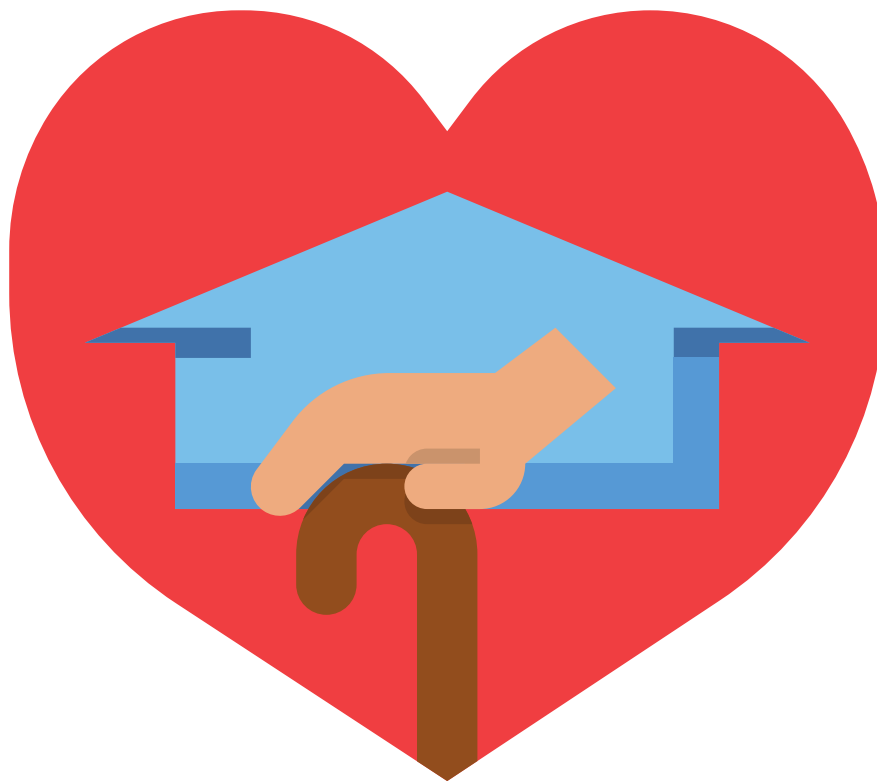


# **Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway**

## **Fort Horsted Nursing 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](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 Fort Horsted Nursing 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 Fort Horsted 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 Fort Horsted 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 Fort Horsted Nursing Home on 11th 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. We also heard from one family about their experiences.

## In Summary

- All 6 residents that we spoke to said that, along with their families, they had chosen Fort Horsted Nursing Home.
- The GP visits the home every fortnight with support from the Practice Nurse in between
- Two residents felt that the GP service had improved
- Staff told us about improvements in the services offered by their GP service since the new enhanced GP service was put in place.
- The home has access to a minibus to enable them to organise outings.

## What have we recommended?

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

- The GP should visit the home more regularly. NHS guidance states that the care homes dedicated GP should visit each week.
- 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.
- Families and residents should be clearly informed about the enhanced GP service and that they can opt out if they wish.
- An improved, and more diverse calendar of activities should be put in place to ensure residents are active and stimulated.

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:

All six residents that we spoke to told us that they had choose Fort Horsted Nursing Home. Two of them made the decision alongside family.

We heard what was important to residents when choosing Fort Horsted Nursing Home:

Most residents said that they choose Fort Horsted Nursing Home because it was close to their family and friends.

Residents told us it was important to move somewhere that was clean and homely, warm and comfortable. One resident told us their brother and sister where both at the home, so this made the decision easy for her.

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

Five residents we spoke to had been at Fort Horsted Nursing Home for over 1 year. "I have definitely improved. I came out of hospital and was told I wouldn't walk again or eat properly again. Now I can eat what I want easily. My legs haven't worked properly for years but I can move around the home ok".

"It is easy to see a GP".

