

# **Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway Summary Report**



**October 2020**

**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  
[enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com)

## **What were we trying to achieve from our visits?**

We wanted to talk to people who were currently residents at Care Homes across Medway about their experiences of the Care Home and understand what happens if they need health treatment or social care support.

We also wanted to speak to staff to see what difference the new enhanced GP service had on staff and residents and if it had made a positive impact for residents.

We wanted to talk to residents about some key areas including

- 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 the 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, Optical checks etc.

## **How did we go about it?**

Our trained Healthwatch staff and volunteers wanted to visit 24 Care Homes across Medway between October 2019 and February 2020. These visits are known as Enter & View visits. We completed visits to 23 of these care homes - see Appendix 1 for a list of all the care homes we visited.

Prior to our visits, 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.

In total we were able to complete full visits at 23 of the 24 care homes. We spoke to 87 residents about their experience of living in the home and heard from 57 family members. We also spoke to 55 members of staff.

## What did people tell us?

### In Summary

- Eighteen of the homes had a GP who regularly visited the home as part of the new enhanced GP service.
- 60% of these homes had a GP visiting residents every week as per the NHS guidance.
- Five homes didn't have regular GP visits.
- 60% of the staff we spoke to talk positively about the improvements for residents since the enhanced GP service started.
- The majority (79%) of residents told us they did choose the home, some making the decision alongside their family.
- 52% of homes didn't have a dentist who visited residents regularly

### What have we recommended?

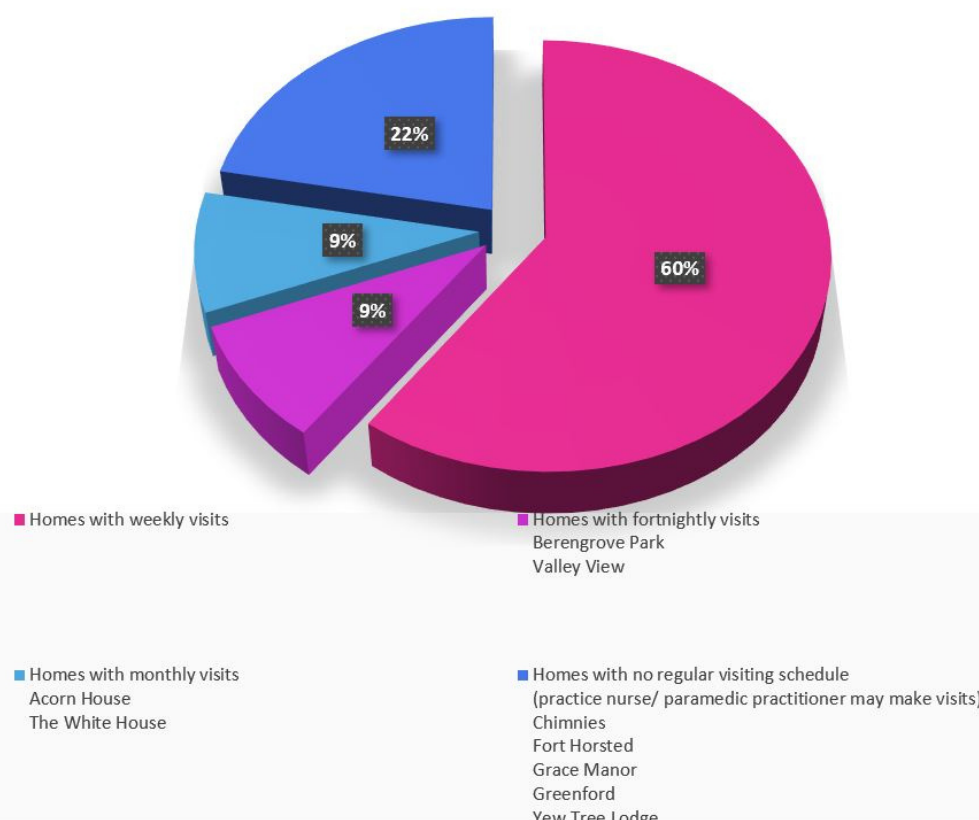
#### GP Visits

40% of the homes did not have a weekly visit from a GP. However, NHS guidance states that the GP affiliated with the home, should visit residents every week.

For these homes we have made the following recommendations:

- The GP must visit residents at the home every week. The enhanced GP service guidance states that GPs should visit Care Homes every week to ensure they know their patients and can pick up issues before they become serious and so avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and interventions.
- During these visits, the GP must spend enough time with each resident who wishes to be seen.
- Homes should inform families prior to a GP visit with their relative so they can be involved and aware of the issue and any outcomes/medication prescribed.

#### GP visiting schedule to Medway Care Homes



## Dental Care

Over half (52%) of the homes we visited, did not have a regular dentist visit their residents.

In 2019 the CQC published a report 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.

We have clearly recommended that all residents must have regular access to dental check ups.

## Opticians

Three of the homes we visited, didn't have an optician who visited residents regularly. We have recommended that all residents must have regular access to an optician at the home.

Activities for residents. Whilst most of the homes we visited had a varied activity programme for residents, we heard from residents at nine homes about improvements that could be made.

