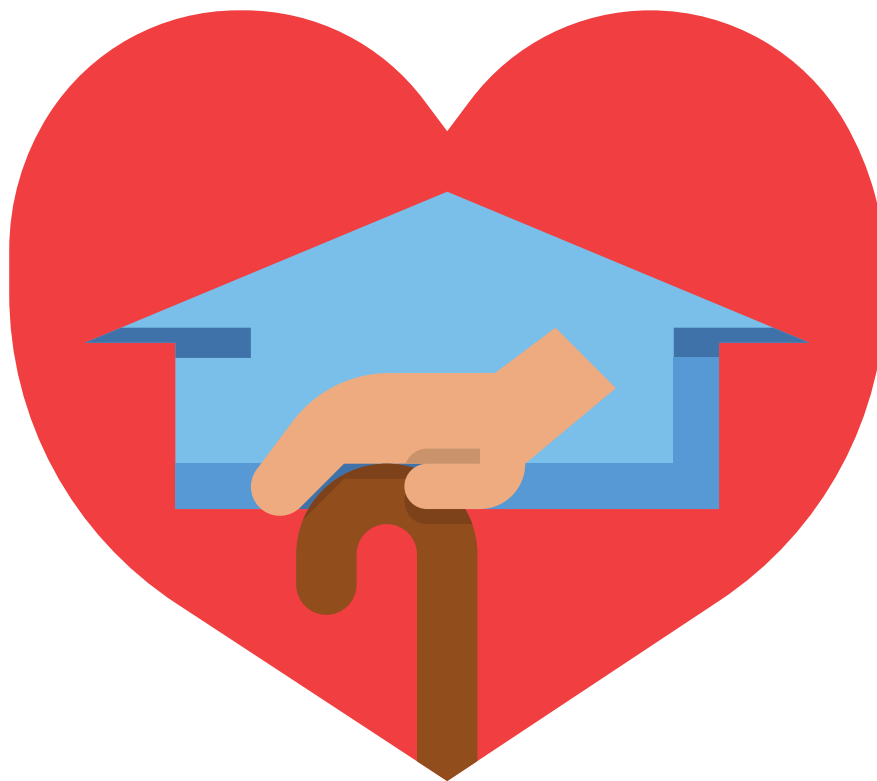


**Spotlight on Care Homes  
in Medway  
Park View  
Care Home, Gillingham**



**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](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 Park View 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 Park View 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 Park View 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 Park View Care Home on 28th 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 one resident, along with their granddaughter who was visiting, plus one member of staff. There was a party during our visit, which meant all the other residents and staff were unable to talk to us.

## In Summary

- The resident we spoke to chose the home after staying there for a respite break.
- Previously they had been living at another home, but the family had found the care unsatisfactory and so had moved them to Park View.
- The GP visits the home weekly.
- Staff talked to us about improvements in care for the residents now that they have a relationship with one GP practice.
- We heard that a dentist and an optician both visit residents at the home every six months.

## What have we recommended?

Normally we would make a series of recommendations following any Enter & View visit. However, because we were only able to speak to one resident and one member of staff, in this instance we've decided not to.



## 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:

The resident, and their family, told us that they were staying at Park View Care Home for respite and decided they wanted to stay.

“Here the staff are friendly and approachable. It was clear this was the right place to be”.

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

They told us it was important for them that staff were friendly, and for them to recognise residents and get to you know you. They wanted to know that the home was secure and safe before making a decision.

We asked how long the resident had been living at Park View Care Home and had they noticed any changes in services during that time?

They moved in two months ago.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan?

The resident’s granddaughter found out that the resident had no care plan. She discovered this when her relative was contacted as next-of-kin after the resident had had a fall.

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.

Staff told us that the Home originally had links with five GP practices, which was not working satisfactorily, and that the residents were aware of the problems. After speaking to all the residents and their families and after obtaining their agreement, the home changed its arrangements, moving to one dedicated GP Practice. As a result of this the GP service has improved noticeably.



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

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 Park View Care Home to examine residents:**

We heard that the dentist visits residents at the home every six months.

**Does an Optometrist visit Park View Care Home to examine residents:**

Staff told us that the optician visits the home every six months.

**Social Activities at Park View Care Home:**

Staff told us that there is a full-time staff member who is responsible for providing weekly activities.

### **What did family and friends tell us?**

Unfortunately, we did not receive any completed questionnaires from the families of residents at Park View Care Home.

### **What did the Staff at Park View 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:

Staff told us that they had moved over to using one dedicated GP in 2016, before the new enhanced GP service commenced.

**How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?**

Staff told us the GP visits once a week.

**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 they inform the GP which residents need a visit each week. Any resident who is receiving end of life care is also seen weekly by the GP.

If a resident is unwell and the GP is unavailable, a paramedic from the GP practice will visit instead; the paramedic can issue prescriptions and can deal with most matters.

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 does refer residents to the appropriate service. Staff at Park View are also able to call on the Advanced Practitioner Nurses if there are emergencies (not linked to the GP Practice). Community nurses are also called in to help with medical care and they can prescribe.

The Home has links with a local hospice for end-of-life care. We also heard that the Home has good links with the GP based pharmacist, who undertakes regular reviews of residents' medication.

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 charts are kept for each resident for food and fluids. Staff encourage residents to drink and there is water and the tea trolleys pass around the home frequently.

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

Tea and biscuits are offered to residents during the night to residents who are awake.

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

Staff told us that body maps are prepared for each resident. Checks are then made for pressure sores during help with personal care.

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 heard that the home has a full-time staff member who is responsible for providing activities. These include bingo, quizzes, exercise and dance, a sing-along, arts and crafts, mental activities, cake-and-coffee times and visits from children. Animals are popular and a dog is a regular visitor.

On the day of our visit there was a party in full swing. It was evident that both staff and residents were enjoying their time together and concern for residents was evident.

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

Arrangements are made for trips out, often to local garden centres. The home has a private gate into Gillingham Park and residents are taken out there in warmer weather. Staff always accompany them outside.

The Home has a garden which is paved and has two raised beds. Residents can ask to be taken out at any time we were told.

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

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

Staff told us this depends on the weather and the resident's choice.

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:

On our initial visit to Park View we were refused entry as the staff were unaware of our visit. A further date was offered, and visit was made.

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

### CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Park View Care Home - Good. Visited on 2nd November 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.



**Healthwatch Medway**

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

 **enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com**

 **@healthwmedway**

 **@HWMedway**

 **@HealthwatchMedway**

 **0800 136 656**