



Enter and View Report

Care Homes - Alex Wood House

Service Address: 3a Fortesque Road, Cambridge, CB4 2JS
Service Provider: CHS Group
Date and Time: Tuesday 11th August 2015 at 10:30am
Authorised representatives: Jenny Egbe, Maureen Symons, Rosemary Lawrance, Susan Dowling and Kate Hales



Acknowledgement

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire would like to thank the residents, relatives and staff at Alex Wood House who spent time talking to us about their experiences of living at the home or having family staying at the home.

Thank you also to the Manager of the home for helping us to arrange the visit and providing relevant information that we asked for.

Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time. This report relates to findings observed on 11th August 2015 at 10:30am.

The visit also takes into consideration the fact that some of the residents spoken to will have a long term illness or disability, including dementia, which will have an impact on the information that is provided.

We recognise that providers are often able to respond to us about any issues raised and we will include all responses in the final report.



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Introduction and methodology

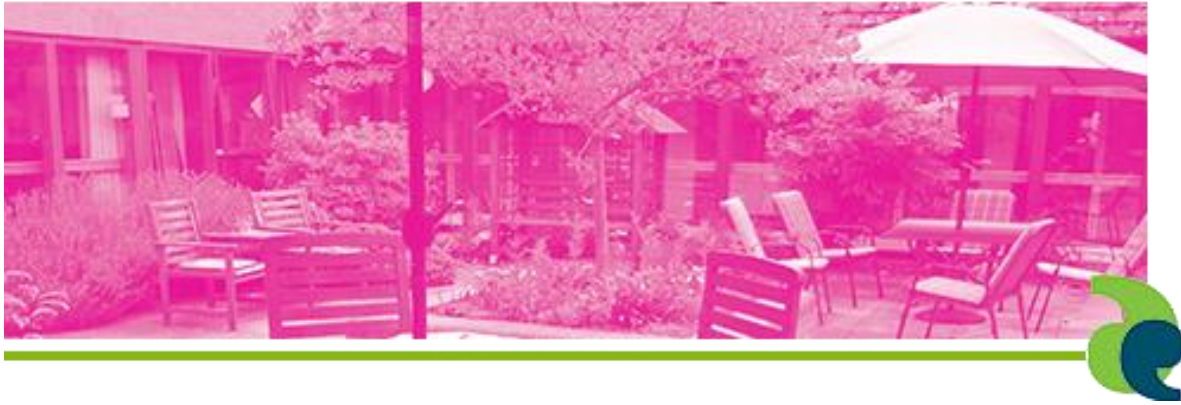
What is Enter and View?

Part of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire's work programme is to carry out Enter and View visits to health and social care services, to see and hear how people experience care. The visits are carried out by our authorised representatives. We can make recommendations or suggest ideas where we see areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service. Equally they can occur when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Cambridgeshire's safeguarding policies.



Our Care Home project

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire made the decision to undertake a programme of enter and view visits to care homes in Cambridgeshire in spring-summer 2015.

Our visits are intended to:

- Find out what daily life is like in a care home in Cambridgeshire.
- Gather the opinions and experiences of residents, relatives/friends and staff.
- Raise awareness of the role of Healthwatch.
- Build relationships to enable those voices not often heard, to have a say about the health and care services that they receive.

Enter and view visits will also highlight (if applicable) what the team view as ‘good ideas’ and this will be collated and shared with all the care homes that we have visited at a later date.

The care homes to be visited are selected based upon a number of factors which include geographical spread across the county. Where possible we will ensure the visit does not conflict with other visits such as planned Care Quality Commission Inspections or visits by the local authority.

Following each visit a report will be produced and this will form part of a summary report highlighting good ideas and issues around access to health and care services.

Purpose of the visit

The purpose of the visit is to find out what daily life is like for residents at the care home. We observe day to day life in the care home and talk to residents, relatives, staff and other visitors, to collect their experiences and opinions.

- We look at how residents are supported to make choices about their daily life, for example making mealtime choices or what to wear.
- We watch how staff interact with residents and other people in the care home.
- We find out what activities are available for residents at the home and in the community.
- We ask people what they think about the range and quality of their food.



