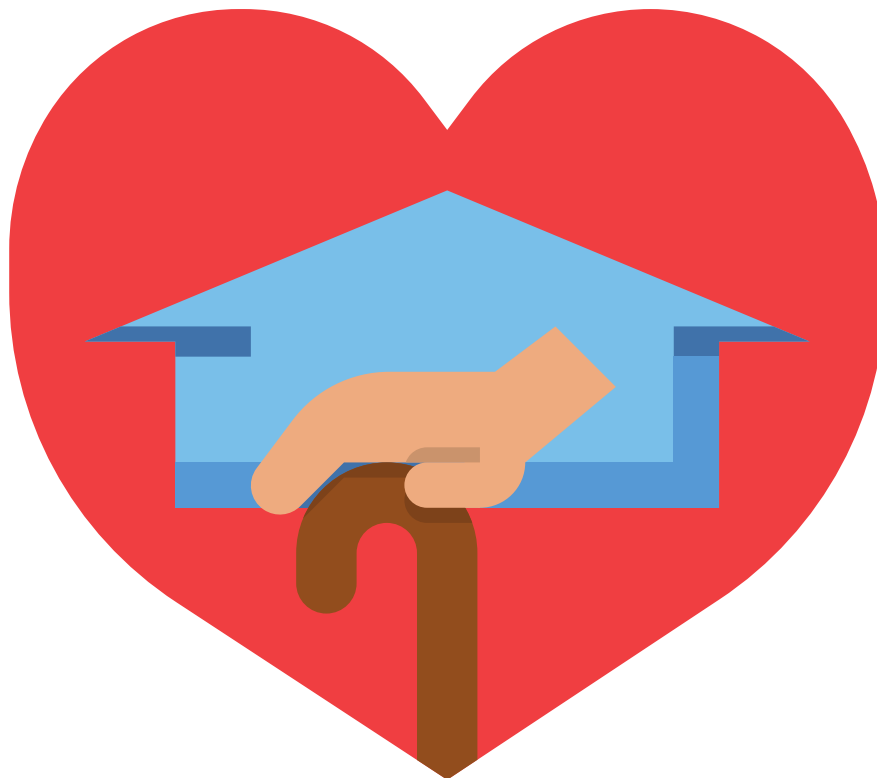


Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway

Chimnies Care Home, Allhallows



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 Chimnies Care Home in Care Home in Allhallows 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 Chimnies 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 Chimnies Care Home, Hoo.
- 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 Chimnies Care Home on 24th 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 2 residents, 2 members of staff during our visit. We also heard from two families.

What did people tell us?

In Summary

- The GP does not make regular visits and there are delays if medication is required.
- One resident who had lived at Chimnies Care Home for 8 years and said they had not noticed any changes in the service offered at the Home.
- The two families told us that their loved one had not experienced any problems accessing the GP at Chimnies Care Home.
- Staff told us that they had not seen benefits to the GP service since the enhanced GP service started.

What have we recommended?

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

- Improved frequency and access to the GP should be implemented. NHS guidance states that the care homes dedicated GP should visit each week.
- Annual health checks should be in place for all residents over 75 years of age.
- Residents should have access to a regular dental service.
- Access to an optician should be provided.
- Activities for residents should reflect the hobbies and wishes of the residents and there should be a regular weekly schedule of activities offered to 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:

Both residents that we spoke to said that they did choose Chimnies Care Home, both made the decision after spending a short spell at Chimnies.

They told us:

“Yes, I chose the Home. Other homes were full up. This one was friendly. I was here for a week in the summer and staff were very good and I got on very well. My daughter looked around and liked it”.

“Yes, I chose the Home. I was suffering from depression and stayed a fortnight and then decided to stay on. I found living on my own made me anxious, everything is taken care of here. Someone visits me each week”.

We asked what was important to residents when choosing Chimnies Care Home:

The residents we spoke to told us that it was important to have caring, helpful staff, good food and for the home to be clean.

We asked how long each resident had been living at Chimnies Care Home and had they notice any changes in services during that time:

Only one of the residents we spoke to had been at Chimnies Care Home for over 1 year - this particular resident had lived at Chimnies for 8 years. This resident said they hadn't noticed any changes in the service at the home.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan?

