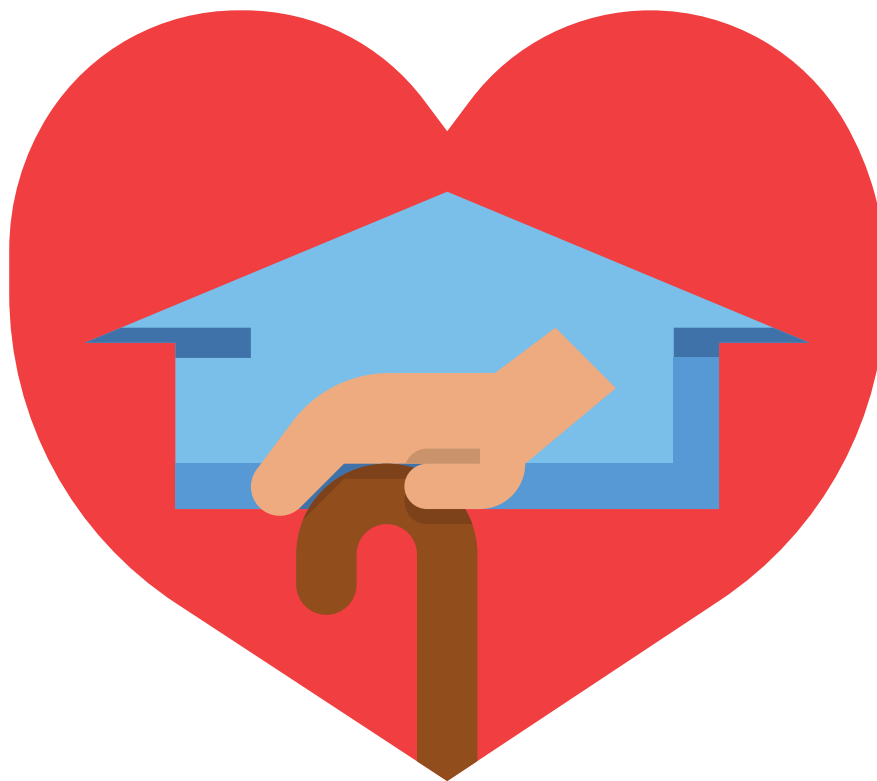


Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway

Grace Manor

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 living at Grace Manor 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 residents' lives at Grace Manor 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 Grace Manor 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 Grace Manor Nursing Home on 9th 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 and 1 member of staff during our visit and we heard from one family.

In Summary

- One resident told us they had not seen a change in service since moving into Grace Manor Nursing Home but commented that they had noticed changes with different management and staff.
- One family told us that the GP service had improved since the enhanced service was put in place.
- A family talked to us about challenges to get the right GP treatment out of hours which led to an unnecessary hospital admission.
- One family told us that their loved one was unable to leave their bed when they moved in, but now they are more mobile.

What have we recommended?

Based on the feedback from residents and what we saw during our visit, 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.
- The Home should keep a log of any further concerns about the out of hours GP service and share them directly with Healthwatch Medway to ensure they are escalated to the right people.
- Activities for residents should reflect the hobbies and wishes of all the residents.
- Ensure all residents are encouraged and offered time outside during dry weather.
- When residents move into Grace Manor, ensure they are given a choice of remaining with their own GP, should this be possible, or have the choice of moving over to the homes' dedicated GP practice.

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:

Only one resident answered this question, telling us their son chose Grace Manor Nursing Home.

We heard what was important to residents when choosing Grace Manor Nursing Home:

Only one resident answered this question, telling us their son chose Grace Manor Nursing Home.

“Somewhere where I could move around. The food and carers are good here”.

“This is a marvellous home. The carers are second to none. I have so much respect for everyone who works in this home. All my needs are catered for to the best possible ability”.

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

One resident told us they had lived at Grace Manor for 6 years and when asked if they had noticed any changes in service since moving in, they commented:

“Not particularly although there are changes with different managers and different carers coming and going”.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan:

Both residents told us they were aware that they had a care plan and could request to see it if they wished.

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 the GP visits regularly. According to NHS England’s plan, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

One resident told us:

“I have only seen the GP if he’s called out for a particular reason for example when I had flu in November. The GP has not carried out a general assessment of me ever, they only respond to particular problems I raise”.

The other resident we spoke to told us: “I had a GP in Gillingham at The Sunlight Centre who was marvellous, then suddenly that centre closed. After that I was not given a choice of GP. A nurse at Grace Manor told all the former Sunlight Centre patients that it was a rule of the CCG that every Sunlight Centre patient must be transferred to one doctor. I am outraged at this as it contravenes the NHS Constitution and I have made a formal complaint to the CCG. The nearest health centre is Woodlands and I would prefer a GP there”.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

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

One resident said: “This is a marvellous home. The carers are second to none”.

