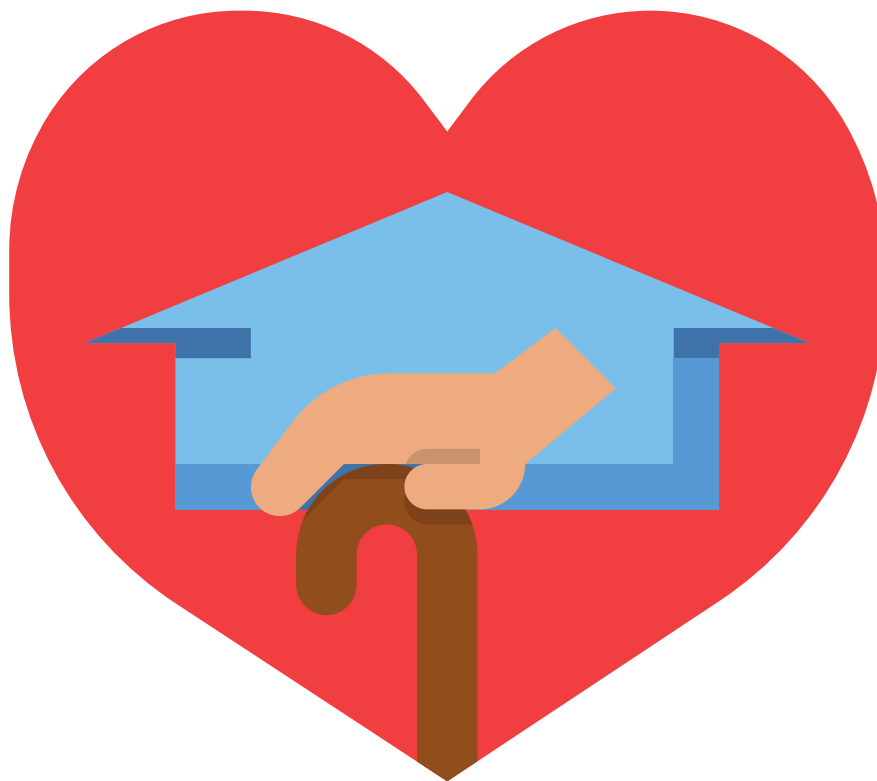


Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway

Acorn House Residential Care Home, Chatham



September 2020

FOREWORD

In Medway we have 74 Care Homes offering a variety of services and different levels of support to residents and their families.

In June 2018, a new system was created to enable every nursing and residential home in Medway to form a partnership with a local GP. The partnership was designed to ensure residents would have a dedicated GP who could visit them in the home and help avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

That means that every care home in Medway should now have a dedicated GP who visits the care home regularly, getting to know residents and their needs, giving continuity and more timely medication reviews. Patients still have the option to opt out of this service if they wish and register with an alternative GP.

This new way of working has been in place since 2018, and we wanted to talk to people to see what difference it has made to their experience.

We committed to visiting 24 Care Homes across Medway to talk to the residents, their friends and family and staff to hear about how the new enhanced GP service has changed the services offered at the homes. We also wanted to find out whether the residents were supported with other health and social services such as dental treatment and social activities.

Coupled with this desire, we knew that Medway Council were planning to recommission residential and nursing care services for older people and working aged adults in Medway. We wanted to ensure decision makers heard about peoples' experience of living in a Care Home in Medway to help inform their decisions.

Everything we found is detailed in this report and we have shared our findings directly with each Care Home, Medway Council and the Medway Clinical Commissioning Group.

We would love to hear your story about a Care Home in Medway. Was it good? Could it have been improved?

Get in touch with us anytime on: www.healthwatchmedway.com

We look forward to hearing from you

Maggie Cane
Healthwatch Medway

What were we trying to achieve from our visits?

We wanted to talk to people who were currently residents at Acorn House Residential care Home in Chatham about their experiences of the health and social care offered at this home.

We also wanted to speak to staff to see if the new enhanced GP service had made a positive impact on how they work and support their residents.

We wanted to hear about some key areas of the resident's lives at Acorn House Residential care Home:

- Were residents given a choice about which Care Home to move into when they were choosing where to go?
- Were residents given the choice to keep their own GP or join the homes dedicated GP Practice when they moved to Amherst Court Care Home.
- For residents who have lived at the home since 2018, did they feel the new system of a dedicated GP visiting the home had benefited them?
- Are the social care needs of the residents supported at the home with a programme of activities?
- Are residents offered support with other health services, such as a dental services, eye sight checks, etc.