"Services have improved. I moved to the home's GP when I moved in as my old surgery was in a different area".

We asked residents whether they had a care plan:

Three residents didn't know whether they had a care plan.

One resident, who had family with her at the time of our visit, told us that the family often discuss their needs with the staff.

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

Four of the residents we spoke to had seen the GP recently and two couldn't remember when they'd last seen them. One person had seen the nurse for a flu jab recently.

## Our Findings in Detail cont.

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

One resident told us that they weren't involved in decisions about their medical care. Another, who has difficulty speaking, told us she has a nurse who explains care options with them.

One resident, who had a family visiting, told us that there is good communication with staff so they always feel involved and know if there are any issues.

"There is a resident/family meeting at the home every 3 months where you can express any worries and chat and you are listened to".

### 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 Berengrove Park Nursing Home to examine residents:

We heard that a dentist does visit the home.

"I have not seen a dentist but know I could see one if necessary".

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

Residents told us that an optician does visit regularly.

"I see the optician once a year".

### Social Activities at Berengrove Park Nursing Home:

We were told that there is no activities co-ordinator currently at the home. Instead, staff play music and do motivation exercise with residents.

One resident told us they enjoy making their own cards and showed us some lovely cards they had displayed in their room.



## What did family and friends tell us?

We only heard from one family of Fort Horstead residents.

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:

The family chose Fort Horsted Nursing Home themselves based on personal knowledge.

Health and GP service at Fort Horsted Nursing Home:

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

The family told us that the new enhanced GP service was not discussed with them and they were not aware that there was a choice to keep their own GP or use the homes dedicated GP.

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

"No, no problems".

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 family told us that the resident's medication was changed which upset the resident.

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

The family told us that they had only been asked once within the past year.



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

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

“Only seen GP once in a year”.

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

The family weren't aware of a care plan.

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

They told us their relative can't go outside unaided.

How often is the resident taken outdoors?

They told us their relative isn't taken outside.

## **What did the Staff at Fort Horsted 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:

Both staff members told us that they had seen improvements since the new GP service started.

“Yes, I have seen improvements since the enhanced GP service started. There is better communication. The GP and Practice Nurse are very good and listen to us”.

How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?

Staff told us that the GP visits when required, every 2-4 weeks. The practice nurse visits every fortnight and alerts the GP if there are problems.

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 Practice Nurse will see residents identified by staff and all bed bound residents. There is always enough time for the Practice Nurse/GP to see residents.

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 they have an in-house dietician and speech therapist.

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

“Yes. The Deputy Manager is our lead and two more members of staff will soon be joining as infection prevention carers. Staff have regular training”.



## **What did the Staff at Fort Horsted Nursing Home tell us cont.**

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, “Healthcare assistants have 8-10 patients to care for, most need encouragement to eat and drink and are checked on average each hour to check that they are hydrated”.

“Input and output of fluids is monitored. Dementia/bedbound/residents with challenging behaviour all have contact charts which notes all food/fluids”.

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

“Yes, drinks are always available”.

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

Staff confirmed that pressure sores are checked daily during personal care and staff have training on identifying Pressure sores.

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 the Home is currently looking to employ a new Activity Co-ordinator. Staff run activities on a weekly basis for residents, including music and motivation exercise.

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 taken out either weekly or monthly. In the summer residents sit on the front. Sometimes they sit in the back garden or in the courtyard.

“There is a minibus service that services the local schools, we get the use of that minibus during school times for free so do trips in the summer. If residents express an interest or want to go shopping they can on the bus/wheelchair”.

“Residents can go out with family and friends as long as they have no restrictions”.

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

We were told it depends on the residents’ choice 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.

One person said it would be nice to have a befriending service in place for when family and 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. There were Christmas decorations up in the Home when we visited which were lovely and the Home had clearly taken time to make the home festive and welcoming.

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

### CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Fort Horsted Nursing Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 16th March 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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