy and positive atmosphere to live in?

### 3) Remaining an individual - Day to day living

- Choice of what, when and where to eat. Ask to look at the menu; are special diets catered for, is a glass of wine or sherry offered at meal times?



- A range of activities including outings (is there transport?)
- Visitors welcome anytime
- Flexible bed times
- Religious, cultural and other needs catered for?
- Are the carers talking to and interacting with the residents?

At Melrose we strive to provide an excellent home in which our residents can live a comfortable and meaningful life, well cared for in all of the above ways. We offer respite and convalescence as well as long term care (with nursing services). There is a dedicated team of over 40 members of staff including nurses, carers, cleaners, kitchen staff, and a handyman. This ensures that residents' requirements are met day and night. An on-going training programme, keeps members of staff up to date.

If you would like any further information about choosing a home, please feel free to phone Louise Bruce (Owner - pictured above left) or Liz Seymour (Manager) on 01903 230406 or visit [www.melrosecare.org.uk](http://www.melrosecare.org.uk) **Melrose had been rated by CSCI as a 3 star home – confirming our excellence.**