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 Grace Manor Nursing Home to examine residents:

Residents told us the dentist does visit with one commenting that she sees the dentist every 6 months.

Does an Optometrist visit Grace Manor Nursing Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that the optician does visit the home.

Social Activities at Grace Manor Nursing Home:

Staff told us that they do have activity co-ordinators at the home.

One resident told us that they do not take part in many activities as a lot of the residents have got dementia. They stay in their room and do word searches and writing to friends and sometimes watching television. It would be nice if the home would take residents out more, even if just for a drive they told us. There used to be visits to Herne Bay and to Dobbies Garden Centre.

One resident said that they do not want to take part in activities with other residents as they are very simple activities and many residents have dementia.



What did family and friends tell us?

Unfortunately, we did not receive any completed questionnaires from the family and friends of the residents of Grace Manor Nursing Home.

However, during our visit one of our trained volunteers was able to speak to a family who were visiting the home, here is what they told us:

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:

“We had a choice. We also saw Friston House, we liked both and this one became available first. We like it here and they care. It is a homely environment. Resident moved in 3 years ago”.

Health and GP service at Grace Manor Nursing Home:

To gain an insight into the impact the new enhanced GP service was making on the resident's lives at Grace Manor 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?

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

“What is good about the new enhanced GP service is the response time - you get antibiotics immediately. It is common sense to have one practice for the home”.

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

The family we spoke to told us they felt there was an issue with the out of hours service (Medoc). Often the resident becomes ill in the evening and several times the home has contacted Medoc to come and see resident. However the out of hours doctor hasn't arrived that evening or night and the resident has had to wait to see the GP the following morning.

On one occasion, the resident needed antibiotics immediately, but Medoc did not come out and he ended up going to hospital which the family felt was unnecessary.

On another occasion Medoc came to the home at 1:30am but without a prescription pad. The resident needed antibiotics and a family member had to drive in the middle of the night to the Medway Maritime Hospital to get a prescription and then onto the pharmacy. The family member got back to Grace Manor at around 4:30am. If the family member was not able to get antibiotics then the resident could have ended up in hospital once again or worse.

The family told us: “staff here are good at detecting medical conditions”. When the resident seems out of sorts, staff do a dip test and see whether the resident has a water infection.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

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

“GP associated with the home does not visit weekly, only sees people when it is necessary to do so”.

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

“Very satisfied. Since the home has gone over to this particular GP surgery, the resident has not been admitted to hospital at all but treated in the care home. In the past he went to hospital often. The service is really good now.”

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

The family we spoke to had power of attorney in place so they make decisions on behalf of their loved one.

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

The family told us that the resident goes into the garden in a wheelchair. They do not take him off site in the car as they don't have the machinery needed to manoeuvre him or the wheelchair. However they told us that there are several gardens in the grounds of the home to go into and sit. Sometimes there is entertainment in them such as stalls, bouncy castles or a gazebo.

How often is the resident taken outdoors?

The carer of the resident who was present during our visit told us:

“Residents can go outside all the time - as and when they request it. However, if they need to be accompanied all the time they are outside (as would this resident), this would not always be possible”.



What did the Staff at Grace Manor 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 were only able to talk to one member of staff. They told us that if the GP is not available the home will contact the out of hours doctor at Medoc or the 'care home team', which has doctors and nurses.

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

We were told the tissue viability and community nurse are bought in from the outside to handle pressure sores and ulcers.

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

"We have a summer fete, Easter egg hunts and children visit. We have entertainers on a Monday and Tuesday. A lady comes in to guide the residents with exercise. We have two activity organisers, they organise bingo, cake making, arts and crafts etc".

"On the first Sunday of each month there is a church service".

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

"We hire minibuses for events but we only take people who are mobile enough to go to the toilet - we can't take people who need a hoist".

"If residents need to be accompanied all the time they are outside this would not always be possible".

"Staff will take residents out any time. They can wrap up warm if necessary. I ask them if they want to go out".

"In the summer we may have lunch or supper in the garden and we have outside activities".

"Residents always have sun hats and sun cream on hot days.

"On bonfire night, quite a few residents stand at the window in the lounge to look at the fireworks".

"One of the residents who suffers from dementia goes out in the summer and does gardening".

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

We were told it depends on residents' choice, their mobility and the weather.

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

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

The Home has in-house chefs and laundry services. Grace Manor offers residents access to other health services including a podiatrist.

CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Grace Manor Nursing Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 20th January 2020.

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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