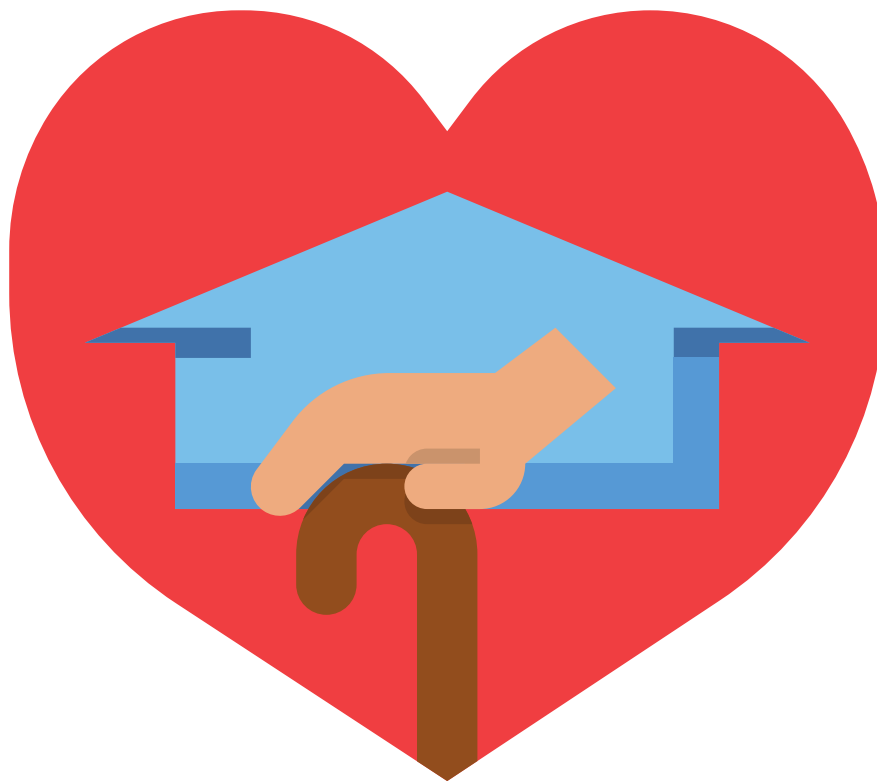


**Spotlight on Care Homes
in Medway
Heatherdale Nursing Home,
Gillingham**



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 residents at Heatherdale 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 resident's lives at Heatherdale 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 Heatherdale 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 Heatherdale Nursing Home on 15th 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 four residents and three members of staff during our visit.

In Summary

- We heard that the GP visits the home every week and stays until they have seen all the residents that need them
- Staff talked positively about the enhanced GP service and felt it had been beneficial for residents
- Residents told us that the service at the home hadn't changed since they moved in
- The Activities Co-ordinator was on long term sick at the time of our visit
- Infection control training is mandatory every year for all staff including catering staff

What have we recommended?

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

- Ensure the home always has a full schedule of staff throughout the night with the capacity to ensure all residents needs are taken care of.
- All residents should have access to a dentist regularly
- Provide a weekly and varied schedule of activities for residents to take part in which is put together with the wishes and hobbies of the residents in mind.

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:

Two residents told us that they did choose Heatherdale Nursing Home, and one made the decision alongside family.

We heard what was important to residents when choosing Berengrove Park Nursing Home:

Residents talked to us about a variety of factors when choosing a Care Home including;

“24 hour care was important”.

“To have what I have here, to be looked after”.

“Someone to make sure I’m taking my meds properly”.

“Friendly staff and compassion for older people”.

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

Three residents we spoke to had been at Heatherdale Nursing Home for over a year with one having lived there for more than five years.

All four residents that we spoke to told us that they thought the services offered at Heatherdale Nursing Home had not changed since they moved in.

“Staff are very good, very pleasant. The food is alright. I go to the dining room in a wheelchair and they have an oxygen machine there to plug me in.”

“Staff are pretty good and the catering staff cater for my dietary needs. Sometimes it is a bit difficult, I try not to be a nuisance. I eat in my room and usually the staff bring me food I can eat but not always.”

“There have been many staff changes, particularly mature staff leaving”.

“Some changes but all good and beneficial. Standards continue to be excellent. I like to have the option to have meals in my room”.

One resident said that they felt like there was a lack of perceptions of old age and the problems associated with getting older.

“Sometimes at night there are only two staff. There are plenty of day staff. We could do with more staff at night. If I press buzzer, it sometimes takes a while”.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan?

Staff informed us that care plans are reviewed monthly.

Only two residents knew about their care plan. One resident was not sure however their granddaughter was there during our visit and she told us that there is a care plan. Another resident told us they didn't have 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 their GP visits regularly on a weekly basis. According to NHS England's plan, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

Three of the residents told us that they had seen a GP recently. One resident told us that the GP visits weekly and there is always a Nurse on duty.

"I saw the GP last week. I have had falls and needed to see a GP. Good you can see someone quickly as I have health problems".

"I can't remember when I last saw the GP. It is very good service here. The Doctor comes to the home once a week, on Thursdays, I think. I might see him tomorrow. I have an ear problem so will speak to staff nurse and she will arrange an appointment".

