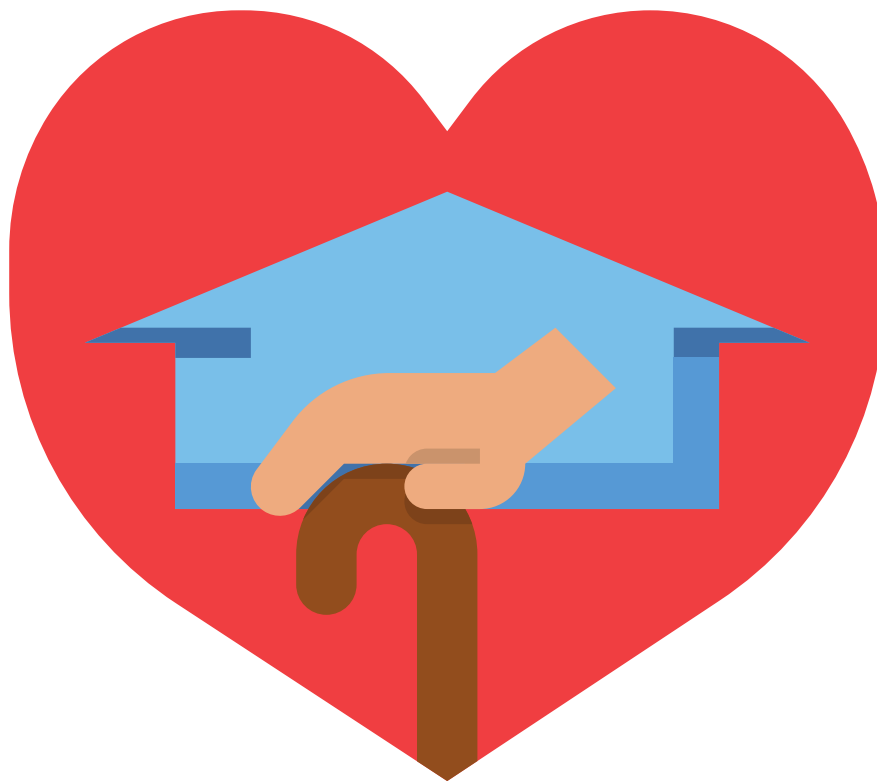


**Spotlight on Care Homes
in Medway
Greenford
Care Home, Gillingham**



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 Greenford Care 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 Greenford 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 home's dedicated GP practice when they moved to Greenford Care 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 Greenford Care Home 13th 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 2 members of staff during our visit. We also heard from two families.

In Summary

- Both residents we spoke to said they had not chosen Greenford Care Home but could no longer live at home without care.
- One family told us that there hadn't been a choice when their loved one moved to Greenford Care Home.
- The GP does not visit every week, only when called.
- Staff talked about challenges to reach the GP and delays in treatment.

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 every week to see residents as per the NHS Guidance.
- A different arrangement should be in place to enable the home to reach the GP easily and not waste valuable time.
- Every resident should be able to access dental treatment, especially those who cannot travel to the dentist across the road.

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:

Neither of the residents who spoke to us chose Greenford Care Home, they told us:

“I lived close and needed constant care”.

“I had a fall and require constant help”.

We heard what was important to residents when choosing Greenford Care Home:

“Always staff to help and this is evident at Greenford”.

“It meets my needs”.

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

One person, who had been living at Greenford Care Home for less than a year, told us that they had not seen any difference in service at the Home since moving in.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan:

Both residents told us they didn't know about a care plan.

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 when called. According to NHS England's plan, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

One resident told us that they had seen the GP within the last week. The other resident could not recall the last time they had seen the GP.

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

One resident said they were involved in decision making around their medical needs and said that the care was joined up and co-ordinated.

The other resident said they were not involved in decisions around their medical needs but commented that “The staff are wonderful”.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

We asked residents whether they had been offered support by staff to access other health services e.g. dentist, chiropractist?