- We find out how easy it is for residents to access local health and care services, for example GP, Dentist, Optician and Chiropractic.
- We collate examples of good ideas and report on any issues or concerns that are raised.
- We talk to people about their experiences of living in the home, and any ideas they have for change.
- We tell people about Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and what we do.

Announced visit

This was an announced Enter and View visit. It was undertaken by a team of five authorised Enter and View representatives, including one Healthwatch staff member and four volunteers. It lasted approximately two hours. We wrote to the home explaining the purpose of the visit and inviting them to take part in our Care Home project.

Confirmation included advising the names of those who would be taking part in the visit. Posters with details of the visit and Healthwatch contact information together with leaflets for display prior to the visit were sent to the home the week before.

The visit was informal and involved a combination of observations and talking to residents, relatives and staff; all findings were logged. We were given a tour of the home and invited to walk around without an escort.

A large proportion of the visit was also observational, involving the authorised representatives walking around the public areas and observing the surroundings to gain an understanding of how the home works and to get a feel for the general environment.

Notebooks and questionnaires were used to record the information gathered.

The Enter and View team spoke with the Manager, who provided detailed information about the home and answered any queries raised.



Information was also given out about Healthwatch Cambridgeshire to residents, and the home was given copies of the latest Newsletter, Information and Signposting bookmark, leaflets and posters to display in the reception area. To keep in touch with Healthwatch, the Manager signed up to receive both our newsletters.

Alex Wood House

Alex Wood House is a purpose built two storey care home that provides residential and dementia care. A single storey extension was added and this provides a lounge for the residents to use and a separate self-contained area which offers day centre facilities.

There is car parking to the front and side of the home, with disabled parking near the main entrance. The home is located in a residential area on the outskirts of the City of Cambridge.



Day Centre

The home is run by a charitable housing association. It is registered to provide care for older people and for people with dementia. It has 36 beds which are in single rooms with en-suite facilities. Some of these beds are funded by Adult Social Care, Cambridgeshire County Council. On the day of our visit 35 men and women were living at the home.



The front entrance was locked and key coded. When we entered, we found information stands, noticeboards and a table with the visitor signing in book, which we were asked to complete. A lift and staircase are available for access to the first floor.

We noted there were separate bathing, shower and toilet facilities available on both floors and these are equipped with aids, rails and moveable hoists.

A large open courtyard with colourful planted raised beds, shaded seating and tables is located at the centre, surrounded on all four sides by the home. Access to the courtyard is available from all sides.

Summary of findings

- The home was welcoming and friendly. It appeared clean, fresh and well maintained.
- At the time of our visit we observed the home to be operating to a high standard of care with regard to daily life and the care of residents.
- The residents told us:
 - they were able to make decisions about what they liked to eat;
 - what they wanted to wear; and
 - what activities they liked to take part in on a daily basis.
- Residents appeared comfortable, clean and content.
- Staff were observed to be positive, respectful, kind and friendly with residents.
- We saw evidence that told us that all the residents have access to a variety of social activities both in the home and outside.



The Findings

Accommodation and environment

Alex Wood House is a purpose built home and we were told that it was extended five years ago. There are 36 single rooms with en-suite, and at the time of our visit there were 35 residents living there. We were told that they try to accommodate couples when they can with rooms next door to each other.

We observed staff being friendly and calm towards people, in addition there was no unnecessary noise and activity to disturb residents. The home's décor was "home like" rather than clinical, which we thought would make it feel more comfortable and relaxing for residents.

The home is a two storey building with residents' rooms on both the ground and first floors. The extension houses a large day centre which is self contained with its own lounge, dining area and kitchenette.

The residents' lounge is spacious, light and airy with upright seating and a television.

The dementia unit, called 'Memory Lane', is accessed through key coded doors. This unit is self contained with a lounge, dining area, kitchenette and bathing facilities. Residents can also use a secure garden area which has raised beds, colourful planting, seating and shaded areas. A vintage nostalgia sitting room has been created which reflects what daily life was like in the 1950s.

