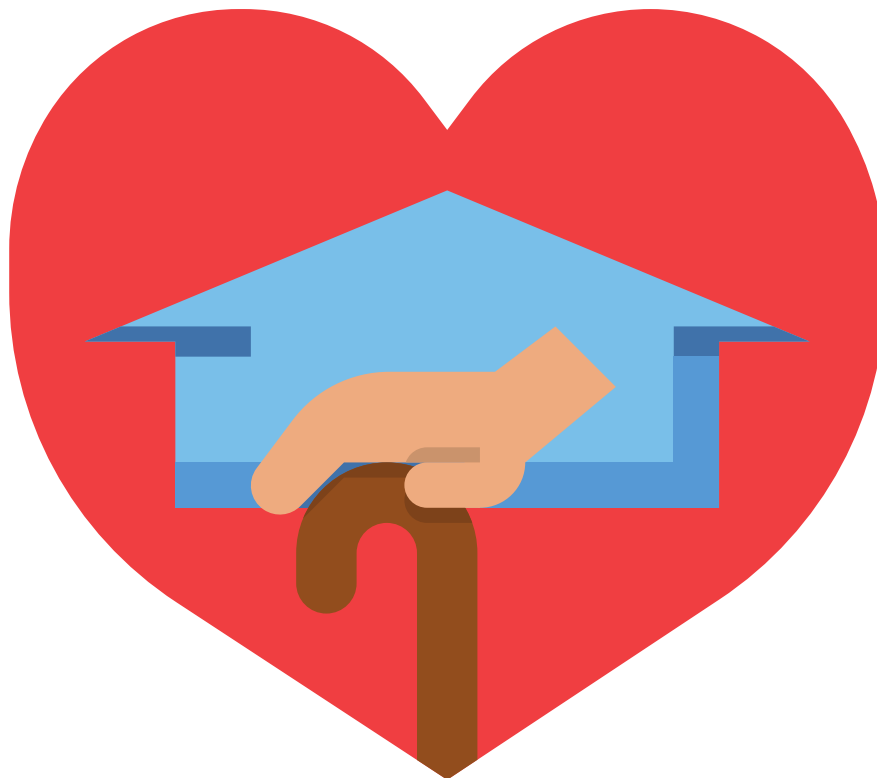


# **Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway**

## **Platters Farm**

### **Lodge 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 Platters Farm Lodge 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 Platters Farm Lodge 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 homes dedicated GP Practice when they moved to Platters Farm Lodge 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 Platters Farm Lodge Care Home on 14th November 2019. 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.

On arrival on the day of our visit, it was apparent that the Home had not opened the information that we had sent them. This meant that families had not been offered the opportunity to complete our questionnaires and share their thoughts with us. Neither the Manager nor Duty Manager were present during our visit

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 one member of staff during our visit.

## What did people tell us?

### In Summary

- The GP visits the home every week.
- The staff member we spoke to talked about a noticeable improvement since the new enhanced GP service started.
- Residents talked about the important of the home being near to their family and friends.

### What have we recommended?

Based on feedback from residents, we have made the following recommendations:

- All residents must have access to a regular dentist
- Residents should have the option to see an optician in the home

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 choose Platters Farm Lodge Care.

We asked what was important to residents when choosing Platters Farm Lodge Care Home:

“Being close to home”.

“Close to family and friends”.

We asked how long each resident had been living at Platters Farm Lodge Care Home and had they notice any changes in services during that time:

None of the residents we spoke to had been at the home longer than one month and hadn't noticed any changes during that time.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan?

Two residents told us they were aware of their care plan.

We wanted to know when residents had last seen a GP or practice nurse, and are 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.

One resident told us they were informed about the local GP practice and were given the option of staying with their own GP. This resident decided to move to the Homes dedicated GP Practice. Another resident said they see a Nurse every day.

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

Two residents said they were involved in decisions about their medical needs.



## 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.

We heard that the Home has a full time physiotherapist.

**Does a Dentist visit Platters Farm Lodge Care Home to examine residents:**

We were told that a dentist doesn't visit the home. Instead, families have to organise it themselves.