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 Greenford Care Home to examine residents:

We heard that a dentist does not visit the home but that there is a dental practice across the road from the home.

Does an Optometrist visit Greenford Care Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that an optician does visit them in the home.

Social Activities at Greenford Care Home:

We heard about the weekly schedule of activities for residents to take part in. This is shared with residents and is also posted up on the noticeboard.



What did family and friends tell us?

Two families of the residents of Greenford Care 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:

“Main factor was cost! But of those we saw, we liked Greenford, the location and they had a vacancy”.

“No. Due to a top priority situation this was the first new home for resident”.

Health and GP service at Greenford Care Home

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

One family told us that the enhanced GP service was discussed with them when their loved one moved in. The other family who responded confirmed that the service was not in place when their loved one moved in.

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?

“Blood tests are easy and done at home. Nurse seems to visit regularly”.

“I have been verbally told about more regular visits, but I haven't seen this for myself”.

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

Both families who responded said they hadn't had any problems in seeing the GP, one commented:

“Not that I am aware. Communication between family and carers can be lapse at times”.

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

Families told us that residents are asked if they would like to see the GP when they visit.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

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

One family said they were very satisfied with the GP service at Greenford Care Home.

The other family who commented, told us:

“The only time I have spoken to a doctor regarding my family, I didn't feel he was really listening as I know the resident better than anyone”.

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

Both families told us they were involved in the medical care.

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

Both families told us they were aware of the care plan, with one commenting:

“We are informed that our loved one's plan has been updated but confidentiality is always observed. Our family member will happily tell us what's been discussed”.

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

Both families said that their family member was unable to go outside alone commenting:

“Staff take resident to the park and events”.

“They are taken out into the garden for a cigarette to break up the day”.

How often is the resident taken outdoors?

Families told us that their family member is taken out weekly in warm weather.

“Fresh air and exercise are very important. I take them out for a walk to the park or up the road as much as weather permits. For a long-distance trip for a long period, they would need a wheelchair. They are able to walk with a walker, but not able to sit in garden unattended”.



What did the Staff at Greenford 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:

We spoke to one member of staff during our visit.

They told us:

“Yes and no. One GP was coming every 2 weeks, but he left. Now the Home has another GP, but it is hard to get an answer on the surgery phone line”.

“If we need to call the GP, we have to call the surgery, then they call someone else who comes out to assess the resident, they then say if a GP is needed. When you call the surgery you often wait then just get cut off”.

“The service is good apart from not being able to get through and having to wait for someone to assess”.

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 everyone we need to be seen during their visit.

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

“Yes, various services come to the home to see residents”.

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

We heard that all staff are trained in infection control and they have a lead for 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?

“There is a tea trolley and refreshments are always available in the lounge and in residents’ rooms. We use fluid charts and beakers which show measurements of how much liquid has been drunk.”

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

We heard that staff check residents every two hours through the night and this is logged.

What did the Staff at Greenford Care 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 are all trained and use a body map. Health records are checked. Every resident has a care plan and all charts are updated hourly and every resident has a daily file that staff can just look at and update easily”.

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 were told about the Activity Co-ordinator. The weekly schedule is shown up on the wall in the Home and residents are given the option to take part.

The home is small, and staff are always entertaining residents. A volunteer from the local church also comes in to speak to the residents.

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

Depending on the weather, residents often go outside we were told. Families take their relatives out and there is a park close by.

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

Staff told us it depends on the resident and what they want to do as well as 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.

Both families said it would be nice to have a befriending service in place for when family or 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 atmosphere in the home was calm and on the day of our visit there was music playing. The décor was colourful and there was artwork on the walls. The signage around the home was good with words and pictures.

On the afternoon of our visit residents had the option of a snack and then they chose a movie to watch.

The Home has in-house chefs and laundry service.

CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Greenford Care Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 15th October 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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