Both of the residents knew about their 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 their GP does not visit the home weekly. According to NHS England's guidance, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

One resident told us they had seen the GP within the last month and commented that they thought their care was well co-ordinated and joined up. The other resident couldn't recall when they last saw the GP but said it was some time ago.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

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

Both residents said that they were involved in their medical care and discuss any worries with the Senior Carer or the Manger.

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 Chimnies Care Home to examine residents:

Residents told us they had no access to a dentist.

Does an Optometrist visit Chimnies Care Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that the optician doesn't visit the home.

One resident told us they had not seen a dentist since they moved in five months ago.

Another said, "If I need to see a dentist, I would get an appointment with the dentist at Stoke and a family member would take me. My family also take me to the optician at Hoo".

Both residents told us they could access other health services such as chiropody.

Social Activities at Chimnies Care Home:

Staff told us that there is a weekly schedule of activities for residents to take part in, including, a lay reader who brings communication from the local church to residents in a group every four weeks.

When we spoke to resident's they told us:

"I would like some more activities, something organised otherwise I am just sitting here watching TV or reading a book and its gets a bit boring. It would be nice to have something to look forward to. I would like quizzes and debates".

"We don't have a lot of activities. I play cards once or twice a week. There's usually bingo every week. There are not many active people here. I would like the home to organise exercise. They used to have someone come in but as few residents were taking part - they stopped".

One resident told us that they did not think there were enough staff to supervise activities. They did have their nails painted recently which they enjoyed.

Some further comments from residents:

“I sit out between 20-30 minutes every day, including at this time of year. I just sit out, maybe read a book, usually after lunch. Sometimes my Husband or Daughter take me out for trips”

Someone takes the resident out in their wheelchair but they don't need someone with them all the time. The resident told us they just ask the staff when they want to go out.

“If it's a nice warm day I walk around the grounds, it's a bit of exercise. I go on my own with a walking stick. I can go out when I like. If I feel like going out, I open the door and walk around. The only occasion when I go out of the homes grounds is when family takes me”.

What did family and friends tell us?

Family and Friends of the residents of Chimnies Care Home kindly answered a questionnaire for Healthwatch.

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:

“Yes, we did have a choice. We made a decision together; it seemed welcoming, clean and the staff were nice”.

“Chimnies was recommended to me and my Mother, the choice was therefore ours as she is self-funding”.

Health and GP service at Chimnies Care Home:

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

Both families told us that they weren't told about the enhanced GP service. However, one family did say that their loved one had decided to stay with their own GP when moving into Chimnies Care Home.

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?

“The GP recently seems to visit the care home more regularly”.

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

One family said: “My Mother tells the staff when she needs to see a GP”.

When we asked how satisfied family and friends were with the GP service at Chimnies Care Home:

Both families told us they were satisfied with the GP service at the Home.

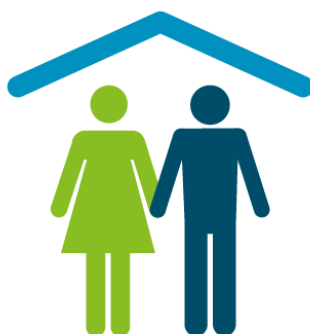
Are family members involved in the Medical Care of the resident?:

Both families said they were involved with the medical care of their loved one.

“I am very happy with the care my mother gets from the care home and the staff, the GP and the Medway Maritime Hospital”.

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

One family told us that that they were aware that their family member had a Care Plan in place at the Home.



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?

One family told us that their loved one is unable able to outside unaided.

Another family said: “They can go outside without help into the garden. It makes her happy. I take my mother out to lunch every week too”.

What did the staff at Chimnies 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 didn't feel there had been any improvement in the GP service since the new enhanced GP system came into practice. Instead that talked to us about a reduction in the service in some areas.

The GP doesn't visit residents regularly, only visiting when they are particularly asked to. Staff told us that the GP Practice does not offer the annual health check that GP practices are contractually obliged to offer everyone over 75 years of age.

“There haven't been any changes coinciding with the introduction of the enhanced GP service in June 2018. Last year a paramedic practitioner started coming out, usually instead of the GP”.

