Choosing a residential aged care facility: What do consumers think you should ask?

When you are choosing a facility we advise you to take this evidence-based checklist to help you consider issues that older people who live in residential aged care have told us are important. These questions are based on factors proven to be associated with better quality of life of residents.

It is advisable to visit at least three facilities. It is best to ring and make an appointment with the Director of Nursing or Facility Manager. You may need to visit more than once and if so, try to choose a different time of the day for the second or subsequent visits.

Consumer–informed quality of care

We conducted a study of more than 500 people living in residential aged care facilities. Based on this research, we have compiled a list of questions to assist you when you visit a facility.

Food emerged as an important aspect of quality of care, consider these questions below.

Food

1. Can I choose the serving size I want?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Can I sample the food?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Can I choose my meal on the day?
   - Yes
   - No

4. Is there a meal choice for those on texture-modified diets?
   - Yes
   - No
Answer these questions to consider how you or your family member feel about the facility. To answer some of these questions you may need to ask current staff or residents/their family members some questions.

1. How much time can staff spend attending to your needs each day? (Talking to current residents/families or staff)
   - □ A lot of time
   - □ Some time
   - □ Not much time

2. Do the shared spaces here make you feel ‘at home’?
   - □ Yes  □ No

3. Will your room here make you feel ‘at home’?
   - □ Yes  □ No

4. Will you be able to access outside and gardens in this aged care home without help?
   - □ Yes whenever I want
   - □ Yes sometimes
   - □ No, not easily

5. Are there activities I can do here that will make me feel valued?
   - □ Often
   - □ Sometimes
   - □ Occasionally

6. Are care routines flexible (e.g. meal times, getting up)? (Ask the staff about what is important to you)
   - □ Yes, very flexible
   - □ Sometimes
   - □ Not very flexible

Notes: