

CHECK THE CQC WEBSITE

Some reports can be well out of date, by two or even three years.

Some don't reflect the reality. **It is not uncommon for the CQC only to discover a home is bad when the police have launched an investigation.**

Read reports on homes in a 20 mile radius. Do not expect to find one at the end of the road – although you may. Look back over the last five years. There are many yo-yo homes - which improve after a bad report but then sink back to old ways. Reports are available free on-line on the CQC website.

Read between the lines. If it says some families were concerned about staffing, that probably means the home is unsafe and families are waving flaming torches and pitchforks outside. **Families are very reluctant to admit - even to themselves that a home is poor - so do not take website recommendations as Gospel.**

Remember, on the day the CQC turned up, the home will have put on their best face and probably called in extra staff. So if they could not get it right in order to receive a 'Good' report then...

You really want an 'Outstanding' home, if possible. There are very few, so you will probably need to look at the 'Good' ones as well. But check past reports – they may have just pulled themselves out of 'Requires Improvement'.

A reader points out that you can always put in a Freedom of Information request to the CQC, to ask for the original inspector's report - rather than the edited highlights. But, beware, they only keep these for six months. (Thanks ML).