The residents' room doors on Memory Lane are brightly coloured with big handles, numbers, name and a photograph of the resident. Memory boxes are used and these are filled with personal items as reminders of their lives.

A sensory room has been set-up with differing coloured lights and tactile materials for stimulation.

We were told by staff that visitors are welcomed and encouraged. When visiting at meal times they are invited to have a meal with their relative or friend if the resident want them to. We were told that the *"residents love to have young children visit"*.



We were also told that overnight accommodation can occasionally be arranged for relatives, to enable them to be with their loved ones when needed.

The main dining area for the residential residents is on the first floor, and the residents are encouraged to eat together and socialise.

We noted that the signage was clear and at levels that are easy to read.

We were told that the style of name labels on the residents' room doors was down to each individual's choice.

One of our team is a wheelchair user and said that access throughout the home is very good and they had no problems using the lift or entering the courtyard.

Resident told us

“Just like living at home”

Relative told us

“Like being in my parent's home”

Activities

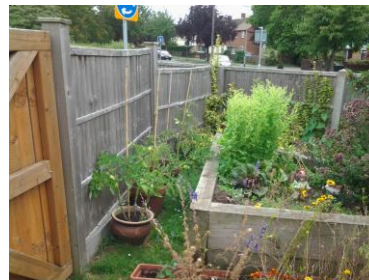
The Lead Practitioner is responsible for activities at the home and the staff help and support these. The home can use the day centre bus for outings and this is booked in advance.

The activity programme includes quizzes, baking, cards and board games. We were told that the residents are asked what activities they would like the home to run, and can choose what they would like to take part in.

Students from the local school visit the home on a monthly basis to perform plays for the residents. A resident told us these are *“mainly Shakespeare and it would be nice to have a change”*.



Memory Lane - garden and newly painted shed



Memory Lane - vegetable pots and raised bed

Staff told us that the residents in the dementia unit *'love to garden and be outside'*. The Manager told us *'the residents painted the shed and are growing vegetables and flowers in the garden'*. Recently morris dancers gave a show in the garden.

A smoking area is available outside.

We were told that the home meets the religious needs of the residents. Family and friends can take residents out to local services and ministers visit the home to meet with individuals. Church service takes place on the second Wednesday of the month. When residents are going out they let staff know where they are going, who with and how long they will be.

The Pets as Therapy service visits regularly and we were told the residents like to see the dogs when they visit.



One resident has a budgie and the home have fish in a tank. The Manager told us they have not been asked by any other residents if they can also bring their pets.

We noticed that some of the books in the library area were duplicated a number of times, for example there were multiple copies of 'Pride and Prejudice'.

Newspapers are delivered and residents can choose which they like and if they want to read them.

Residents told us

"I can sit here all day and there is nothing I want to do"

"I like to sit and chat with my friend"

"It is not expected that we would want to go out and we are never asked"

"Want to go to football, but no one will take me"

"Love being in the garden - shame the rabbits were killed"

(N.B. The Manager told us that the rabbits were rehomed following an experience with a fox and were not killed.)

"I love to sing, would like to do more singing"

"I like being outside"

"I would like different books to read, these are all the same"

"Would like more activities during the day"

Visitor told us

"There is a good range of activities for my friend"



Catering

We were told that the menus are changed every five weeks. There is a noticeboard in the entrance area with all the news from the kitchen including the menus. We were told that the staff ask residents what they would like to eat for their meals and alternatives are always available.

We noted that the table mats used in Memory Lane all have the label 'breakfast' and wondered if this was confusing for residents at other meal times. The dining area floor in this unit is vinyl with a black rubber ridge as the divider between the two areas. We saw a resident trip on this.



Dining and carpet flooring in Memory Lane

The residents are encouraged to get-up and eat their meals in the dining rooms, although some prefer to eat their meals in their own rooms.

The main dining room for residential residents is on the first floor. We thought this was very home like and attractively laid out with placemats, napkins and cutlery. We observed lunch being served to the residents. This appeared to be well organised, and staff were respectful and supportive towards the residents.



First floor dining room

When the meals are served the vegetables are put in large bowls in the middle of the tables for the residents to help themselves. Staff are on hand to assist when needed.