Staff told us that they preferred the situation before, when residents were treated by the local GP. The paramedic practitioner cannot write prescriptions so she has to go back to the surgery and talk to a doctor, who may then write a prescription. This causes a delay. This staff member gave us a recent example of the service:

“Yesterday the paramedic practitioner visited a resident with a chest infection. In the past the home would have got the prescription that day and have faxed it to the pharmacy. Now we are not getting medication to give to the resident until later the following day, in this case the afternoon of the following day”.

“Over the past few months it has always been the paramedic practitioner who calls unless she is on holiday, in which case the GP will call instead”.

Community nurses visit the home and do dressings and they can operate syringe drivers; this means that residents with end-of-life nursing needs can be cared for at the home.

“The pharmacy side of the operation works well; even if the delivery person has already called on any particular day, they will come back later to deliver further medicines which have been ordered”.

What did the staff at tell us cont.

How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?

Staff told us the GP only visits when asked to visit to attend a particular resident.

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 they like to keep residents in the home at the end of life if possible:

“We can cope with the help of good doctors and district nurses. Nursing procedures would have to be done by district nurses. We talk to residents about end-of-life care. In the past we have only had to move three residents on. The circumstances in which residents have to be asked to leave have to be really extreme”.

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

Staff told us that the manager in the infection prevention lead and all staff are trained on 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 charts are used for every resident charting food and fluid intake. The charts cover morning, lunch and night-time intake. Staff note down how much each resident eats during mealtimes. A senior member of staff monitors the charts and always encourage fluid intake. Staff always encourage fluid intake.

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

“A lot of residents are capable of buzzing and asking for example for a cup of tea throughout the night, and they get it”.

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 have had training.

Residents are checked daily when helping them to wash and dress. The community nurses come in and do dressings and they can operate syringe drivers; this means residents with end-of-life nursing needs can be cared for at the Home.

“Carers will turn residents in their beds if necessary, say, two hourly”.

What did the Staff at Chimnies Care Home tell us cont.

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

The home produces a weekly schedule with a large number of activity options including, going outside to see the donkey and ponies in the field, one-to-one contact, bingo, movies, reminiscence sessions and 'sherry afternoon' (which is sherry with Sunday lunch). There is no activity co-ordinator, the carers organise activities themselves.

There is an annual visit by children from the local school to sing carols.

"We ask residents at lunch time which they would prefer to do on that day. Five or six residents will want to take part in an activity, but the remainder like to do their own thing and don't want to be disturbed".

"We organised an outing and a good number of residents said they would like to go so we booked the bus. Residents then became agitated and the owner thought they might be panicking about going out, for instance, what about access to toilets? Would a doctor be around? Would they enjoy the day? We asked residents whether they would prefer to cancel, and they said they would and that if they went out they would prefer to do so with their family"

As a result of this staff told us that the manager is trying to enhance activities that take place on the premises such as enjoying tea and cakes while watching films and playing bingo. An exercise person has come in to organise exercises and debates.

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 residents are offered time outdoors daily, whenever they wish. In summer they will sit out.

The home does not have its own bus so does not organise outside outings but some residents go out with their families.

"One resident goes out on his own and staff look out of the windows to check he is all right. Another resident who is in a wheelchair goes out for 15 minutes every day, again, staff monitor this through the window".

There is a bus stop just outside the home. Staff told us that one resident goes to a day clinic once a week. This resident had a stroke and gets speech and language therapy at the clinic.



What did the Staff at Chimnies Care Home tell us cont.

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.

One person said they thought it would be nice to have a befriending service in place for when family/friends can't visit.

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

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

This is a relatively small home that appears to be resident centred, providing a comfortable and supportive environment, with a committed staff. There is plenty of space in which residents can socialise and engage in activities. Should the home decide to take residents with dementia in future, careful thought should be given as to how this can be done without reducing the freedom of movement within the building and into the grounds and overall quality of life of the existing residents and those future residents who do not have dementia.

The Home has in-house chefs and laundry services. Chimnies Care Home offers residents access to other health services including a podiatrist, who visits regularly.



CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Chimnies Care Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 28th January 2020.

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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