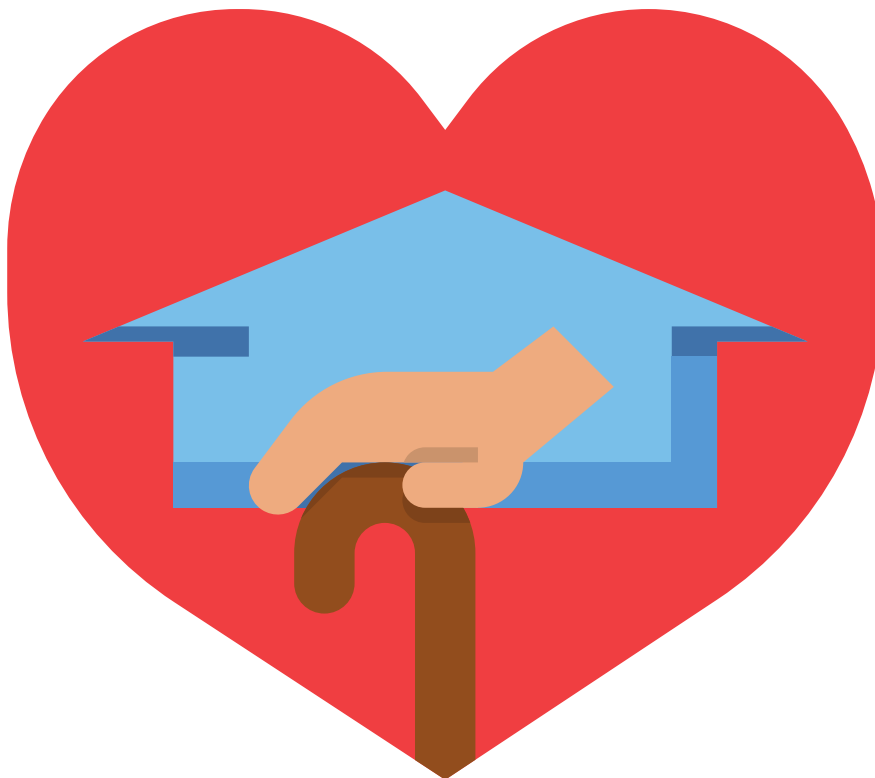


Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway

Valley View Care Home, Rochester



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 Valley View Care Home in Rochester 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 Valley 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 homes dedicated GP Practice when they moved to Valley 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 Valley View Care Home in Rochester on 31st 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 three residents and one member of staff during our visit. We also heard from two families.

What did people tell us?

In Summary

- Two families told us that they chose Valley View Care Home with one expressing that there was limited choice for their relative who has mobility problems.
- The GP visits the home every fortnight.
- Staff told us that they had noticed an improvement since the new GP service commenced.
- Families also talked positively about the GP service.

What have we recommended?

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

- The GP should visit the home every week as per the NHS guidance and ensure there is time to discuss residents care with staff
- We would recommend replacing the carpet on the few stairs that give access to the first floor - due to the dark carpet this was seen to be a possible hazard.

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 their families choose Valley View Care Home themselves, one because of the cost and the other because the home was most suited for the needs of the resident.

We asked what was important to residents when choosing Valley View Care Home:

Residents told us that it was important to be close to family and to be somewhere that suited their needs and cost.

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

Two of the residents we spoke to had been at Valley View Care Home for two years; one said they had not noticed any changes in service and the other resident said they thought the service received at Valley View had got worse since they moved in.

The third resident who spoke to us had only lived there for 3 months.

“Staff having to do different duties. The current cook is not as good as the previous one”.

“Modest changes, not always for the better”.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan?

Two residents were aware they had a Care Plan and said their family members discuss their care with staff. The third resident we spoke to wasn't sure.

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 fortnightly basis. According to NHS England's plan, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

Two residents said they had seen the GP within the last week with another resident telling us that they had seen the GP within the past two months.

One resident talk about a recent hospital appointment. They used the patient transport service, provided by G4S which took 2.5 hours. A member of the care home staff gone with them.

Residents expressed gratitude towards the care home staff who give support them and attend appointments with them.

Our Findings in Detail cont.

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

“Staff talk to me about my needs”.

“Not really, I just accept what is decided”.

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 Valley View Care Home to examine residents?

Two residents told us they had seen a dentist within the last 10 months.

Does an Optometrist visit Valley View Care Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that an optician does visit the home.

Social Activities at Valley View Care Home:

One of the residents we spoke to is bed ridden and the other has some dementia, so they told us that they do not always get involved with activities.

“I have limited involvement. My personal interests include reading, word search, monthly church and communication. I am unable to go outdoors now, I have a leg problem



What did family and friends tell us?