Residents told us

“Cannot fault the food”

“The food is really good and we have no complaints”

“I only like salad and chopped up mars bars”

“There is plenty to eat”

Care and help

The Manager told us that assessments are carried out for potential new residents prior to admission to the home, to make sure a person’s care needs can be met.

Residents are also assessed before they come back from hospital, the Manager told us *“they have to be firm to get the information they need to ensure that they can still support the resident”*.

The residents’ clothes are labelled with their names and each resident has their own labelled basket for their clothes.



Residents told us

“Staff are caring and friendly”

“Carers good and friendly, can have a laugh”

“Can get up and go to bed whenever I want to”

“Laundry is good, am pleased with that”

“Can choose what I want to wear”

Staff attitudes

We saw staff attending to the needs of residents, showing patience and understanding. Staff were polite making sure the residents were comfortable. The staff knew the residents very well and made the time to stop and chat.

We watched staff interacting with residents; laughing and joking.

We saw residents greeting staff, smiling and chatting, pleased to see them.

We watched staff interacting with the residents and they were respectful, caring and friendly. We saw a member of staff taking their time with a resident who was struggling to finish their meal.

Carers and Relatives

We were told that relatives and friends were welcomed at all times and they were invited and encouraged to visit and join in the meetings and outings.

Access to health and care services

The home uses the services of four local GP Surgeries. We were told that they have planned meetings every six weeks with the Link Nurse and the facility is in place to go direct if there are any issues. The home has a central point of contact for the District Nurse Team.



We were told that the medication review was working fine.

A local optician visits the home, and this company also provides hearing tests.

The residents can attend the local medical centre for private chiropody services.

The Manager told us ‘for hearing aids the residents are referred by their local GP to the hearing service’.

Dental care is provided by a local private surgery who visit the residents in the home. A further surgery is available to residents of the home across the road. We were told ‘the home can organise a NHS dentist for residents if they wish and if there are any available’.

We were told that the waiting time for the speech and language therapy service (SALT) is 15 weeks and this includes residents who require ‘urgent care’.

Good Ideas

- Making sure gardening and being able to grow flowers and vegetables is accessible in a secure and safe environment.
- Reminders of yesteryear and daily life in the 1950s with the creation of the vintage nostalgia room.
- Brightly coloured front doors for residents’ rooms, giving the appearance of going into your own home.
- Actively using memory boxes that hold memorabilia and reminders of who you are. They also help staff know more about a resident.



Ideas to take forward

We encourage care homes to develop ways to involve residents, their families, carers and staff in making decisions to improve care in the home.

We encourage a positive approach to managing complaints and learning from people's feedback about care in the home.

Our ideas for Alex Wood House:

We ask all the care homes we visit to help us promote the residents' opportunities to feedback on their local health and care services by displaying Healthwatch Cambridgeshire literature in their home.

1. Greater selection of reading materials. Perhaps allowing residents to visit the local library service or arranging for the library service to visit the home. Or perhaps a book swap arrangement with other homes in the CHS Group.
2. Table mats with different words for Memory Lane; we are not sure if there is confusion with those in use just saying 'breakfast' when used at lunchtime.
3. Look at the dining area flooring in Memory Lane to check for trip areas between the two different flooring materials.



Response to the report from Alex Wood House

We were happy to have Healthwatch visit Alex Wood House and have been very pleased with the positive comments made by your team, by the staff and the residents. It is important to us to receive feedback as we strive to make improvements to enhance the daily lives of our residents and to make it as much like home as we can.

1. We have taken on board your comments regarding a greater choice of books and have liaised with relatives and visitors to obtain a wider selection. We now have a small bookcase upstairs as well as the reading area downstairs. Residents can be assisted to visit the local library if they wish to go. The mobile library used to visit the Home but this service was stopped several years ago.
2. Since the flooring has been replaced in Memory Lane we have new table cloths and have eliminated the need for place mats.
3. The flooring has been replaced in Memory Lane during the last month. New non slip cushion flooring now covers the entire room and gives greater flexibility for arranging the dining and lounge areas.

I hope that the above comments are useful for the report.



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