



Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home

Empower

Influence

Lead

Promote

Partner

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:

- Delivery of care for nearly 25,000 residents
- Account for over 80% of all long-term care beds in the country, and,
- Employ almost 35,000 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 county – 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 on your behalf
- 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 understanding of the services, activities, and quality of care and life for the residents
- Choose the nursing home that best meets your needs



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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 nursing home charge extra for other services or care for special medical needs?

General Questions to Consider:

- Is the nursing home registered with HIQA (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 any of the residents already in the nursing 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 or near a public transport route? Is it close to any amenities that you wish to use?
- Is there a happy, homely atmosphere in the nursing 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 beforehand. 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 nursing 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 nursing 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 nursing home have an open visitor policy?
- ✓ Does the nursing home have a complaints policy?
- ✓ Does the nursing home have a resident's committee?

Quality of Care:

- ✓ Does the nursing home have a philosophy of care?
- ✓ Does the nursing 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 nursing home have access to physiotherapy, occupational therapy and other services if required?



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- ✓ 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 residents' well-being?

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 influenza and pneumonia?

Hospitals:

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

Accreditation:

- ✓ How is the nursing home accredited?
- ✓ Is the nursing home involved in quality initiatives e.g. 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 – healthcare coverage and/ or long-term care insurance
- Information on your medical history:

Your doctor may give the nursing home 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 immunisations you have received.

- Information on your current health status:

This includes a status of your current health condition, and any activities of daily living that you may need assistance with.

- A list of your current medicines – include the dosage, how often you take it, and for what reason you are taking it
- A list of your current healthcare providers – include names, addresses, and telephone numbers
- A list of any outpatient 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



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Our vision for the future

NHI actively supports our members, enabling them to provide sustainable, high quality care to their residents.

Our vision is for a strong, sustainable and agile private and voluntary nursing home sector, as a vital part of Ireland's health care system. To achieve this, NHI will continue to advocate on behalf of our members and the sector and will strengthen our range of professional services provided to members.

At NHI, the resident is always at the heart of what we do. We support private and voluntary nursing homes to deliver the very highest standard of care.

We care about the delivery of better care. We support our members to create rich experiences of life for residents. Our members meet residents where they are on their journey and focus on enriching lives well-lived.

Care is better when we work together. We empower our private and voluntary nursing home members with the latest information and advocate for the sector so it can perform better. We bring our message of warmth, comfort and responsibility in a clear and strong voice to the wider community.

We are working to shape a new, more dynamic model of care. Caring is best when it is collective and collaborative. With our residents, members, communities and stakeholders, we are confidently moving forward together.

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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