Two residents told us they did not think they had seen a dentist for 1 to 2 years.

**Does an Optometrist visit Platters Farm Lodge Care Home to examine residents:**

An optician doesn't visit the home on a regular basis, care home staff arrange this if needed.

Two residents told us they had been offered support in accessing other health services with one resident saying they see a physiotherapist.

**Social Activities at Platters Farm Lodge Care Home:**

We heard about the Hub where social activities take place. A full morning of group activities in the Hub was being enjoyed by the residents on the day of our visit.

An appointed member of staff leads the varied activities which include arm-chair exercises with a dramatized music recording, a general knowledge old-time quiz, and a post wartime sing along. There is also a monthly church service.



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

Regrettably the package and covering letter that was addressed to the Manager had not been opened prior to our visit. This meant that families had not been given the opportunity to share their thoughts with us.

## **What did the staff at Platters Farm Lodge 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 have noticed an improvement in the GP service.

How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?

The GP visits regularly each week on a Friday.

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

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 spends time with the residents that need to see him.

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 makes necessary referrals. If not, staff will make a referral directly for the resident.

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

We heard that there is no lead for infection control but all members of staff receive training.

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 talked about monitoring fluid and food intake daily and logging it in the system. They told us that residents are weighed weekly.

There is a large menu on display with clear picture illustrations and words in the corridor leading to the dining room. Residents make a personal choice from the menu that they are served the following day.

On the day of our visit, a hot lunch was being served and all the care staff were involved in serving the food. The meals were well presented and appreciated by everyone. There was plenty of social interaction by residents during mealtime.

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

Staff told us that refreshments are offered to residents during the night if they are awake. Refreshments that are taken by residents are logged.

## **What did the Staff at Platters Farm Lodge 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?

A fully electronic care record system has been in use for about two years and all the staff members have this information on a hand-held device that links to a central computer in the office. Residents are identified by both name and photograph which allows the staff to easily read and record care plan details and it has proved to be very helpful.

There is a member of staff designated as the 'Care Quality Monitor' who also conducts a weekly medicine audit.

Body maps are completed on admission for each resident.

Daily body maps are completed regularly, and referrals are made to the nurse for PAC (electronic care record system) if necessary.

All the care staff have had End of Life training.

A Community Matron visits the home where required as staff do not have nursing training.

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 told us that there is a weekly schedule of activities for residents to take part in. There are also books available for residents to read.

There is a monthly church service held on site and local ministers of religion are available if the residents request a visit.

There is an on-site hairdresser.

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

We heard that most residents stay at the home for a short time or for respite.

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.

The staff member we spoke to said they could see a befriending service being beneficial to residents.



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

On the day of our visit we were greeted by a senior member of staff who said she had no knowledge of our visit. Unfortunately, the package which included our introduction letter and questionnaires for family and friends had not been opened by the Manger even though it was hand delivered prior to the visit. The Manger and Deputy Manager were not present. The staff we spoke to were cheerful and friendly.

The main décor of the Home is in calm pastel shades and the home was seen to be spotlessly clean with no odours. The toilets and shower room doors were all clearly marked with pictures and words for signage.

During our visit most of the residents were gathered in the 'Hub, participating in activities. Most of the residents currently staying at Platters Farm Lodge Care Home are there on a short time basis of respite.

There were clear displays showing the day, date, month, and the time in clear lettering for the residents to view. There was a large menu on display for residents to see. On the day that we visited, a hot lunch was served and was well presented. Residents seemed to be enjoying their meal and the social interaction with staff and other residents. The Home has in-house chefs and laundry services.

### **CQC rating:**

Current CQC Rating of Chimnies Care Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 28th January 2020.

### **Acknowledgements**

Healthwatch Medway would like to thank the patients, family, friends and carers along with our volunteers for taking the time to contribute to this piece of work.

### **Disclaimer**

Please note this report relates to the findings on the days stated at the beginning of this report. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients, family, friends and carers, only an account of what was contributed and observed during our visit on those days noted.

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