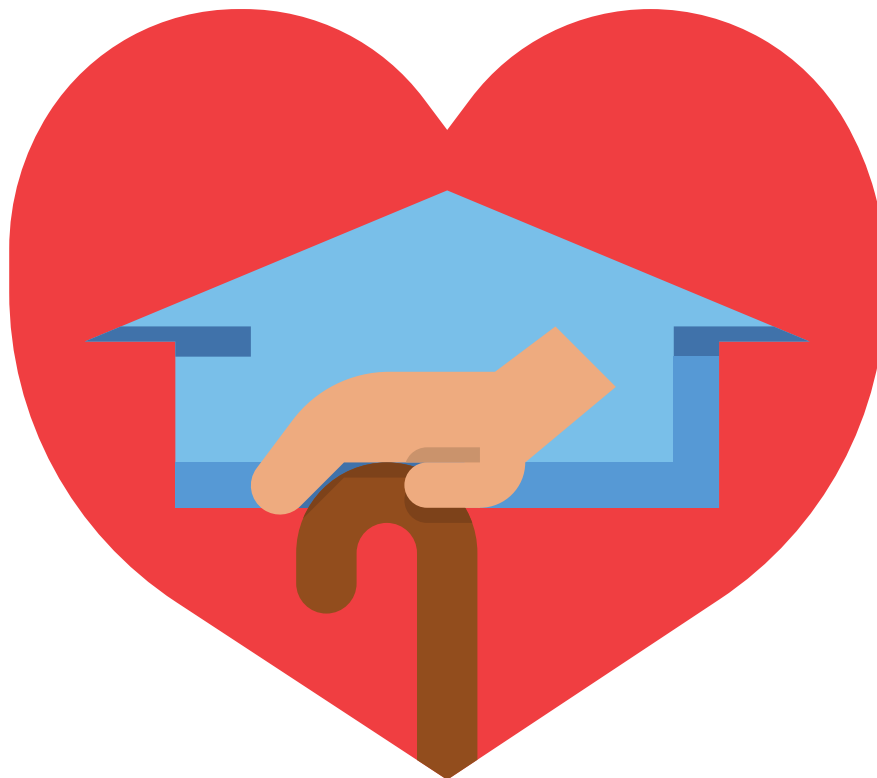


# **Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway**

## **Byron Lodge Residential 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 Byron Lodge Residential 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 Byron Lodge Residential 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 homes dedicated GP practice when they moved to Byron Lodge Residential 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 Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home on 21st 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 7 residents and 4 members of staff during our visit and we heard from 6 families.

# What did people tell us?

## In Summary

- Two residents told us they did not have a choice when moving into Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home.
- Most of the residents who spoke to us told us they thought the service offered at the home was the same as when they moved in, with one resident saying they thought it had gone worse.
- All the families who answered our questionnaire told us they had chosen Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home when their family member need to move into a Home.
- The GP visits the home every fortnight and the Practice Nurse also visits.
- We heard individual stories about lack of access to a physio and struggles for people to use the lounge and join in with the activities.
- Families felt that the enhanced GP service had been beneficial.

## What have we recommended?

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

- We would encourage the home to let families know prior to a resident having a GP visit in case they have any concerns or questions to send in advance.
- Ensure that the GP takes enough time to visit all residents who require to be seen during the visit.
- Ensure that if a prescription is written for a resident, this is actioned the same day it is prescribed to save residents having to wait unnecessarily to start their course of medication.
- Activities for residents should reflect the hobbies and wishes of the residents.
- Explore a befriending service for the benefit of residents.

We will be following up with all the homes we have visited to check that they have implemented our recommendations.



## What did people tell us?

\*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:

5 out of the 7 resident who spoke to us told us that they had chosen Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home, 3 of those residents said their friends/family helped make the decision.

Two residents told us they did not have a choice when moving into Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home and commented:

“No, I had been in hospital previously. I had carers at home, but they felt I needed 24-hour care, so I was referred here”.

“No. I was in Medway Maritime Hospital and lost the use of my legs. They moved me here by ambulance. My daughter was not notified that I had been brought here”.

We heard what was important to residents when choosing Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home:

Most residents told us it was important to have friendly caring staff and for the home to be clean and homely. The level of care was also important.

Residents told us:

“The staff being caring. They are lovely here”.

“I didn't choose it but likes it now. Staff are very caring”.

“It is important to make friends”.

We asked how long each resident had been living at Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home and had they notice any changes in services during that time:

Six of the residents that we spoke to had been at Byron Lodge for over 1 year with four of these being residents for over 3 years.

5 residents told us that they thought the services offered at the home since they moved in was about the same.

