



What to consider when choosing a good care at home service (domiciliary care)

There is a wide range of services to help you continue living comfortably, independently and safely in your own home. It will be helpful when you are choosing a service to know what level of support you are looking for, whether a little help with the housework occasionally, daily visits to help you get up and about, or someone living in your home full time to be available whenever you need them.

These are questions you may want answered when you meet with the provider(s) you are considering. You may think that some are not relevant or more detailed than necessary, but your needs may change and it may be helpful to check them out at this stage.

Service 1

Service 2

Service 3

1. Reliability

Will I have the same people coming to help me at agreed times?			
Will you tell me beforehand if the person is going to be different, when the regular person is sick or on holiday?			
Can we agree a schedule of who is coming and when they will come at least a week in advance?			
If my care worker is going to be delayed, will I be told?			
How is call attendance checked?			
If I need more help at short notice, would this be available?			
How can I change the service to suit my individual needs and preferences?			

2. Competence

How do you make sure that the person who is coming to help me knows what I need and how to support me?			
What training will the person who is coming to help me have?			
Can they help me with my medication or with exercises that a doctor/nurse/physiotherapist has recommended?			
What happens if I don't like the person you send? Can I ask for someone else?			
Can I see your statement of purpose?			
How long has your organisation provided this sort of service?			
Is the manager registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)? Can I see a copy of the certificate?			
Can I have a copy of your latest CQC Inspection Report? What is your current CQC rating?			
What do you know about the wider community where I live? Do you link in with other organisations?			

3. Security

Do your staff wear any form of uniform?			
Do they have an identity card?			
What happens if I think that the person is not trustworthy, or something has been stolen?			
Do you have public liability and employers liability insurance cover?			

4. Checking that I am satisfied

How will you ensure the service meets my individual needs and preferences?			
What notice do I have to give if I want to cancel a visit or the whole service?			
How often will one of your managers check with me that the service is as it should be?			
Can I see a copy of your latest customer satisfaction survey?			
How will you collect my opinions/suggestions about the service?			
How do I raise any concerns and how will you deal with them?			
Do you have a complaints policy?			

5. Costs

What does an hour's visit cost?			
Is it different at any time, e.g. at weekends, other times such as Bank Holidays?			
Are there any additional costs, e.g. mileage for the carer to get to my home?			
Are there any charges for equipment that the carer needs to have?			
Is there a minimum time or cost that I am committed to when I agree the service can start?			
When do you change the prices of the service?			
How do you notify me of the change?			
How do I pay for the service – will you send me a bill?			