One resident could not recall seeing a GP for a very long time.

Another told us that she stayed with her own GP Practice when she moved into Heatherdale Care Home and had seen her GP within the last two months. This resident commented:

"Care is joined up and convenient. My daughter takes me if possible, otherwise, I could arrange through the home, either a carer would take me, or I would pay for transport".

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

Three residents told us they were involved in their medical care.

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.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

Does a Dentist visit Heatherdale Nursing Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that a dentist does visit them in the home.

One resident told us that they visit their own dentist and went about a year ago.

“Not had to see dentist since I’ve been here, I would ask staff if I needed someone”.

“I saw the Dentist a long time ago”

“Visited my dentist one month ago with my daughter”.

Does an Optometrist visit Heatherdale Nursing Home to examine residents:

Residents also told us that they see an optician regularly in the home.

All of the residents that we spoke to said they had been offered access to other health services such as chiropody.

Social Activities at Heatherdale Nursing Home:

Staff told us that the Activities Co-ordinator is on long term sick leave. Three volunteers visit the home occasionally and run activity sessions. There are one off days such as Halloween when staff encourage families to join in and the local nursery children come in. The Vicar also visits.

“Only volunteers do a quiz or bingo. There are not enough activities, I would like more”.

“Yes, I think so, I don’t take part. I like crosswords, reading, puzzles, quizzes to keep my mind active. I cannot hear properly but I like my own company”

“I don’t go outside unless my family takes me. They take me to the pub. I go by taxi which the family organises. I would like to go into the garden when the weather is better but would need to take oxygen with me. I am lucky to have a big family, someone comes most days. My daughter took me to church recently.”

What did family and friends tell us?

Although we left questionnaires for family and friends to complete, we did not receive any feedback from the residents’ families.



What did the Staff at Heatherdale 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:

Staff told us that they had seen noticeable improvements in the GP service since the enhanced GP service came in. Staff told us that the service was much quicker now.

“Before, it sometimes took 2 or 3 days before the GP came. Much quicker service now. We can get someone same day if need be”.

“Much better now. Used to be rushed. Now GP has time to see and listen to patients”.

How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?

Staff told us that the GP visits every Thursday.

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?

The GP stays until he has seen all the residents that need to be seen.

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 the GP refers residents to the physio or dietician as needed. They also told us that the GP will welcome their input and thoughts about their residents. We heard that the nurses liaise well with the GP.

A number of residents are referred to them by the local hospice for end of life and palliative care.

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

Staff told us that the lead nurse takes responsibility for infection control and that all staff are trained every year including catering staff.

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 both fluids and food are logged on a computer. Staff use fluid charts and carers record fluid intake and record this on the computer. Staff reported that they check on the total intake for every resident each day. Hydration rounds are carried out throughout the day.

Carers are always present in the dining room at meal times and food intake is recorded.

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

Drinks and cups of tea are offered to residents before bed and were told that there are drinks in the rooms at night. If a resident wakes up and wants a drink they can ask.

What did the Staff at Heatherdale Nursing 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 told us that every carer/nurse will check pressure points during personal care. Staff undertake yearly training on pressure areas and wound care. On-line training is also available.

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 informed us that the Activities Co-ordinator was currently on long term sick leave. The home have tried to appoint a temporary co-ordinator but with no luck so far. There are three volunteers who come into the Home but there is not much uptake for activities. Staff said they have more success with themed days such as Bollywood, Halloween when they encourage families to join them and bring their loved ones.

Children from the local playgroup do come regularly and set up in the lounge with their toys. Staff told us that some residents who never leave their rooms do come for these sessions when the children and residents are encouraged to interact.

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 regularly. It depends on what each resident wants. In the summer, residents can go into the garden when they want to.

Family can take residents out too we were told. If a resident has no family, then staff will take them out although they do not have a minibus.

“Quality of care is difficult to maintain for average residents outdoors”.

“Occasionally we take residents outside, but more during warm weather.”

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

Staff said that it would be dependent on the needs of the resident. Their medical needs may also affect going outside for example, some residents are bed bound. Families are encouraged to encourage their loved ones outside.

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.

Three people said it would be nice to have a befriending service in place for when family and friends cannot visit.

“Some residents don't have family and are lonely and might enjoy some company. Some residents who stay in their rooms still like to chat. They enjoy 1:1 activities and face to face contact so a befriending service would be good for them.”

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

Healthwatch were warmly welcomed on arrival and staff were helpful and friendly. The home was bright and cheerful with wide well-lit corridors. Residents rooms were homely and personalised and all rooms are en-suite with a toilet and basin. There are 4 double bedrooms, for couples - both residents must have nursing/care needs. The lounge leads onto a conservatory which was a little cold on the day of our visit.

All residents have nursing or medical needs. The Home does not offer Dementia care however about 4 or 5 of their residents have some form of dementia, some of these are receiving End of Life care. The Manager informed us that the Home gets good support from the Clinical Commissioning Group's End of Life Facilitator and also the CCG Pharmacist.

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

CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Heatherdale Nursing Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 10th December 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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