



INNOVATION AGENCY
Academic Health Science Network
for the North West Coast

healthwatch
Lancashire

Choosing a Care Home

The Mum's Test Checklist



Introduction

The care and nursing home sector delivers a crucial service, supporting those who need residential or nursing care in a place other than their own home.

In Lancashire there are hundreds of facilities providing such care and in September 2015 Healthwatch Lancashire launched an innovative visit and assessment programme using a team of trained authorised representatives, all of whom have undertaken relevant training and an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.

The team use a simple question to assess residential care and nursing homes:

‘Would I be happy for my mum, dad, brother, sister or any loved one to be cared for by this home?’. We call this ‘The Mum’s Test’.

Nursing and residential care homes should provide their residents with compassionate care in a safe environment where staff know their residents and residents know the staff; where residents feel comfortable, safe and are well cared for.


Residents, their families and carers should have their voices heard, be involved in the care provided, and have their opinions sought and respected.

It is important to remember that these establishments are homes, where residents live. They are not hospitals or clinics.

They need to provide welcoming, friendly, stimulating, clean and safe environments where their residents want to live, because for some, this will be for the rest of their life.

Since the launch of the programme in 2015 the team have visited more than thirty establishments in Lancashire and have spoken with many residents and staff together with resident’s family and friends.

During visits the team gathered information about the nature and quality of care and services provided and have observed much good practice and have used their experience of The Mum’s Test to compile this checklist which we hope may assist those undertaking their own ‘Mum’s Test’ when seeking a suitable nursing or residential care home.



Sheralee Turner- Birchall, Chief Executive Healthwatch Lancashire

Before you visit a care home

Things to look out for...

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the Care Home have an informative website with the latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) report? If you need to obtain the latest CQC report go to www.cqc.org.uk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the most recent inspection report for any concerns or required improvements. This report should also be available at the care/nursing home and you can ask to see it. All registered homes are inspected by the CQC.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check to see whether Healthwatch Lancashire has undertaken a recent 'Enter and View' visit. Our reports can be read on the internet at www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the home have an informative a brochure that answers any questions you may have?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are many different types of care homes providing a range of services. Does this care home cover your specific care needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Phone the home if you have any queries and check that your call is answered quickly, politely and there is an appropriate member of staff available for you to talk to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The home's location

Things to look out for...

Yes

No

- Is the home located near to public transport routes so people can visit easily if they don't drive?
- Is there sufficient parking for visitors who drive?
- Are there disabled parking spaces or pick up and drop off points close to the home's entrance?
- Is there a disabled access ramp?
- Is the home's external environment pleasant and well maintained?
- Is there a pleasant and safe garden with appropriate furniture so that residents may outside in good weather?
- Is the garden accessible for walking frame users and those in wheelchairs?
- Does the garden provide interesting focal points, such as bird tables and flower beds?
- Is access to the home secure?
- Is the home near to local amenities - eg shops, parks etc?

Reception areas

Things to look out for...

	Yes	No
• Does the home have a secure entry system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Was the door answered in a timely manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Did the home's staff greet you warmly and made you feel welcome?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is there sanitising hand gel available as you enter the home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is a visitor's book in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is the reception area homely and welcoming?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are staff friendly and helpful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is there a notice board which is up to date and with useful information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is the latest CQC report displayed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are there activity notices with up to date information about social events, outings and entertainment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are names and photographs of key staff displayed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is your initial impression of the home one of a calm, friendly, caring and professional environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Public Areas (including corridors and bathrooms)

Yes

No

Things to look out for...

These areas should:

- Be clean.
- Be without discernible odours.
- Be uncluttered.
- Be well lit.
- Be kept at an appropriate temperature.
- Have safe floors and carpets which are unworn and in good condition.
- Look and feel homely.
- Be well maintained and decorated to an acceptable standard.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Corridors

Things to look out for...

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are corridors wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and walking aids?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do the corridors have handrails? If appropriate, are handrails painted in a contrasting colour to the walls to assist residents experiencing dementia?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there clear signposting to emergency exits and key areas such as toilets, bathrooms, lounges and dining rooms? Where appropriate these should be 'dementia friendly' with pictorial representation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are cleaning cupboards and storage rooms accessible from the corridors secured with keypads or kept locked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are furnishings and pictures/features on the walls interesting and stimulating?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there seating for residents to sit and rest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has the home 'themed' their corridors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If there is more than one floor, is there a lift or chairlift facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Toilets and bathrooms

Things to look out for...

