

Nursing Homes Ireland is the representative organisation for the private and voluntary nursing homes sector. This sector and the care our members provide are key parts of the Irish health service. Private and voluntary nursing homes provide:

- Care for nearly 20,600 residents
- Account for more than 70% of all long term care beds in the country, and,
- Employ more than 21,000 staff

The ***Nursing Homes Ireland (NHI) Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home*** is designed to help you and your family make the best choice, whether you are planning ahead, or need to make an unexpected decision.

Choosing a nursing home can have great emotional effect on you and your loved ones. It is helpful to plan ahead, visit and compare several nursing homes, and make good financial plans early.

If you are helping someone who is about to go into a nursing home, get him or her involved in making the decision as much as possible.

If the person you are helping is not alert or able to communicate well, keep his or her values and preferences in mind. Finding a nursing home that has the right services, and a pleasant comfortable atmosphere, often requires a lot of planning.

This guide hopes to give you a systematic approach to identifying the priorities you have to enable you to make the right choice of Nursing home to meet all of your needs.

The main steps to choosing a nursing home are:

- Find out about the nursing homes in your area – listing available on www.nhi.ie
- Find out how nursing homes compare in quality
- Visit the nursing homes you are interested in, or have someone visit for you
- Make an appointment with the nursing home before you visit but you should also visit at other times to clarify any issues you may have
- Take a formal tour with the Director of Nursing or designated deputy
- Ask questions during your tour
- Look around to get a better picture of the services, activities, and quality of care and life for the residents
- Choose the nursing home that best meets your needs

Get Information:

- About Services: What services does the nursing home provide?
- What fees are charged?
- What additional/ state funding is available to support your care?
- Does the Home charge extra for other services or care for special medical needs?

General Questions to Consider:

- Is the nursing home registered with the Health Information and Quality Authority?
- Is there a bed available? (Is there a waiting list?)
- Is the bed in a single or shared room? Does it have en-suite facilities?
- Do you know anybody already resident in the home? If so are they happy with the care they receive?
- Is the nursing home easy to visit for family and friends? Is it on a bus route? And close to amenities you may wish to use?
- Is there a happy homely atmosphere in the home?
- Talk to staff, residents, and family members if you can. Are they satisfied?
- However, don't go into resident rooms or care areas without checking with the resident and nursing home staff first. Residents have a right to privacy.

Helpful Checklist

Quality of Life:

- Do the staff treat residents in a respectful way?
- Do the staff appear friendly approachable and caring?
- Are there a variety of social, recreational, religious, or cultural activities?
- Are hobbies encouraged? Is entertainment provided on a regular basis and for special occasions?
- Does the home have a daily routine and do you think it will meet your needs?
- Do the residents have choices over their schedule and living space?
- Can they choose to eat their meals in their rooms?
- Is there a menu on display and does the menu offer choice?
- Does the home cater for special dietary requirements?
- Does the home offer hairdressing, chiropody and optical services? How often are they available and what is the cost?
- Do the residents have privacy for visits and personal care?
- Can your friends and family take you out for the day or weekend?
- Does the home have an open visitor policy?
- Does the home have a complaints policy?
- Does the home have a residents committee?

Quality of Care:

- Does the home have a philosophy of care?
- Does the home have a contract of care that you can view?
- Are there enough staff? What are the staff to resident ratios?
- What qualifications and training do the staff have?
- Are residents happy with the care they receive and do they look well cared for?
- Are the staff approachable and helpful?
- Can residents still see their personal doctors?
- Does the home have access to Physiotherapy, occupational therapy and other services if required?
- Does the nursing home have any quality of care deficiencies?

Location:

- Is the nursing home close to family and friends so they can visit often?

Security:

- Does the nursing home provide a safe environment?
- Is the nursing home locked at night?
- Are there special arrangements to help keep residents who may become confused in the facility?
- Are there special security and monitoring systems in place to safeguard resident's wellbeing?

Preventive Care:

- Does the nursing home make sure that residents get preventive care to help keep them healthy?
- Does the nursing home have a screening program for immunisations such as Flu (influenza) and pneumonia?

Hospitals:

- Does the nursing home have an arrangement with a nearby hospital for emergencies?

Accredited (accreditation):

- How is the nursing home accredited?
- Is the Nursing home involved in quality initiatives eg Essence of Care?
- Is the nursing home a member of NHI (Nursing Homes Ireland)?

This list of suggested questions is not an exhaustive list but a guide to help you choose the right care setting to meet your care needs.

Frequent visits are the best way to make sure that you or your loved one is happy and does well in the nursing home.

Making the 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 office, it is helpful to have the following information ready:

- **Payment Information for Nursing Home Office Staff**
- **Insurance Information:** health care coverage and/or long-term care insurance
- **Information on Your Medical History**
Your doctor may give the staff some of this information. This includes a list of any current or past health problems, past surgeries or treatments you have had allergies you have to food or medicine, and immunizations you've had.
- **Information on Your Current Health Status:**
Your doctor may give the staff some of this information. This includes a list of your current health status, and any activities of daily living that might be difficult for you to do by yourself.
- **A List of Your Current Medicines:** Include the dose, how often you take it, and why you take it.
- **A List of All Your Health Care Providers:** Include names, addresses, and telephone numbers.
- **A list of any out patient or other future appointments you may have.**
- **A List of Family Members to Call in Case of an Emergency:** Include names, addresses, and telephone numbers.

Our vision for the future

As a nation, Ireland now has the resources to develop the best possible services to meet the needs of a growing older population. Our older people deserve the best.

We, in Nursing Homes Ireland have a significant contribution to make in developing those services, so that residential care for our older people is the best that it can be. We have the expertise, the commitment and the willingness to work alongside the Government and all other key stakeholders in the sector to create a service to be proud of.

Our experience and our ideas will be important in informing the development of public policy on the care of older people. We look forward to leading this important debate, as key providers of a vital part of the health service, and of meeting the challenge of growing and funding the best possible services for our older people.

Our vision, that all residents of nursing homes will receive high quality care, is one which will be realised through meaningful partnership with the Government, the HSE and the National Treatment Purchase Fund as purchasers, HIQA as the regulator, our members and all the stakeholders in delivering that high quality care to those who need it.

Having high quality nursing home care available to those who need it is an essential part of a well-functioning health service which delivers the care people need, in a way that is affordable, accessible, and, of the highest standard. Those who use our services should have the choice and flexibility in selecting the nursing home that most suits their needs.

Our members are committed to

- Maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of residents
- Preserving the autonomy of residents, guaranteeing free expression of opinion and freedom of choice
- Maintaining a safe physical and emotional environment
- Ensuring that the privacy and dignity of residents is respected
- Being an employer of choice and providing continuous professional development and training

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