In these cases we have made the following recommendations:

- Ensure there is a regular weekly schedule of activities offered to residents which reflects the hobbies and wishes of the residents.
- Activities for residents could be communicated more clearly to residents and families so that everyone knows what is available.
- Seek solutions to encourage residents outside during dry weather.



### What we have learnt from speaking to the residents at the care homes?

Residents talked to us about what was important to them when making a decision about which home to move into. This is what they told us:

- To be close to family and friends
- “Nice and clean”
- Caring and friendly staff
- To have a home from home feeling, to be able to have personal possessions in the rooms
- To be able to socialise and make friends
- To feel safe
- For staff to know each resident personally, using their names and having familiarity
- To have a choice of food and for the food to be good and wholesome
- To have nice surroundings, nice decoration, a pleasant building
- To be able to move into the same home as family members should they already live there
- To have lots of activities to get involved in
- For the GP to know the residents and their medical needs
- For the home to have room to move around
- For the home to be able to offer the care and attention needed
- For staff to look after each resident, ensuring medication is monitored
- To be offered health services like a chiropodist, dentist and optician

### What we have learnt from the families of residents?

- Families told us that it was important for them to know when their loved one was visited by the GP.
- Families felt it was important for staff to communicate regularly with families, to keep them updated on the resident, their medical and social observations.
- It was important to families to be contacted immediately should their loved one be moved from hospital to a care home when they are not present.
- Families told us that it was important for them to know that, when they were not able to visit, their loved one is given the option for some time outside, where possible, during good weather, even if the resident does not have the capacity to ask, giving residents the option is important.
- It is important to families to know that there are enough staff on duty to undertake appropriate care their loved one needs.



## What we have learnt from listening to staff?

60% of staff talked about the benefits of the enhanced GP service. This is what they told us:

- It is much more efficient not having to ring different practices for each resident.
- The GP service is now more efficient in responding to the residents' needs.
- The new service brings continuity to the residents' needs.
- The GP is able to build a relationship with the residents.
- The GP now spends more time in the home visiting the residents.
- Having a dedicated GP has given staff more confidence in decision making around the care of each resident.
- There is better communication between the practice and the home.
- When the GP visits, he has more time and is able to listen to both residents and staff.
- Residents like the familiarity with the dedicated GP.
- The GP's response is much quicker now there is a dedicated GP and as such residents are responded to quicker and symptoms can be spotted quicker due to regular visits.

## 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 visits. 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.

If you would like more detail about the visits to each Care Home, you can find reports on each visit on our website [www.healthwatchmedway.com](http://www.healthwatchmedway.com)





## APPENDIX 1

### CARE HOMES VISITED BY HEALTHWATCH MEDWAY

Acorn House Residential Care Home	39 Maidstone Rd, Chatham ME4 6DP
Amherst Court Care Home	Palmerston Road, Chatham, ME4 6LU
Aquarius Residential Care Home	8 Watson Ave, Chatham, ME5 9SH
Berengrove Park Nursing Home	45 Park Ave, Gillingham, ME7 4AQ
Byron Lodge Residential Nursing Home	105-107 Rock Ave, Gillingham, ME7 5PX
Charing House Care and Nursing Home	Canterbury Street, Gillingham, ME7 5AY
Chimnies Care Home	Stoke Rd, Hoo, Allhallows, Rochester ME3 9PD
Copper Beeches Care Home	5 Sylewood Cl, Rochester, ME1 3LL
Durland House Residential Care Home	160 High St, Rainham, Gillingham, ME8 8AT
Fort Horsted Nursing Home	Primrose Close, Chatham, ME4 6HZ
Frindsbury Hall Care Home	Frindsbury Hill, Rochester, ME2 4JS
Friston House Care Home	414 City Way, Rochester, ME1 2BQ
Grace Manor Nursing Home	348 Grange Rd, Gillingham, ME7 2UD
Greenford Care Home	260-262 Nelson Road, Gillingham ME7 4NA
Hawthorn Manor Residential Care Home	369 Maidstone Rd, Gillingham, ME8 0HX
Heatherdale Nursing Home	204 Hempstead Road, Hempstead, Gillingham, ME7 3QG
Park View Care Home	Canterbury St, Gillingham, ME7 5AY
Pembroke House Care Home	11 Oxford Rd, Gillingham, ME7 4BS
Platters Farm Lodge Care Home	Highfield Road, Rainham, Gillingham, ME8 0EQ
Rogers House Care Home	Drewery Drive, Wigmore, Gillingham, ME8 0NX
The White House Care Home	95-99 Maidstone Road, Chatham, ME4 6HY
Valley View Care Home	Maidstone Road, Rochester, ME1 3LT
Winchester House Care Home	180 Wouldham Road, Wouldham, Rochester, ME1 3TR
Yew Tree Lodge Residential Home	Stoke Road, Hoo, Rochester, ME3 9BJ



**Healthwatch Medway**  
**5A New Rd Ave, Chatham ME4 6BB**

 **enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com**

 **@healthwmedway**

 **@HWMedway**

 **@HealthwatchMedway**

 **0800 136 656**