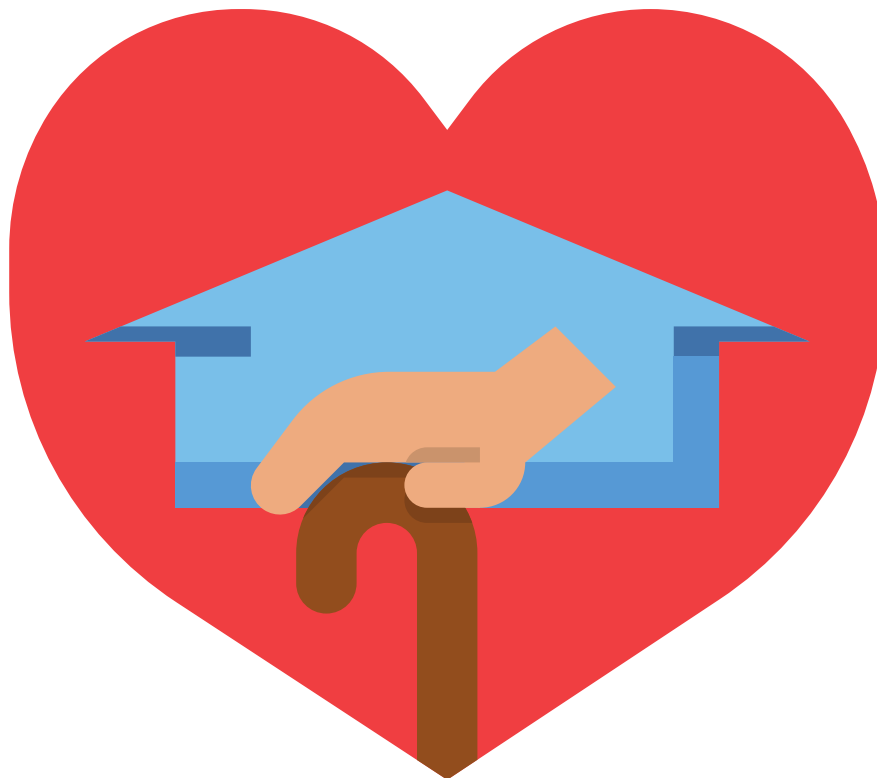


**Spotlight on Care Homes in
Medway
Charing House Care & Nursing
Home, Gillingham**



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

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 Charing House Care & Nursing Home, 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 Charing House Care & 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 Charing House Care & 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 service, eye sight checks, etc.

How did we go about it?



Our trained Healthwatch staff and volunteers visited Charing House Care & Nursing Home on 10th 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 3 residents, 3 members of staff during our visit and heard from 7 families.

What did people tell us?

In Summary

- Families told us that the new enhanced GP service was not discussed with them when their loved one moved into Charing House Care & Nursing Home with one commenting that “unfortunately our own GP will not visit”.
- Staff told us that the GP visits the home every week but residents told us that they found it hard to see the GP.
- Staff talked about a noticeable improvement since the new GP service commenced with comments of “better system in place”, “more efficient when responding to needs.”

What have we recommended?

Based on feedback from residents, we have recommended 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.
- Residents should have regular access to a chiropodist service.
- 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:

Two out of the 3 residents that we spoke to told us that they did choose Charing House Care & Nursing Home themselves. The third told us that they didn't have a choice of home when they came to move into a Care Home.

We asked what was important to residents when choosing Charing House Care & Nursing Home:

Residents told us it was important to move somewhere that was close to family members and somewhere they could feel safe.

We asked how long each resident had been living at Charing House Care & Nursing Home and had they notice any changes in services during that time?

None of the residents we spoke to had lived at Charing House Care & Nursing Home for longer than 6 months.

One resident said they thought the services were just the same as when they moved in 6 months ago.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan:

Two of the residents said they knew they had a care plan in place with the third person telling us that they were not aware of a care plan.

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 regularly on a weekly basis and every effort is made to see resident necessitating at consultation. According to NHS England's plan, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

One family of a resident at Charing House told us "You don't always get a GP when needed" with another commenting "Have rarely seen the GP".

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

One resident said they had a small involvement when decisions were made around their medical needs.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

We asked residents whether they had been offered support by staff to access other health services such as 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 Charing House Care & Nursing Home :to examine residents:

Residents told us that they did see a dentist at the home. One resident told us that their family deals with their dental appointments.

Does an Optometrist visit Charing House Care & Nursing Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that the optician does visit the home.

Social Activities at Charing House Care & Nursing Home:

The Home produces a monthly newsletter which details the activities available to residents along with other interesting information.