One resident told us they thought the services they received had improved since moving in and one resident told us that they thought the services at the home had got worse since they moved into Byron Lodge.

“I have eczema. When my cream runs out, I have to wait for a new prescription, sometimes I have to wait for over a week. I don't know why there is a delay”.

“It is nice and clean, the food is good, the staff are lovely, and I can go downstairs if I want to”.

## **Our Findings in Detail cont.**

### **We asked residents whether they had a care plan:**

Staff told us that all residents have a Care Plan in place.

Only 2 residents spoke to us about their care plan, they told us that they were a nurse so they were familiar with concept of care plans.

One resident told us:

“Not aware of a Care Plan. There was a delay in transferring my medical records to the Home. There isn’t a plan for my eczema”.

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

Staff told us that the GP visits fortnightly and in between those visits the Practice Nurse attends. According to NHS England’s plan, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

Six residents answered this question. One resident told us that he thought he was going to see one recently about his tummy problems but has not. His daughter helps with his medical arrangements.

Two residents told us they had seen the GP within the last month

“It’s been longer than six months”.

“Can’t remember. I was added to the Home’s GP list when I moved in. I see different Doctors each time.” This resident was not aware of how to contact the GP.

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

Three residents told us they did feel involved in their medical care.

One resident, who clearly had difficulty with their hearing, told us:

One resident, who clearly had difficulty with their hearing, told us: “They don’t talk to me about my care”.

Further comments from residents included:

“If I want to see a doctor, I ask the staff. I was prescribed pain killers but don’t need them”.

One resident told us that they had a fall and broke their hip. This was repaired, the resident said that the Physio told them to trust the repair and stand up. They did so and it broke again. Since this time, the resident has had a stroke and now is very limited in movement on one side. The resident has not got out of bed since and finds it very difficult to reach things on their tray - apparently the bed height is no longer adjustable. This resident showed us a small plastic device that they use to reach things, but it was clear how difficult it was. This resident expressed that they would like to see a physiotherapist. He is disappointed that one has not been to see him to see if he has a chance of regaining some mobility

## Our Findings in Detail cont.

Another resident explained that they had visited hospital in October about his ongoing stomach problems. The resident expressed that they were upset that the results of tests were sent to the GP but not to the Home. A family member had taken him to the hospital.

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 Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that the dentist did visit them in the home. 3 residents told us they had seen a Dentist recently. Two residents told us they had false teeth.

Does an Optometrist visit Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home to examine residents:

We were told that an optician does visit the home.

All 6 residents who spoke to said they had been offered access to other health services such as chiropody.

Social Activities at Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home:

Staff told us that the activities are organised in the lounge every day. If residents cannot come to the lounge, they are offered 1:1 activity in their room. Activities include chair exercise, reminiscence session, singing groups visit the home and there was a 'zoo lab' that visits with animals for the residents to pet.

Residents told us:

“I would like to participate but can't get downstairs. The chairs in the lounge are not comfortable- I need to be able to lean back because of my bloated stomach. The chair in the bedroom is not comfortable either - there does not seem to be a suitable chair here for me to use. The home bought one up for me to try this morning, but it was not quite right. Sitting hurts my stomach”.

“I would like to do chair exercise which is offered weekly but can't get downstairs. I would like to socialise”.

“I have been offered things to do but prefer to watch TV. I went to the lounge once but did not like it. Also, I didn't like the wheelchair, it's too big”.

“I try and read the newspaper; I would like large print reading material”.

One resident told us they go shopping in a wheelchair with staff. Another resident told us they find it difficult to take part in activities because they are very deaf.

## What did family and friends tell us?

Families of the residents of Byron Lodge Residential 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:

Half of the families who responded told us that their loved one chose Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home and had a choice. The other half told us they made the choice for their loved one.

"She was in no condition at the time to choose. I chose it because it seemed very homely and friendly - better than others I looked at".

"Yes, we had a choice. Chose Byron Lodge due to cost, location and staff".

"Yes. This home was chosen as it appeared to meet Mums needs and was near to immediate family for visiting".

Health and GP service at Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home:

To gain an insight into the impact the new enhanced GP service was making on the resident's lives at Byron Lodge Residential 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 Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home, was the new enhanced GP service discussed with you?

Only one family out of the 6 who responded told us that the enhanced GP service was discussed with them.

Two families told us that they were aware that the resident could choose to stay with their own GP or move to the Homes dedicated GP Practice.





## **Our Findings in Detail cont.**

We asked whether residents had encountered any problems in seeing a GP when the need arises:

No one had encountered any problems with the Care Homes GP.

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?

There were no negative comments from the families who responded.

“Yes. More contact with GP and more feedback”.

“Yes, patient was transferred from Watford General Hospital and is now receiving better care”.

