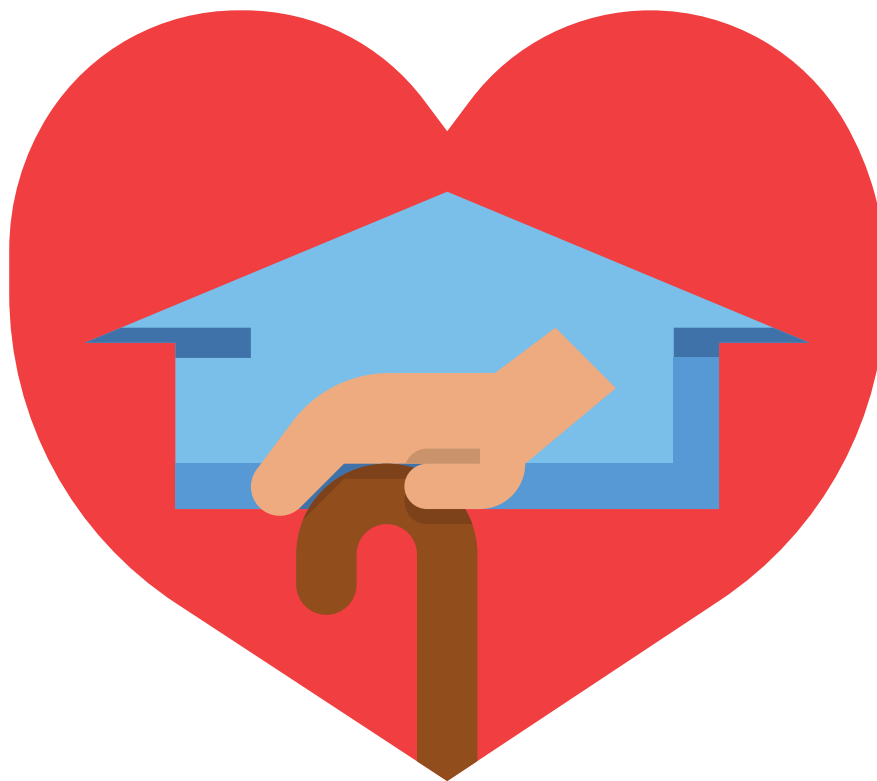


**Spotlight on Care Homes in  
Medway  
Berengrove  
Park Nursing Home,  
Gillingham**



**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](http://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 Berengrove Park Nursing Home in Gillingham 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 Berengrove Park Nursing 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 home's dedicated GP practice when they moved to Berengrove Park Nursing 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 Berengrove Park Nursing Home on 31st January 2020. 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 4 residents and 6 members of staff during our visit and we heard from 2 families.

## In Summary

- Two residents told us they chose Berengrove Park Nursing Home, one made the choice alongside family. One resident told us her Daughter made the choice and it was a good choice.
- Staff told us that the GP visits the Home every fortnight as part of the enhanced GP service although feedback from staff about the benefits of this service was mixed.
- Optician and dentists both visit the home although dental services seem difficult to access in a timely way.

## What have we recommended?

Based on the feedback from residents and what we saw during our visit, we have made the following recommendations.

- Activities for residents could be communicated more clearly to residents and families so that everyone knows what is available
- Improved access to the dental service should be explored
- Improved frequency and access to the GP should be implemented
- Seek solutions to encourage residents outside during dry weather

We will be following up with all the homes we have visited 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 residents whether they had a choice of Home when moving to a Care Home, this is what we heard:

Two residents told us that, alongside family, they did choose Berengrove Park Nursing Home. One resident said they knew about Berengrove Park from living locally.

We heard what was important to residents when choosing Berengrove Park Nursing Home:

All the residents who answered this question all said it was important to be close to family and friends.

We asked how long each resident had been living at Berengrove Park Nursing Home and had they notice any changes in services during that time?

Two residents had been living at Berengrove Park Nursing Home for longer than 1 year and said they had not seen any changes in service since moving in.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan:

Only one resident told us they were aware that they had a Care Plan.

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

Staff told us that their GP visits regularly on a fortnightly basis. According to NHS England's plan, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

One resident told us they see the GP every fortnight. One resident had only lived at Berengrove Park for a few weeks and had not had the need to see them as yet.

A resident who had been at the home for the longest told us:

"I am unsure. I have stomach pain but have not seen a GP about this as yet. I have not seen one for a few weeks".

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

Two residents told us their family speak to staff about their medical care and needs.



## Our Findings in Detail cont.

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

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 Berengrove Park Nursing Home to examine residents:**

Residents told us that the community dentist does visit although there can be a wait for visits.

**Does an Optometrist visit Berengrove Park Nursing Home to examine residents:**

Residents told us that the optician does visit.

