

Questions to ask a home care agency

Here is a list of the key questions to ask a home care agency. Get the answers to the questions that matter most for you or your loved one. This will help you to choose the right care provider for you and avoid problems later on.

Name of care agency _____

Date _____

Contact information _____

THE CARERS

- How do you recruit your carers? Are they interviewed before joining the agency?
- Do you check references before offering them work?
- Do they undergo a criminal records check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (England and Wales), Disclosure Scotland (Scotland) or Access NI (Northern Ireland)?
- What qualifications and experience do the carers have?
- Are they qualified to deal with specialist conditions, such as dementia or mobility issues?

MY LOVED ONE'S CARE NEEDS

- Do you currently provide care for people with similar needs to mine?
- What services do you provide? Are there any specific services that you don't provide?
- Will you carry out an assessment of my needs and draw up a personalised care plan? (see more below)
- How will you ensure that carers follow the care plan?
- How will you match the most suitable carers to my needs?
- Will I have a regular carer or carers?
- Is it possible to interview potential carers in advance?
- If I'm incompatible with a carer, can I request a different person?
- Will carers keep written records of the care that has been given, including timesheets for visits?

THE CARE VISITS

- Can you provide carers at the times I need care?
- What happens if I need to increase the number or duration of visits in future? Will this be possible?

HOME CARE OPTIONS

Our practical guidance helps you choose the right home care options for your needs. Find out about the pros and cons of using a home care agency, employing private carers, arranging live-in care or getting help from your local authority. Read more at: [which.co.uk/homecare](https://www.which.co.uk/homecare)

- How many different carers are likely to visit in a week or in a month?
- What will happen if my carer is off sick or on holiday?
- What is your policy if carers are late or miss a visit?
- How will carers get into my home if I can't answer the door?
- What happens in the event of a medical emergency? Will the carer stay with me until help comes?

CHARGES, FEES AND TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Do you have a standard contract? Can we see a copy in advance?
- Can you send me a brochure and price list?
- What are your hourly charges? And what do they cover?
- Do charges depend on the level of care that is needed?
- Do prices vary depending on the time of day?
- Are there higher charges for weekends and bank holidays?
- Are there any other extra charges I need to know about – such as travel expenses or call-out fees?
- Is there a minimum charge for people who only need a small amount of support?
- How often is payment required, and what payment methods are accepted?
- Will I have to pay a deposit or make any payments in advance?
- When can prices be increased, and by how much?
- How much notice is required if I need to cancel or change a visit, and will there be a fee?
- What happens if I have to go into hospital for a period of time? Will I still be charged for any scheduled home visits while I am in hospital?
- Is it possible to try your service for a short trial period to see how it works out?
- How do I terminate the service? How much notice is required?

THE AGENCY

- How long has the agency been in business?
- Are you a member of the Homecare Association? Have you signed up to their Code of Practice?
- Are you registered with the relevant care regulator? When was your last inspection?
- How do I complain if I'm not happy?
- Who will be the main contact person if I need information or have a question (including outside office hours, if necessary)?
- Do you have insurance, to cover accidents or damage to property, for example?
- Does the agency have procedures in place to:
 - ensure the quality of care is maintained?
 - protect me from accidents, neglect or self-harm?
 - make sure staff respect my privacy and dignity?
 - cover the way staff handle my money or belongings?