How did we go about it?



Our trained Healthwatch staff and volunteers visited Acorn House Residential Care Home on 17th December 2019. These visits are known as Enter & View visits.

Prior to our visit, we provided printed questionnaires designed specifically for family and friends and we asked each home if they would kindly hand these out to family and friends as they visited their residents. These questionnaires were anonymous and had a freepost envelope included so that people could complete at their leisure and return to Healthwatch Medway directly.

During our visits, we spoke to residents and staff and asked them a series of set questions and we listened to their thoughts and experiences.

The following quotes in “italics” are direct quotes from residents (and family members who were there on the day we visited), taken down by our Trained Volunteers and staff during our visit.

We spoke to 6 residents and 2 members of staff during our visit.

In Summary

- The GP does visit the Home on a monthly basis, or as needed.
- The new enhanced GP service seems to have had a positive impact at this home with most residents saying they like the new service.
- Dentists, opticians and chiropodists do visit the home.

What have we recommended?

Based on the feedback from residents, we have made the following recommendations:

- The GP should visit the Home more frequently. NHS guidance states that the dedicated GP should visit each week.
- A Befriending service for residents should be explored to support residents
- Ensure residents have regular dental check-ups.
- Ensure the home always has a full schedule of staff with the capacity to ensure all residents needs are taken care of.

We will be following up with the home to check that they have implemented our recommendations.



Our Findings in Detail

*Please note some residents did not answer all questions

What did residents tell us?

We asked whether there was a choice when choosing a home for the resident and if so, what was important to them:

Out of the 5 residents who answered this question, 4 said they did choose Acorn House Residential Care Home, some made the decision with family members.

One resident told us they chose Acorn House Residential Care Home because it was close to family and friends.

One resident had chosen to return to Acorn House Residential Care Home after spending some time here some time ago.

We asked how long each resident had been living at Acorn House Residential Home and had they noticed any changes in services during that time:

Five residents we spoke to had lived at Acorn House for over 1 year with one of those residents having lived there for 7 years.

Two residents who answered this question said they had seen improvements in the services in the Home, and 3 residents said they thought it was about the same.

One resident told us that they thought the services offered at the Home since they moved in a year ago had worsened commenting:

“Short staffed. Sometimes I have difficulty getting to the toilet”.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan:

Two residents told us they were aware of their care plan with one other saying they thought there was one but had not seen it.

We wanted to know when residents had last seen a GP or practice nurse, and are appointments well co-ordinated and convenient?

Under the new NHS England Plan (2016) GP practices around the country will be paired with care homes with the expectation of carrying out a weekly round.

A report to the NHS England board meeting on a new 'enhanced health in care homes (EHCH)' model, published in 2016 says, care home residents 'are not having their needs properly assessed and addressed'. It says there should be one-to-one mapping of GP practices to care homes, with each resident having a named GP, across the whole of England. Under these plans, GPs have to carry out a weekly round in the care homes they cover.

Staff told us that the GP visits the home monthly or when required.

Two residents told us they had seen the GP within the last month. Another resident told us that they had seen the GP once since moving in 1 year ago, however they see the District Nurse weekly.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

One resident told us they had seen the GP within the last 6 months and commented that he had to go to the surgery himself.

Some further comments from residents:

“Easy to get an appointment, staff arrange this”.

“Ups and downs with appointments”.

We asked residents whether they made decisions around their medical needs?

Two residents told us that their family members discuss their medical needs with staff and another resident said that the District Nurse explains everything.

We asked residents whether they had been offered support by staff to access other health services e.g. dentist, chiropodist?

The CQC published a report in 2019 on oral care in Care Homes. Their findings show us that people in care homes do not always get the support they need with oral care with one third of care homes saying they found it difficult to access routine NHS dentistry services - domiciliary dental services should be in place in every town to support the needs of residents in care and nursing homes, whether this is through visits from dentists or the training of staff to support them in offering general oral care and hygiene to their residents.

Does a Dentist visit Acorn House to examine residents?

Residents told us that yes they have an optician coming to the home.

Does an Optometrist visit Acorn House Residential Care Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that yes, they see an optician

All six residents we spoke to said they had been offered access to other health services such as chiropody. Here are some of their comments:

“Yes, services come in and see us when required”.

“I make regularly visits to Maidstone for my eyes”.

“Not sure when last saw the dentist”.

“I have dentures, currently have mouth ulcers. Had dentures re-done but still giving me problems. Have ointment to ease the pain”.

