

Choosing a care home



A checklist for people with MS, family and carers

This checklist can help you ask questions about care homes. So you feel more confident you're choosing the most suitable home.

You can talk things through and find out more about getting the care and support you need from our website and our MS Help Hub.

mssociety.org.uk

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facebook.com/MSSociety



Care home name

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The location

Is the home within easy reach of family and friends?

Is it on public transport routes?

Is it near to local amenities such as shops?

Are there any busy roads that may affect noise levels?

Are there places to park for residents and for visitors?

Notes about the location

The building

Are the grounds well maintained?

Is the home well decorated?

Does the home smell fresh and clean?

Is the home appropriately decorated for people with sight difficulties?
For example are the walls painted with bright, contrasting colours? Is there enough light to read by?

Are there handrails along corridors?

Is the home fully accessible for wheelchairs? Are the corridors wide enough?
Are there any steps? Is there a lift?

Is the building safe and secure? Are there smoke detectors and fire extinguishers?

Is there a garden that residents can use?

Is there an area for storing powered wheelchairs or scooters?

Notes about the building

Facilities

Is there specialised equipment such as adjustable baths and armchairs?

Are suitable hoists available?

Are there both showers and baths available?

Are the bathrooms fully accessible?

Are arrangements for room cleaning and laundry acceptable to you?

Can valuables or personal belongings be secured?

Is there provision for partners or for relatives to stay overnight?

Notes about the facilities

Residents' rooms

Is there sufficient privacy?

Is there provision for partners or for relatives to stay overnight?

Can residents lock their own rooms?

Do residents have their own washing facilities?

Are there pleasant views from the bedroom windows?

Are residents able to alter the heating or ventilation within the room?

Does the room have a link to the alarm system within easy reach?

Are residents able to bring in their own furniture and possessions?

Do the rooms have sockets for private telephones or computers?

Can residents have their own telephone with a separate number?

Is smoking allowed within residents' rooms?

Does the home allow residents to keep pets?

Notes about the rooms

Communal or shared areas

Are there communal lounge areas with and without televisions?

Is there a separate dining room?

Is smoking allowed anywhere?

Is there a bar?

Notes about the shared areas

Staffing

In this section, ask the manager of the care home:

How many staff are there on duty day and night?

At night, are staff awake, or on call? Is there 24 hour cover?

What is the ratio of staff to residents? Ask what the recommendations are.

Is the level of trained and nursing staff adequate?

Are staff trained to meet the needs of people with MS?

Have they ever had other residents affected by MS?

Do staff seem friendly, courteous and respectful to residents?

Are residents allocated their own 'key worker'?

Notes about the staffing

Management

Inspection rating? How was the home rated on its last inspection?

Who runs the home?

Are they the owner or manager?

How long have they been in charge?

Notes about the management

Care provided

Does each resident have his or her own care plan?

Can the home offer the level and type of care needed?

Will the home be able to accommodate any increases in care needs?

Are residents able to keep their own GP if they want?

Are residents accompanied on visits to their GP or the hospital?

Do other health professionals and therapists (for example, a physiotherapist or dentist) visit the home regularly?

Notes about the care

Catering

Are there choices of menu available to residents?

Does the home cater for individual dietary needs?

Are sample menus available?

Are mealtimes flexible?

Can meals be taken in bedrooms?

Are visitors able to join mealtimes?

Is the food of good quality?

Is alcohol available or permissible?

Can residents make their own drinks or snacks?

Notes about the catering

Daily living and social life

Do residents look happy and well cared for?

Are residents of a similar age, type and/or level of disability to you/
the person you care for?

Are there set times for getting up and going to bed?

Are visitors welcome at all times?

Are there private areas other than bedrooms?

Does the home organise social events or trips out to local places of interest?

Does the home provide transport?

Are regular classes organised?

Are specific staff employed to provide a programme of activities?

Is hairdressing available and does a hairdresser visit the home?

Are residents able to attend religious services and places of worship on a regular basis?

Are residents able to pursue present hobbies or interests?

Is there a library or visiting library service?

Are daily newspapers available?

Can small items such as stamps and snacks be purchased within the home?

How much say do residents have in what events are organised?

Is there a residents' committee?

Are there regular residents' meetings?

Is there a comment and complaints procedure in place?

Notes about daily living and social life

The fees

How much are the fees?

When and how often are they reviewed?

Are they likely to go up in the near future?

Are they payable in advance or arrears?

What happens to the room if a resident goes into hospital?

What do fees include?

What extra charges might there be, for example chiropody, continence pads, therapies?

Are the fees affordable over time?

Will you need to find a third-party contribution, after help from the local authority?

Will the home accept the placement if the local authority is contributing to the fees?

Do the fees include insurance for personal belongings?

Notes about fees

The contract

Is a written contract, covering fees, services, facilities and level of care, provided to all residents?

Does it include the limits of care available within the home?

Notes about the contract

Overall

Is the atmosphere friendly and homely?

When you arrived, were you greeted in a friendly and appropriate way by staff?

Did the staff and management seem happy to talk to you?

Were you provided with a copy of the home's most recent inspection report?

Have staff asked enough questions about you or the person you care for?

Are trial stays available?

Is there any chance to get feedback from other residents and their relatives?

All things considered, do you feel that this could be a future home for you or the person you care for?