



Key Questions To Ask Assisted Living Staff

Please consider the following list of questions to help make the best selection of an assisted living residence.

Service Planning

- ☐ Are the family and the resident involved in the service planning process? How often are residents' needs assessed? Who completes the assessment?
- ☐ Are there special programs for residents who have Alzheimer's disease, other forms of dementia or memory impairments? Are there accommodations for memory-impaired residents to be outside and exercise?
- ☐ Are there special programs for residents with disabilities?
- ☐ How are emergency medical situations managed? What is the protocol for such events?
- ☐ What happens if the health care needs of a resident change? Under what conditions are residents asked to move if there is a change in health status?

Services and Activities

- ☐ Does staff assist residents in administration of medication? If so, what kind of staff and what type of training did they receive?
- ☐ Does the residence generally use a particular pharmacy? If applicable, does that pharmacy participate in the individual's Medicare Part D prescription drug plan? Does the pharmacy provide a yearly review and consultation services?
- ☐ Are there healthcare services on site? If not, do staff members assist residents and families in making arrangements through a home health agency?
- ☐ Are the services of a physical, occupational or speech therapist available or arranged?

- ☐ Does the residence provide bed linens and towels?
- ☐ Does the facility provide laundry service?
- ☐ Are there beauty/barber shop services available on site?
- ☐ What recreational and spiritual activities are available? (Obtain or review a copy of the activities calendar.)
- ☐ Is there a wellness program?
- ☐ Are the activity supplies available for resident use outside of scheduled programs?
- ☐ How are individual activity interests and preferences accommodated?
- ☐ Is transportation provided for medical appointments and recreational purposes? Is there a fee?
- ☐ Are there resident and family councils? How often do they meet?
- ☐ What are the suggestion, complaint, or grievance procedures?
- ☐ Can hospice care be offered? If so, does the residence coordinate that care with the physician and family?

Staff

- ☐ Ask about the residence's staffing levels and philosophy about staffing.
- ☐ What training and qualifications are required for staff? Are there on-going training programs provided for staff?
- ☐ Do staff members receive special training in care for residents with Alzheimer's or dementia?
- ☐ (Observe staff and resident interactions.) Are they positive? Courteous?
- ☐ Do staff members handle resident requests in a timely way?
- ☐ What is the residence occupancy level?
- ☐ Can private duty companions be hired? What is the procedure for that type of service?
- ☐ Does the residence have a volunteer program? If yes, what types of activities do the volunteers perform?

- ☐ Does the administrator/director practice an “open door” policy?
- ☐ Who owns the assisted living community?

Dining and Food Services

- ☐ Does the residence accommodate special diets?
- ☐ Does a dietician or nutritionist review the menus? (Request or review copies of the menus.)
- ☐ How often do the menus rotate? Are residents and families involved in the menu planning?
- ☐ Are residents allowed to have guests for meals? Is there a separate guest dining room?
- ☐ Are there separate fees for guests?
- ☐ What are the criteria for residents to eat meals in their rooms?
- ☐ Are there separate fees for having meals delivered to their room?

Living Space and Accommodations

- ☐ Are there adequate residence areas for resident use?
- ☐ Are the residents’ rooms furnished or unfurnished?
- ☐ What is the policy about personal belongings?
- ☐ What is the policy for overnight guests? Are there guestrooms available? What are the guest fees?
- ☐ Is additional storage space available? Is there an extra fee?
- ☐ Does the residence meet the rules for people with disabilities?
- ☐ Can residents have automobiles? Is there assigned parking? Is there an extra fee?
- ☐ Are there patios and courtyards available for resident use? Is there an area for resident gardening?
- ☐ Does the residence provide security?
- ☐ Are pets allowed to reside in the residence? If so, are there additional fees and or deposits? If not, are pets allowed to visit?

Licensure and Certification

- ☐ Is the residence licensed? (Ask to review the last licensing or certification report.)
- ☐ If the state requires the administrator to be licensed or certified, is it current?
- ☐ Do staff members actively participate in a professional association, such as a state long term care association affiliated with National Center for Assisted Living?

Safety

- ☐ Does the residence have a fire sprinkler system throughout the facility?
- ☐ Where are smoke detectors located?
- ☐ How often does the facility have fire drills?
- ☐ Does the facility have an emergency preparedness plan?
- ☐ How are emergency and evacuation plans reviewed with residents after admission to reinforce their memory?
- ☐ What systems are used to keep residents with dementia or Alzheimer's secure from leaving the residence on their own?

Location

- ☐ Is the location of the residence convenient to shopping, medical services, and entertainment areas?
- ☐ Can family members and visitors easily locate the residence for visiting?

Moving In

- ☐ What does the move-in process entail? What are the paperwork requirements and the timeframes involved?
- ☐ How is the initial assessment managed? Who completes the assessment?
- ☐ Is the residence affiliated with a hospital or nursing home should acute or long term care be needed? If so, is there a priority admission process?

- ☐ If you need hospital or nursing home care, is your room held? What are the associated fees? Is there a discount for unused services (e.g. meals)?
- ☐ Does the residence subscribe to a set of resident rights and responsibilities? Are printed copies of resident rights and responsibilities available?

Costs and Fees

- ☐ What is included in the basic monthly cost? Ask for a written copy.
- ☐ Does the residence have a written schedule of fees for extra services? If so, request a copy.
- ☐ Under what circumstances might the fees change? How much notice is given if there is a fee increase?
- ☐ Is there a security deposit and/or an entrance fee? What is the refund policy?
- ☐ Can service agreements and or contracts be amended or modified?
- ☐ Does the assisted living residence participate in Medicaid?
- ☐ Can the residence provide a list of services and activities that cost extra?