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

Two families told us they are aware when the GP is visiting and ask if the resident would like to be seen.

One family told us “Always informed of the Dr's visit”.

However another family told us “Never know when the GP is coming”.

When we asked how satisfied family and friends were with the GP service at Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home:

From the people whose family member had seen the GP, three families were satisfied but 2 families were dis-satisfied.

“very satisfied. Very thorough with the care”.

“Very satisfied. Excellent care”.

“fairly satisfied. No, consultation with immediate family”.

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

Three families told us they were involved with the medical care of their family member but three families said that they weren't. Another wasn't sure.

When asked whether they knew of a Care Plan in place for their family member:

Three families told us that they were aware of the resident's care plan, but three families were unsure.

## **Our Findings in Detail cont.**

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

All the families who responded told us that their loved one was unable to go outside alone with one saying they think the resident would like to go outside in warmer weather.

How often is the resident taken outdoors?

One family told us their loved one is taken out every 6 months and another told us their loved one was taken out monthly.

“When mum is well enough, every six months”.

“They have the use of a disabled bus once a month”.

“Once a month for shopping trip”.

## **What did the staff at Byron Lodge Residential 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:

One member of staff told us they had seen some changes in service since the enhanced GP service came in. They told us:

“Yes and no. The lead GP does come in. Also, the Practice Nurse. It’s convenient to have residents registered locally”.

How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?

Staff told us that the GP visits twice a month with the Practice Nurse visiting in between those times.

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 often only has time to see a maximum of eight residents but often only 7 are seen.

Staff told us that one of the problems with the service is, when they have concerns about a resident after 3pm they would not be able to get a visit from the GP until the following day which can cause frustrating and concern.

## **What did the Staff at Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home tell us cont.**

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

One member of staff told us the GP did refer residents but another member of staff told us:

“We do that ourselves. For example, the Dementia care service. 75% of residents at Byron Lodge have some form of dementia”.

Staff receive training for Parkinson’s, Dementia Care and Safeguarding.

Staff were complimentary about the support they get from Elizabeth House, Dementia Care. They told us it used to take 6 months to a year before they would come out to see residents who were referred, but now they have a dedicated triage team to do the initial assessment, and the last referral Byron Lodge made resulted in a visit within 12 days. 75% of residents have some form of dementia so this improvement has had a big impact on their residents.

End of Life residents are seen fortnightly. Bryon Lodge works with a Palliative Care Nurse from Medway Community Healthcare.

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

Staff told us that the Registered Nurse is the Infection Control lead and that all health care staff have been trained in infection prevention.

**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 charts and that all residents are ‘at risk’

All carers are trained in Health and Hydration. All residents have a jug of juice/water by their bedside and there are jugs on the table in the lounge. Staff offer regular drinks such as tea, coffee, milkshakes or milk.

Charts are kept showing what residents have eaten after each meal.

A choice of food is offered to residents each morning. The Home caters for specialist diets.

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

Staff told us that the kitchen is always open. Residents can have food & drink whenever they please.

They have a hot drink choice before bedtime and a selection of snacks in the evening. All food and fluid intake are logged.

## **What did the Staff at Byron Lodge Residential 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?

Staff informed us that all staff are trained and able to recognise pressure sores. All rooms have an information poster about "spot the pressure".

Staff told us that none of their residents have pressure sores and that all residents have special mattresses to prevent pressure issues.

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

Yes, there is an activity schedule and there is an Activities Co-ordinator at the Home. If residents cannot come to the Lounge, they are offered 1:1 activity in their room.

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

Staff told us, yes residents are offered time outdoors.

One member of staff told us this can cause problems as residents can only go out in maximum groups of four. This means they need 4 wheelchairs and 4 carers, unless family members can help.

They take residents shopping at Dockside or Hempsted Valley and have picnics in the park in the Summer.

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

Staff told us it was the residents choice, but also a lack of enough wheelchairs or carers. The home is currently investigating transport options.

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.

Four people said 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 Matron has worked at the Home since 2011.

The home is clean, comfortable and had a pleasant relaxed atmosphere. The décor is nice and there are flower arrangements around the dining room. Food is cooked on site and there is a varied menu.

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

### CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home - Requires Improvement . Visited on 1st August 2019.

### Acknowledgements

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

### Disclaimer

Please note this report relates to the findings on the days stated at the beginning of this report. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients, family, friends and carers, only an account of what was contributed and observed during our visit on those days noted.



Healthwatch Medway

5A New Rd Ave, Chatham ME4 6BB

✉ [enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com)

📘 @healthwmedway

🐦 @HWMedway

📷 @HealthwatchMedway

☎ 0800 136 656

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Medway