One member of staff informed us that Therapy Dogs visit the residents.

We heard that monthly minibus trips are arranged plus weekly park walks, depending on the weather. There are also trips to local school, clubs, and pub lunches.

Residents commented:

“I try to get involved but am limited as I’m in a wheelchair”.

“I am aware there are activities but do not wish to participate”.



What did family and friends tell us?

Families of the residents of Charing House Care & 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:

Six out of the 7 families who commented said they the family had chosen the home and offered some insight into why they chose Charing House Care & Nursing Home:

“Yes, we chose it cause of first impressions was lovely - looked clean and cosy”.

“It seemed to be the best at the time, after viewing several nursing homes, but is very expensive as we are self-funding”.

“My mother has dementia and could no longer take care of herself. When selecting a care home, the family, chose this as we were made very welcome when we walked in”.

“As next of kin we made the decision. Being fast tracked did not give us much time to make a decision. The home was close to where we live”.

“She was in hospital and had no choice in coming to this care home”.

Health and GP service at Charing House Care & Nursing Home:

To gain an insight into the impact the new enhanced GP service was making on the resident's lives at Charing House Care & 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 Charing House Care & Nursing Home, was the new enhanced GP service discussed with you?

Five families told us that the new enhanced GP service was not discussed with them when their loved one moved into the home however, they were made aware that their loved one did have a choice of keeping their own GP. Two families were aware of the enhanced GP service saying, “Yes, but not straight away”.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

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

Two families told us:

“Yes, we have, rarely seen the GP”.

“We don't always get a GP when needed”.

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?

Families told us:

“She has only seen the GP once, when admitted in October” which is 2 months ago however, they've not needed a GP as yet”.

“They're not very supportive and we don't think the treatment is right”.

“Residents have to ask to be seen”.

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 said that their family member had been asked whether they would like to be seen by the GP when the GP visits.

Five families told us that their family member had not been asked whether they would like to be seen when the GP visits.

We asked whether it was easy to access the GP outside of regular scheduled visiting times?

“Yes, didn't see the GP but they were taken to hospital with catheter problems”.

When we asked how satisfied family and friends were with the GP service at Charing House Care & Nursing Home:

Four families told us that they were fairly satisfied with the GP service that was delivered at Charing House Care & Nursing Home with one commenting:

“Not very talkative and you don't always get the care needed”.

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

We asked whether it was easy to access the GP outside of regular scheduled visiting times:

“Yes, didn't see GP but was taken to Hospital with catheter problems”.

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

All the families that commented on this said that they were involved in the medical care of their family member.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

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

All the families that commented told us that they were aware of their family members care plan with one commenting:

“Unfortunately, didn’t reach his goal - hoping to come home”.

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 commented told us that their family member was not able to go outside unaided for various reasons.

One said they thought their family member would like to go outside, weather permitting, and another told us that they thought their family member would like to be taken out for shopping trips.

How often is the resident taken outdoors?

“Monthly”.

“Never”.

“Not been outside with the home”.

“Doesn’t go out would like to go shopping”.

What did the staff at Charing House Care & 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:

All three members of staff that spoke to us said Yes, they have noticed an improvement since the enhanced GP service started telling us that the GP is now more efficient in responding to needs of the residents.

How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?

Staff told us that the GP visits the home every week.

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 as many residents as necessary when they visit, if further residents have the need to see the GP, they are added to the visit list.

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

Staff told us that the GP refers residents for physiotherapy, to the dietician and for Parkinson’s disease support.

What did the Staff at Charing House Care & Nursing Home tell us cont.

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

Staff told us that there is an infection control lead and that staff have regular training.

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 each resident is checked hourly and they are encouraged to drink fluids which are offered on a regular basis. All rooms have water jugs.

Fluid charts are used for residents who need monitoring. Nutrition charts are kept which logs all their intake such as meals and snacks. Plus residents weight is monitored monthly.

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

Staff told us that refreshments are available and any intake is logged.

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

Staff told us the focus is on prevention. Staff are trained on body map/position chart and air mattresses are used. Skin integrity of residents is checked regularly during personal care. If necessary, the nurse will be contacted.

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 is a weekly schedule of activities, the home also has therapy dog visits.

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 that time outdoors is offered to residents on a daily or weekly basis, dependant on the weather. Residents are offered trips to the park and to have tea outside. There are also trips out to the Sava Centre in a minibus.

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

We were told it's dependant on the choice of the residents and the weather.

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.

Three 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:

On the day we visited the Home had a Strategic Improvement Plan in place.

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 bright and pleasing to the eye with good signage and access.

CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Charing House Care & Nursing Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 22nd November 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.



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