“Can't recall when I saw the dentist last”.

“Saw a Dentist ages ago, I have ulcers on my gum and have difficulty eating. Would like to see a dentist re abscess and gum”.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

Social Activities at Acorn House Residential Care Home:

The residents told us that there are plenty of activities to get involved in, such as, music and singing, crafts, painting and drawing, games and quizzes. Children visit the Home from a local school.

Staff told us that there is a weekly activity schedule for residents to take part in.

Some further comments from residents:

“Food is quite good, and my bedroom is quite cosy”

“I like the company but would rather be home. Unable to care for myself. Visitors can come anytime”.

“I am happy here, people are lovely, nice garden and you can sit out in the Summer. I have things here that make me feel comfortable. I go and visit my daughter in a chair. My room is pleasant, I have my own furniture and pictures”.

One of the residents we spoke to had family visiting and they commented on how friendly the home was.



What did family and friends tell us?

Unfortunately, we did not receive any completed questionnaires from family or friends of residents at Acorn House Residential Care Home.

What did the staff at Acorn House Residential Care Home tell us?

We asked staff whether they had noticed any improvement since the enhanced GP service commenced, this is what they told us:

Staff told us they had noticed an improvement in services since the enhanced GP service came in.

How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?

Staff told us the GP visited monthly.

What proportion of residents are seen on those occasions and does the GP have enough time to see all the residents who wish to be seen?

Staff told us that the GP sees all the residents that require attention.

Does the GP refer residents to other healthcare specialists such as physiotherapists, dietitians and Parkinson disease nurses as frequently as you think they should?

“Yes, residents can be referred to MCH (Medway Community Healthcare) when needed and to Elizabeth House when necessary (Community Mental Health for Older People)”.

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

“Yes. Every member of staff is trained and it is updated annually”.

How do you ensure residents are hydrated and are eating well?

Do you have a schedule which includes checking on each resident at regular intervals?

“Fluids are always available in rooms and in the lounge. Charts are used and a traffic light system to show residents who may need to be offered more fluids”.

“Catheter residents are automatically on chart”.

“Residents have a day diary - I pads are used. We use a grading system in the dining room to ensure upkeep of who is eating what. We also watch residents’ weight.

“All food is cooked in-house”.

“Residents are offered refreshments at Break, Lunch, Tea-time, and Supper if wanted - a sandwich for example”.

Are refreshments offered to residents through the night? Is this logged?

Yes. All residents have jugs in their room.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

Pressure Sores/Pressure Ulcers - What is the procedure for checking residents and are all staff trained to identify early symptoms?

Staff told us that all staff do regular checks when undertaking personal care of residents.

If something is spotted during personal care, the Manager is alerted and if necessary, the District Nurse is called. This will be added to the resident's care plan and cream is used".

Staff told us that the District Nurse has not been called in for around a year.

Activities for the residents: Do you have a weekly schedule of activities for the residents to take part in if they wish to?

Staff told us that there are lots of activities for residents to get involved with, including, Church visits, arts and crafts, music, videos and children from a local nursery visit.

Are residents offered time outdoors and if so, how often do staff take residents outdoors (whether into the home's grounds or further afield)

"More often in the Summer. Smokers go outside when they wish".

"Some residents visit the Town, and some have families who come and take residents out".

If residents are taken outside less often than on a monthly basis - what is the reasoning for this?

Staff told us that time outdoors is dependent on safety, the weather and of course choice of the resident/ability of residents.

Befriending Service - we asked staff whether they thought a befriending service would benefit the residents:

Befrienders would be a group of Volunteers who would be appropriately vetted and trained and residents and their families would be approached and could sign up to the service.

Two members of staff said yes, they thought a befriending service would be welcomed.



General observations made by Healthwatch staff and volunteers during the visit:

Healthwatch were warmly welcomed on arrival and staff were helpful and friendly. The home was warm and pleasant with a relaxed atmosphere. The décor was pleasing to the eye and residents were calm and relaxed. The home has a pet bird in a cage in the lounge. The signage for shower rooms/lavatories is good with both pictures and words.

The Home has an in-house chef and laundry services.

Acorn House offers residents access to other health services including a Podiatrist, who visits regularly.

CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Acorn House Residential Care Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 6th January 2020.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Medway would like to thank the residents, family, friends and staff along with our volunteers for taking the time to contribute to this piece of work.

Disclaimer

Please note this report relates to what we saw and heard on the day of our visit. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients, family, friends and staff, only an account of what was contributed and observed during our visit on those days noted.



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