

Facility Tour Checklist

What to look for, ask, and trust when you visit assisted living, memory care, or a nursing home.

Bring this on every tour. Jot notes in the margins, and trust what you see and smell, not just what you are told. Compare your notes afterward using the Facility Comparison Worksheet.

First impressions

- ☐ Is the building clean and free of strong odors (not masked by air freshener)?
- ☐ Are entrances, hallways, and rooms well lit, with handrails and clear walkways?
- ☐ Do residents look clean, comfortable, and engaged rather than parked or ignored?
- ☐ Are staff warm with residents, and do they greet people by name?

Care and staffing

- ☐ What is the staff-to-resident ratio during the day, evening, and overnight?
- ☐ Is a licensed nurse on site or on call, and how are emergencies handled?
- ☐ How are care plans created, and how often are they reviewed with the family?
- ☐ How does staff handle a resident who is confused, agitated, or resistant to care?
- ☐ What is the staff turnover rate, and are caregivers employees or agency temps?

Daily life

- ☐ Ask to see a full week's activity calendar. Are activities actually happening?
- ☐ Can you see and ideally taste a meal? Are menus varied and diets accommodated?
- ☐ What are the visiting hours, and can family join for meals or events?
- ☐ How is laundry, housekeeping, and personal grooming handled?

Safety and health

- ☐ How are medications stored, administered, and documented?
- ☐ What is the plan for falls, wandering, and after-hours medical needs?
- ☐ Ask for the most recent NC DHSR inspection results (or look them up).
- ☐ How does the community communicate a change in condition to the family?

Cost and contract

- ☐ What is the base monthly rate, and exactly what does it include?
- ☐ Which services cost extra, and how are care levels priced and reassessed?
- ☐ How much notice is given before a rate increase, and how often do they happen?
- ☐ What are the move-in fees, deposit, and the terms for leaving or discharge?

Notes and gut feeling
