



**Advocacy Project
The Beth Johnson Foundation**

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**Independent
Advocacy
for
Older People**



“Aiding people’s voices to be heard”

**Ten Top Tips
When Choosing a Care Home**

1. First impressions Does the home feel clean and inviting? Are there any unpleasant smells? Is there a relaxed and friendly atmosphere?

2. Residents and Care Is the home registered to provide the level of care you need? Is the home right for your cultural and religious needs? Are there members of staff who speak your language? Are there residents from a similar background to you? Do other residents seem to have a similar level of need to you? What will happen if your needs change or increase? Does the home have bathing facilities that meet your need? Can you choose how often you have a bath or shower? Do you have access to a GP and other health services?

3. Location Where is the home? Will visitors be able to get there easily? Are there transport links nearby? Are there facilities such as shops, pubs, parks within easy reach?

4. Access How accessible is the home? Will it be easy for you to enter the building and move between rooms and floors? How good is the wheelchair access? Is there a lift?

5. Bedrooms and living areas Do the rooms feel hot and stuffy or cold and draughty? Will you feel comfortable chatting and socialising in the home's public areas? Are the chairs arranged in groups or around the edges of the room? Is there a quiet room for reading as well as the one with the TV? Are the rooms a good size? Will you have a room to yourself? Do the rooms have en suite facilities or basins? Will you be able to bring your own possessions such as pictures, plants?

6. Meals Can the home meet your dietary needs? Is there a choice of food and when and where it can be eaten? How are special diets catered for? Can you prepare food and drink for yourself? Do existing residents enjoy the food and can you try it?

7. Visitors Are there any restrictions on visiting times or numbers of visitors? Are young children welcome? Are there facilities for visitors to stay overnight? Where can you spend time with your visitors?

8. Activities Does a mobile library visit? Does the home arrange outings? Are there any physical activities such as exercise groups or gardening? How will you be told about up and coming events? Are you encouraged to stay active and do as much as you can for yourself? Can you go outside for fresh air when you want to? Are you allowed to make choices about your daily routine? Will you be able to rise and go to bed when you want to?

9. Staff How long have the staff worked there? How many staff are employed per resident? How are they trained? Is there a manager on duty at all times? What is the turnover of staff?

10. Legal Can you see copies of the home's brochure/ recent inspection reports/ the homes contract/written conditions? What are the home's fees? How are fees collected? Do self-funding and local-authority assisted residents pay the same rates? Is a top-up payment required for local-authority assisted residents? Are extra items not covered by the basic fees clearly identified and accounted for? What arrangements are there for handling personal money? How your valuables are kept secure? What are the notice conditions in the contract? Are there any fees payable after a resident's death?

Finally....

Spend some time looking around and talking to the person in charge, as well as other staff and residents. Don't be afraid to ask questions.