Three of the residents we spoke to said they had been offered access to other health services such as chiropody. One resident told us their family member organises everything needed.

**Social Activities at Berengrove Park Nursing Home:**

Staff told us that there are activities scheduled every week.

However, none of the residents we spoke to could name any activities that the home organises. Some residents commented:

“I watch television”.

“I get bored because there’s not much to do. No activities and we do not go out for walks”.

“No activities are offered”.

One resident had a family member visiting and they told us they thought some activities were offered if residents wanted to get involved.



## What did family and friends tell us?

Families of the residents of Berengrove Park Nursing Home kindly answered a questionnaire for Healthwatch, here is what they said:

Please note: The word 'resident' is used to identify the resident in the home that family and friends are commenting on behalf of:

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

Only one family commented on this question, telling us:

“At the time, this home was the only nursing home with a vacancy. However, from our first visit our family were confident that the quality of care would be good”.

Health and GP service at Berengrove Park Nursing Home:

To gain an insight into the impact the new enhanced GP service was making on the resident's lives at Berengrove Park Nursing Home we asked family and friends whether they had noticed any changes in service. Do their loved ones have regular visits from the GP, has there been more support with their medical needs and therefore, has there been less visits to hospital and less outside medical intervention?

When choosing Berengrove Park Nursing Home, was the new enhanced GP service discussed with you?

Neither of the families who responded to our questionnaire had any comments on this. One family did tell us that they were aware that residents had a choice of keeping their own GP or registering to the care homes dedicated GP when moving in.

If the resident is using the care home's GP, have you noticed any changes or differences to the medical support over the past six months, for example, regularity of visits by the GP; less need for hospital visits/outside medical intervention?

One family told us that they had not seen any changes in the GP service offered at Berengrove Park.

This family told us that they thought that Dental support was difficult to access and commented:

“I think the Dental service should be provided in the same way as the new enhanced GP service”.

On the day that the GP is due to visit, are residents asked whether they would like to be seen during this visit?

Only one family commented on this question, saying:

“The nurses have always advised me if the GP is needed and have taken the appropriate action”.

## Our Findings in Detail cont.

When we asked how satisfied family and friends were with the GP service at Berengrove Park Nursing Home:

One family told us they were satisfied with the GP service at the Home.

Are family members involved in the Medical Care of the resident?

One family said yes, they are involved in the medical care of their family member.

We asked, was the resident able to go outdoors unaided? If so, do you think they would like to be taken out by staff?

Both of the families who responded told us that their family member was unable to go outdoors unaided. One family commented that they visit the home each day.





## What did the Staff at Berengrove Park Nursing Home tell us?

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

We heard a mixed response from staff, here is what they told us:

“Since the GP had started coming in regularly (once every two weeks) it is much better than each resident having their own GP, or none at all. The GP’s themselves are excellent, very helpful and good with the residents.”

Staff told us it had made a difference not having to ring different practices for each resident, having to speak to different receptionists each time, some of whom they told us were not always helpful.

Two members of staff told us it is harder now to get a GP to visit.

**How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?**

Staff told us that the GP visits every fortnight.

**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 said that the GP sees all the residents who wish to be seen and has enough time to spend with each.

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

Staff told us that the GP does refer residents to services such as the dietician.

**Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?**

Staff told us that the Infection Prevention Lead at the Home is the Matron. Staff are trained regularly and the last training (at the time of our visit) was in 2019.

**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?**

Staff told us that they use food and fluid charts. Residents are always encouraged to take fluids and to eat. They take notes on timings of food intake and residents are weighted regularly.

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

Staff confirmed that residents are offered refreshments at night and it is logged.

## **What did the Staff at Berengrove Park Nursing Home tell us cont.**

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

Residents are checked daily during personal care. Cream is added if required and concerns are acted upon straightaway. If necessary, the Nurse is alerted.

Activity's 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 was a schedule of activities.

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

All staff told us that residents are taken out in warmer weather. In summer this can be once a month.

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

Staff told us this would be due to the weather or the residents decision.

Befriending Service - we asked both Staff and family and friends 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 people told us it would be nice to have a befriending service in place for when family/friends cannot visit.



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

Healthwatch were warmly welcomed on arrival and staff were helpful and friendly.

The décor was pleasant and felt warm and inviting and the home was found to be clean.

The residents seemed to really enjoy the chance to talk to us and the conversation was free and easy.

When meeting residents in the Lounge, it was noted that there were no staff present, although they were within calling distance. At one point one of the Healthwatch representatives visiting had to fetch a member of staff to deal with a spillage.

The Home has in-house chefs and laundry services. Berengrove Park offers residents access to other health services including a Podiatrist, who visits regularly.

### CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Berengrove Park Nursing Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 29th July 2019.

### 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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