

## **Care Home Contracts**

Finding a care home place can be difficult, with many homes running at or near full occupancy levels, so it is no wonder that many families do not pay close attention to the contracts for care offered to them by the care home of their choice.

Care homes are required to offer contracts which meet certain minimum standards but there are pitfalls to look out for in the contracts offered by some homes. Here are some of the main things to which you should give particular attention:

### **Basic Care**

The contract should set out in clear terms the charges for accommodation and meals, nursing care and personal care.

### **Additional Charges**

The cost of any additional services, such as hairdressing, laundry and so on, should be quantified clearly. It is important to understand which services are provided within the basic charges and which are regarded as 'extras'. Watch out also for up-front charges, such as 'placement fees', which can be substantial.

### **Variations**

Make sure that changes in charges are the subject of a suitable notice period, and that termination notice periods are acceptable.

### **Non-payment Clauses**

Some contracts provide for the payment of interest on sums due which are paid late and may provide for the retention of belongings of the person in care in the event of non-payment. If such clauses are present, make sure they are clearly understood.

### **Voids**

Some contracts attempt to continue to charge a resident who has died or moved until a new resident is found.

### **Guarantees**

A contract may specify that a guarantor for the fees must be provided – normally a family member. Where such clauses are present, particular care must be taken.

There are a number of other potential pitfalls in care home contracts which have not been mentioned here. If you are looking into care homes, either as a potential resident or as attorney for a resident, it is sensible to ensure that advice is taken over the precise terms of the contract. We will be pleased to help you. Contact [<<CONTACT DETAILS>>](#).