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there appropriate signposting indicating the route to the home's communal toilets and bathrooms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are toilets and bathrooms dementia friendly, if needed? Information about dementia friendly adaptations can be found at www.alzheimers.org.uk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there adaptations such as handrails?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there accessible communal toilets close to lounge and dining areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are toilets and bathrooms clean?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are cleaning rotas or checklists displayed and up-to-date?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there an adequate supply of toilet rolls, soap, towels and waste bins?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lounge, dining room and other public areas

Things to look out for...

	Yes	No
• Are public areas pleasant, comfortable and homely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do seating arrangements promote social interaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is there a quiet lounge or area which can be used for visitors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is there enough seating for residents in dining and lounge areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• If the TV is on, is anyone watching it? Is it too loud to prevent conversation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are books / magazines / newspapers available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Does a mobile library visit and/or can trips to the local library be facilitated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is there internet access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Can residents have easy access to the telephone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is there mobile 'phone reception?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resident's rooms

Things to look out for...

Yes

No

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Are resident's rooms spacious enough for the resident's needs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are resident's rooms at a suitable temperature? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are residents able to watch television in their own room? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Can residents personalise their room and bring personal possessions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there privacy in the resident's rooms? Can the door be locked if appropriate? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there a call bell in the room which is easily accessible at all times? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there a 'phone point where a resident can make a private 'phone call either in their room or elsewhere in the home? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • For residents affected by memory problems has the home personalised the doors to resident's rooms? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does the home display information on the back of residents' doors giving the name and photo of the resident's keyworker, care plan coordinator or stating useful information such as "I like to be called...." ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Staff and resident interactions

Things to look out for...

Yes

No

- Does there appear to be enough appropriate staff on duty? Yes No
- Can you easily identify staff members eg Do they wear uniforms and name badges? Yes No
- Do staff talk to residents respectfully? Yes No
- Do staff respect resident's dignity? Yes No
- Do staff appear know residents well? Yes No
- Do staff address residents by their name? Yes No
- Do staff respond promptly to residents asking for assistance? Yes No
- Do call bells get answered promptly? Yes No
- Is there a constant stream of call bells? Be aware that your relative may have to listen to this all day and possibly into the night too! Yes No
- Are staff helpful and friendly? Yes No
- Do you observe friendly interactions between staff and residents? Yes No
- Does the home have a happy and caring environment? Yes No

Care, kindness & compassion

Things to look out for...

Yes

No

- Can the home and staff cater for the needs of your relative? Are the staff properly trained and supervised? Ask the Manager to explain how the home will provide this care.
- What does the latest Care Quality Commission report say about the quality of care provided by the home? Are there any other reviews available eg from feedback surveys?
- Do residents have a choice about when they get up and go to bed or is this determined by the staff and home routine?
- Do residents appear to be well cared for?
- Do staff interact with residents in a kind way?
- Do residents appear to enjoy living in the home?
- Do residents appear to be treated with dignity and respect?
- Are residents dressed appropriately?
- Check that you will be involved in the care planning of your relative and that they have proper procedures in place in case of an emergency.
- Ask whether the home uses 'One-Page Profiles' or similar - This considers the person as an individual and is either displayed on, or behind, the door of the resident's room. Further information can be found at: www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles

Food and nutrition

What to look out for...

Yes

No

- Is there a choice of menu at mealtimes?
- Can residents have something else if they do not want the meals on offer?
- Is the menu varied and are ingredients of a high quality?
- Who prepares the food? Perhaps visit just before a meal time, ask to see the food being served.
- Are drinks readily available throughout the day?
- Can residents choose when and where to eat their meals?
- Are residents offered the option of having breakfast in bed, and breakfast over an extended period?
- When visiting, can you eat with your relative if you want to? Some care homes will invite you to stay, whilst others may have protected meal times when visitors are discouraged from visiting.

Activities, outings and general well-being

What to look out for...

Yes

No

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Does the home have an appropriate activities schedule? Are residents included in choosing activities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there evidence of a variety of activities, entertainment and trips? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the residents asked what personal interests they have and are they supported to pursue them? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does the home have use of a mini bus? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there an activities coordinator employed by the home? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there evidence that residents are involved in activities, for example, activities taking place during your visit, photographs, notice boards about events and entertainment? Ask about recent trips or events which have taken place within the last few weeks. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there a newsletter to keep you updated and informed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does the home have regular access to a hairdresser or barber? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does the home have access to any holistic therapies? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does the home have access to any beauty treatments such as manicure / pedicure / massage? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is the home near places of worship? Are there opportunities for residents to practice their chosen faith should they wish to? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

This information is not exhaustive and should be viewed in conjunction with Healthwatch Lancashire's 'The Mum's Test - Good Practice Observations from Lancashire's Residential Care & Nursing Home Sector' document.

Did you find this guide useful?

Let us know by emailing: info@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk or by writing to us at:

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