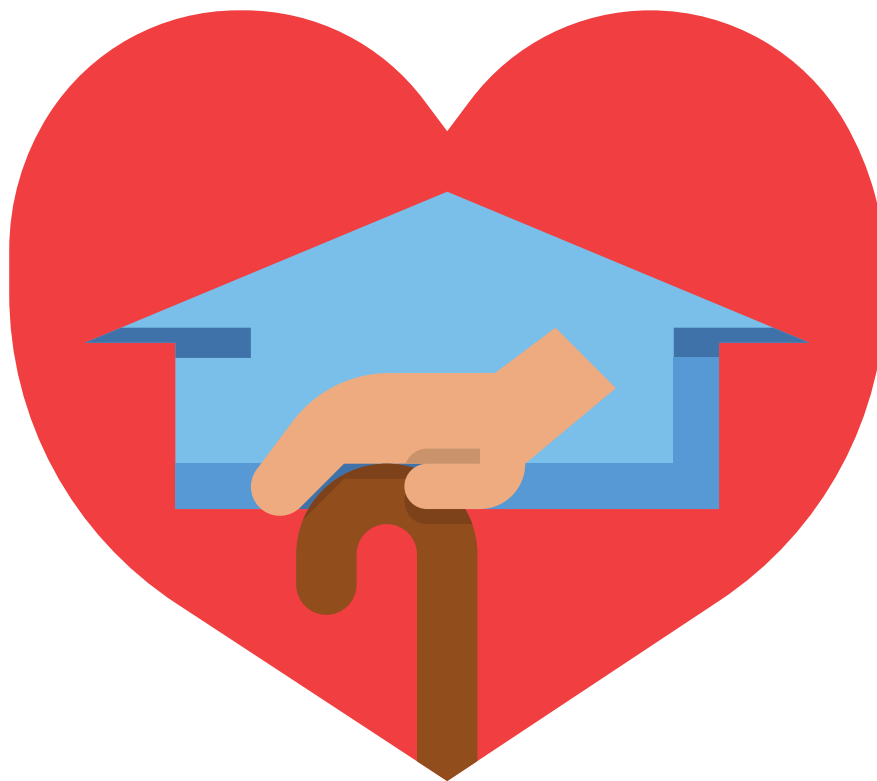


Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway

The White House Care Home, Chatham



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 The White House in Chatham 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 The White House 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 The White House 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 The White House Care Home on 25th 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.

Unfortunately, we did not receive any completed questionnaires from families.

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 two residents and two members of staff during our visit..

In Summary

- Both residents told us that social services had chosen the home for them.
- The GP visits the home once a month
- Staff talked about the positive benefits of the new enhanced GP service

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 once a week as per the guidance. NHS guidance states that the care homes dedicated GP should visit each week.

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:

Both residents that we spoke to said that they did not have a choice when moving to The White House Care Home, but social services had chosen the home for them.

We asked how long each resident had been living at The White House Care Home and had they noticed any changes in services during that time:

One resident had only lived at The White House Care Home for 6 months and the other resident we spoke to had been there for 2 years.

They told us that it was important to be close to family and friends.

One resident said, “the management are good” with the other saying “the staff are nice”.

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 monthly for reviews. According to NHS England’s plan, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

The resident who has been living at The White House Care Home for 2 years commented that they did not think they had seen a GP for 6 months but if they need a carer someone comes.

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

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 The White House Care Home regularly to examine residents:

Residents told us that the dentist does visit.

Does an Optometrist visit The White House Care Home regularly to examine residents:

We heard that the optician does visit the home.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

Social Activities at The White House Care Home:

During our visit staff were showing residents pictures of well-known movie stars to see if they recognised them and encouraged them to reminisce about their memories.

One resident told us that staff played ball games with them and on special occasions, such as birthdays and Christmas, staff would send residents cards and 'make a fuss' of them.

What did family and friends tell us?

Unfortunately, we didn't receive any feedback from families.

What did the staff at The White House Care Home tell us?

We asked staff whether they had noticed any improvement since the new GP enhanced service and this is what they told us:

Mangers talked about the benefits of being linked to a single GP practice and that all the residents have consented to join the scheme.

"I feel that any symptoms of illness being are responded to quicker".

"Communication is better and issues get dealt with quicker. If concerns come up, the GP can highlight them, and staff can keep an eye on these. Definitely more preventative. Communication through email too which is quick and easy.

"Before the GP pin prick tests for our Diabetic residents were random, but now the GP has suggested 3 monthly blood tests, he does this, and it gives the GP a good view of the residents 3-month glucose levels".

"They have introduced patches for patients to use instead of trying to take tablets".

How often does the dedicated Homes' GP visit?

We heard that the GP visits once a month for an hour and a half. The GP will also visit when requested in between.

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 up to 10 residents each month.

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 reported that the GP will refer to specialists, or instruct the carer to do so. Staff can make a referral to a dietician online.

What did the staff at The White House Care Home tell us?

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

We heard that there is an infection control lead and that staff are trained annually.

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?

We heard that diet and nutrition are recorded and logged on the computer.

“We prepare and serve residents hot or cold food and at offer refreshments at 2 hourly intervals, provide water or squash as requested. We record intakes”.

“We record daily intake - we monitor weights monthly and record any changes”.

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

“Hot drinks at 7pm, tea, hot chocolate, Horlicks or cold drinks are made available upon request”

“The kitchen is never closed. Residents are offered cold drinks, hot drinks and food”.

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

“Staff are shown and informed to check skin daily when providing personal care and to apply prescribed topical creams, use and pro pad aids”.

“We have two bed bound residents currently. We have regular checks and turn policy and staff receive training”.

Activities for the residents: Do you have a weekly schedule of activities for the residents to take part in if they wish to?

Activities are offered in the morning and in the afternoon we heard. Activities include word association, maths, music, exercise and quizzes.

The children from a local school also visit the residents on occasion.

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

“During the summer warmer months, the garden and grounds are used extensively, for walking, sitting in the sunshine, entertaining visitors etc. Some residents go on outings with friends, relatives or walks with staff members”.

What did the staff at The White House Care Home tell us? cont.

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

Preference of residents, transport issues. Staff said that some residents may need two people to assist them to go 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.

Both members of staff that we spoke to said they could see a befriending service beneficial to residents and they told us:

“We have tried many voluntary organisations - Hands-RVS-to try and arrange befriending but with no success, they don't have the resources. We used to use a befriending service, but it was cut due to funding”.



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

Healthwatch were warmly welcomed on arrival and staff were helpful and friendly. The Managers were present during our visit, and were keen to talk to us. All the members of staff we saw were happy to talk to us and clearly enjoyed their care duties.

The Home was clean and tidy and residents rooms looked homely with personal items. The home has a main lounge for activities that has a large TV screen and a clock displaying the time, date and temperature. It was well populated when we arrived. There is a smaller 'quiet' lounge with suitable furniture.

There was a large notice board displaying the lunch menu in the dining room. The residents make a personal choice on the day. A hot meal was served at lunch with some residents eating in the lounge with others choosing to have their lunch in their rooms.

The areas of the home that we saw were clean and uncluttered, with a modest number of pictures displayed on the walls.

The Home has in house chefs and laundry services. Both the residents we spoke to said they had seen a Hairdresser and one resident had had her nails looked after.

CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of The White House Care Home - Requires Improvement. Visited on 20th August 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.

