



CareHomeGuide

# Care Home Guide for Dorset Residents

A practical checklist for families

**Free, independent, CQC-rated care home data for Dorset**

This guide provides practical advice for choosing a care home, with local data specific to Dorset.



115

TOTAL CARE HOMES

35

NURSING CARE HOMES

80

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

72

DEMENTIA SPECIALIST

## CQC Ratings Breakdown

Current Care Quality Commission ratings for care homes in Dorset:

6 Outstanding

94 Good

6 Requires Improvement

1 Inadequate

### What do these ratings mean?

**Outstanding:** The service is performing exceptionally well.

**Good:** The service is performing well and meeting expectations.

**Requires Improvement:** The service isn't performing as well as it should.

**Inadequate:** The service is performing badly.

## Average Weekly Costs (South West)

Regional averages based on 2025 data from Laing Buisson via PayingForCare.org:

Residential Care

£1,200/week

Nursing Care

£1,400/week

*These are regional averages. Individual care home fees vary based on location, facilities, and level of care required.*



# What to Look For When Visiting

## Before You Visit

- Read the CQC inspection report online before you go
- Book visits at different times of day (including mealtimes)
- Try to visit at least 3-5 different homes before deciding
- Bring a list of questions and take notes during the visit

## First Impressions

- Is it clean, warm, and welcoming?
- Are there any unpleasant odours (urine, stale air)?
- Does it feel homely rather than institutional?
- Are you greeted promptly by staff?

## Residents & Atmosphere

- Do residents look happy, clean, and well cared for?
- Are residents dressed appropriately for the time of day?
- Are residents engaged in activities or conversation?
- Can you speak to other residents or families?

## Staff Interactions

- Do staff speak warmly and respectfully to residents?
- Do staff crouch down to speak at eye level?
- Do staff use residents' names (not room numbers)?
- Are there enough staff visible and available?
- Do staff seem to know residents as individuals?

## Facilities & Rooms

- Can you see a typical room, not just a show room?
- Can residents personalise their rooms with photos and furniture?
- Is there adequate space, light, and storage?
- Is there accessible outdoor space that's actually used?
- Are communal areas clean and well-maintained?



## Questions to Ask

- What is the staff-to-resident ratio during day and night?
- What is your staff turnover rate?
- How do you manage medication and medical emergencies?
- What activities and outings are available?
- Can residents choose when to get up and go to bed?
- What happens if care needs increase significantly?
- Can residents keep their own GP or will they need to change?
- How do you communicate with families about day-to-day changes?

## Costs & Contract

- What is included in the basic weekly fee?
- What extras are charged separately (hairdressing, chiropody, outings)?
- How much notice for fee increases?
- Do fees continue during hospital stays?
- What is the notice period for leaving?
- Are there any joining fees or admin charges?

## Activities & Food

- Is there a varied activities programme?
- Can you see a sample weekly menu?
- What happens if a resident doesn't like what's on offer?
- Are mealtimes flexible or fixed?

### Red Flags to Watch For

- Residents calling for help but being ignored
- Staff who seem rushed, stressed, or dismissive
- Reluctance to answer questions or show you around
- Pressure to make a quick decision
- Vague or evasive answers about fees and contracts
- Unpleasant odours or unclean communal areas
- Residents who appear unkempt or unhappy



## Find All 115 Care Homes in Dorset

Search, compare, and read full CQC inspection reports for every care home in Dorset



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