Family and friends of the residents of Valley View Care Home kindly answered a questionnaire for Healthwatch, here is what they said:

Please note: The word ‘resident’ is used to identify the resident in the home that family and friends are commenting on behalf of:

We asked whether there was a choice when choosing a home for the resident and if so, what was important to them?

One family told us that there did not seem much choice as their family member needed somewhere that caters for mobility problems.

The other family said, “Our reasons for choosing this home were that; on viewing, staff were friendly and welcoming, the building seemed clean and well maintained. It is close to relatives and so convenient for them to visit”.

Health and GP service at Valley View Care Home:

To gain an insight into the impact the new enhanced GP service was making on the resident’s lives at Valley View Care Home we asked family and friends whether they had noticed any changes in service. Do their loved ones have regular visits from the GP, has there been more support with their medical needs and therefore, has there been less visits to hospital and less outside medical intervention?

When choosing Valley View Care Home, was the new enhanced GP service discussed with you?

Both families told us that the GP service wasn’t discussed with them although one family member did get a choice of GP when they moved into the home.

If the resident is using the care home’s GP, have you noticed any changes or differences to the medical support over the past six months, for example, regularity of visits by the GP; less need for hospital visits/outside medical intervention?

“Yes, the GP visits more regularly”.

“Medication has been regularly reviewed and changed if deemed appropriate”.

On the day that the GP is due to visit, are residents asked whether they would like to be seen during this visit?

One family told us that their family member is asked if they would like to see the GP on his rounds. The other family said they weren’t involved in decisions of when to see the GP saying;

“No. We are happy to leave it to them to decide”.

What did family and friends tell us? cont.

When we asked how satisfied family and friends were with the GP service at Valley View Care Home:

Both families told us they were satisfied with one commenting:

“Medication has been regularly reviewed and changed as deemed appropriate”.

Are family members involved in the medical care of the resident?

“She has very limited speech so it helps to have a family member involved in discussions about her medical care.”

“We are happy to allow nursing staff/GP to make appropriate judgement about medical care.”

“We have been very satisfied by the standard of care at the home. Her physical and mental condition has improved somewhat since her arrival at this home. Whereas it deteriorated significantly in hospital”.

When asked whether they knew of a Care Plan in place for their family member, half said yes, and half said no with one person commenting:

Both families told us they were aware of a Care Plan for their family member.

We asked, was the resident able to go outdoors unaided? If so, do you think they would like to be taken out by staff?

Both families told us that their family member was unable to go outside alone.

How often is the resident taken outdoors?

One family commented saying that they thought the staff only took residents out in the summer for a short period of time.



What did the staff at Valley 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 it was the Home's policy for all residents to be registered with the same GP Practice. All but one of the residents have agreed to this approach:

One has refused, because of long standing ties with their family GP.

Staff said there was a good relationship with the local Pharmacist, who carries out audits of drug use.

Staff told us there has been an improvement in service since the enhanced GP service commenced.

How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?

The GP visits the home fortnightly we were told.

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?

We were told that the GP sees about three quarters of the residents when they visit, the visits takes around 2 hours which is enough to see all the residents who wish 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 felt that referrals were made as and when they were needed.

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

We heard that there was an infection control lead.

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 were told that fluid charts are used and these are monitored by the Nurse. There is always a choice on the menu, and they cater for special diets.

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

Refreshments are offered and all intake is logged.

What did the Staff at Valley View 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?

We were told that care staff check residents daily during personal care and report to the Nurse if necessary.

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

Yes, there is a schedule of activities for residents to take part in should they wish. The Home has good links to the local church, with a monthly service and communion.

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

It was noted that there was little opportunity to go outside but we were told, residents sit in the garden when it is warm.

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

The staff member we spoke to said: "Because of physical needs or no substitute transportation. For example, If they need special care or special wheelchair".

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.

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



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

Healthwatch were warmly welcomed on arrival and staff were helpful and friendly. Some of the staff have been working there for a long time. For example, the Deputy Matron has worked at the home for 15 years. Residents seemed well cared for with their medical needs being a priority.

Décor was smart and there were plenty of pictures on the walls and windowsills as well as vases of faux flowers. The home was warm and clean. It was noted that the single rooms have only one chair for visitors to use. Also, the visitors lounge is small and there are no options available for refreshments. A refreshment trolley would be a good idea to encourage visitors to spend time with their loved ones.

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

CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Valley View Care Home - Requires Improvement . Visited on 21st December 2019.

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.



Healthwatch Medway

5A New Rd Ave, Chatham ME4 6BB

 enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com

 @healthwmedway

 @HWMedway

 @HealthwatchMedway

 0800 136 656