Touring a retirement or care home

The questions that separate residences, and the things to notice while nobody is talking.

Use it when: You are visiting somewhere you might actually move a parent into.

Money, before anything else

- [ ] What is in the base rate, exactly?
- [ ] What are the care-level bands and what do they cost?
  Ask for this in writing. It is where budgets slip.
- [ ] How much notice before a care level changes?
- [ ] What were the last three annual increases?
- [ ] Is there a move-in fee or a deposit?
- [ ] How much notice to leave, and is any of it refundable?

Staff

- [ ] How many care staff are on at 3am?
- [ ] Is there a nurse on site, and at what hours?
- [ ] What is staff turnover this year?
- [ ] What dementia training does every care staff member have?
- [ ] How long has the manager been here?

What to notice, not ask

- [ ] Do staff greet residents by name in the corridor?
- [ ] Are residents out of their rooms, and doing something?
- [ ] Does it smell of anything other than cleaning products?
- [ ] Are call bells being answered while you are there?
- [ ] Is the food being eaten?

Before you leave

- [ ] Ask to see a real suite, not the show suite
- [ ] Ask for this month's activity calendar and menu
- [ ] Read the state inspection report — and the CMS Care Compare rating for a nursing home
- [ ] Ask to come back unannounced, and see how they react
- [ ] Ask for two families you can phone

In an emergency, call 911.

Free to print and share. Nothing on this checklist was sent to SeniorCareZ or anyone else.