

VIVANT
CARE

OUR GUIDE
to CHOOSING
a CARE HOME



Where to begin?

Choosing a care home for yourself or a loved one is an important and deeply personal decision. It's natural to want to take your time, gather the right information, and feel confident in the choices you make.

This impartial guide can support you in exploring your care options and help you understand what to look out for in a care home setting.



What matters most?

Every situation is unique and personal to you. Before visiting any care home settings, it can be helpful to reflect on what matters most to you.

This may include:

- What level of care you or your loved one may need
- Your budget
- Your preferred location
- The environment and lifestyle

Understanding the different types of care

Home care

You may be considering whether to remain living at home with support, or to move into a care home where reassurance, companionship and full-time support are available round-the-clock.

While staying at home offers familiarity and some flexibility, a care home can provide a safe, supportive environment with consistent, personalised care, alongside opportunities for social interaction and meaningful daily experiences.

There is no right or wrong choice, only what feels right for you and your family at this moment in time.

Care homes

A care home offers round-the-clock care, which falls into four main categories:

- **Residential care** – support with day-to-day living and personal care
- **Dementia care** – support for people living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia
- **Nursing care** – round-the-clock care from a qualified nursing team for people with more complex medical needs
- **Respite care stays** – some care homes offer a flexible, short-term option, providing support for both guests and their families. Whether you're exploring long-term care or simply need a short-term holiday, it can be an ideal solution

Some homes provide all types of care, while others offer just one type. If you're unsure which care is right for you, call the home or visit their website for more information.



Understanding fees and what they include

When discussing fees with a care home, take time to ask for a detailed breakdown of what is included.

Fees can vary between providers, and understanding exactly what you are paying for will help you make an informed decision and avoid unexpected costs later.

Some homes may charge extra for certain services or experiences while others offer an all-inclusive approach.

For example, Vivant Care offers an all-inclusive fee that covers a wide range of quality hospitality services. This includes a concierge service, local excursions, barista service, restaurant-quality meals with drinks, access to a fully-equipped gym, private-dining experiences and much more (terms apply).

This all-inclusive approach is designed to provide reassurance, knowing that daily living, wellbeing, and lifestyle experiences are all covered in one transparent fee.

Always ask for a full list of what is included and clarify any terms or conditions that may apply.

If you would like to talk things through, our **Enquiry Support Team** is available on **0808 156 2758**.

Researching your options

- **Ask for recommendations.** Speaking with family, friends, or trusted healthcare professionals can provide helpful starting points.
- **Visit independent review websites.** Sites such as [carehome.co.uk](https://www.carehome.co.uk) offer honest feedback and insights from residents, families and loved ones.
- **Explore social media.** Many homes share moments from daily life, giving you a sense of the atmosphere and experiences they offer.
- **Check care regulators' inspection ratings.** In England, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) publishes its inspection reports and ratings. You should be able to access its reports easily on the home's website.
- **Consider a respite stay in a care home.** A respite care stay is a wonderful way to experience care home life without a long-term commitment.

At Vivant Care, respite stays combine exceptional care with an extraordinary, hotel-like experience. Guests benefit from restaurant-quality dining, engaging experiences, and beautifully designed spaces, while family carers can take time to rest or go on holiday.

If you're considering respite care, speak to the care home manager about availability, inclusions, and how they support both guests and families.

Creating a care home shortlist

Once you've identified a few homes that feel promising, the next step is to make contact and arrange visits.

During conversations, the home manager or a team member will be able to talk you through the type of care they offer, the fees involved and current availability.



Visiting a care home checklist

First impressions

- How does the home make you feel as you arrive? You should feel a sense of calm and comfort as soon as you walk through the door.
- Notice how the team welcomes you – warmth, kindness and clear communication make a strong first impression.
- Consider the level of cleanliness and decor and whether the environment feels well cared for.
- Look at how safety and security are managed discreetly and effectively.

The home and surroundings

- Shared spaces should feel inviting, homely and thoughtfully designed for both social time and quiet moments.
- Does the dining experience appear enjoyable and thoughtfully planned?
- Bedrooms should feel like personal sanctuaries – private, comfortable and welcoming.
- Facilities should enhance daily life. What is on offer – a cinema, café, gym or dedicated areas for families and friends to gather?
- Spend time outside – are the gardens safe, accessible and well-maintained?

Everyday life

High-quality care extends beyond meeting physical needs; it should nurture wellbeing, joy and a sense of belonging and purpose.

- Look for settings where staff take time to understand each person's life story, preferences and interests.
- If possible, speak with residents and visiting family members for their perspective on daily life and the culture of the home.

The team

The quality of care is reflected in everyday interactions between the team and the residents.

- Observe how team members interact with residents and one another. Kindness, patience, and genuine warmth are positive signs.
- Does the leadership team feel approachable, knowledgeable, and well respected?
- Consider whether the wider team appears confident, engaged and familiar with their residents' individual needs.



Experiences and connection

A fulfilling day is shaped by moments of connection, choice and meaningful experiences.

- Are the experiences and activities varied, engaging and shaped by residents?
- How does the team support residents to continue their hobbies or explore new ones?
- Does the home have positive links with the local community?
- Is technology used to help residents stay engaged and connected with family and friends?



Dining experiences

Dining plays an important role in health and wellbeing, so it should feel thoughtful, flexible and enjoyable.

- Look for freshly prepared food and seasonal choices.
- How are individual preferences and dietary needs considered?
- What support is offered to residents who live with dementia to help stay well-nourished and hydrated?
- Are there opportunities for private dining when desired?
- How is the dining area arranged and what is the alternative for someone who prefers not to eat with others?
- Access to drinks and refreshments throughout the day is another small detail that reflects thoughtful care.

In summary

Choosing a care home is a personal decision and often the right choice is not only guided by the practical details but also how a care home setting makes you feel.

Taking time to visit, observe and reflect can provide clarity and reassurance as you consider your next steps.

If you would like to talk things through, our **Enquiry Support Team** is available on **0808 156 2758**.

CARE HOME VISITOR ENQUIRY *Checklist*

Our helpful checklist is designed to guide you as you explore care homes, whether you're visiting in person or taking a virtual tour.

We hope it gives you confidence and clarity as you make the right choice for yourself or a loved one. If you have any questions at all, our friendly **Enquiry Support Team** is always here to help on **0808 156 2758**.

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How are individual preferences and dietary needs considered?
Is a sample menu available?

What support is offered to residents who live with dementia?



Research

Visit independent review websites, such as [carehome.co.uk](https://www.carehome.co.uk) which offers honest feedback.

Explore social media for a glimpse into daily life.

Check Care Quality Commission inspection ratings, which should be available on the home's website.



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