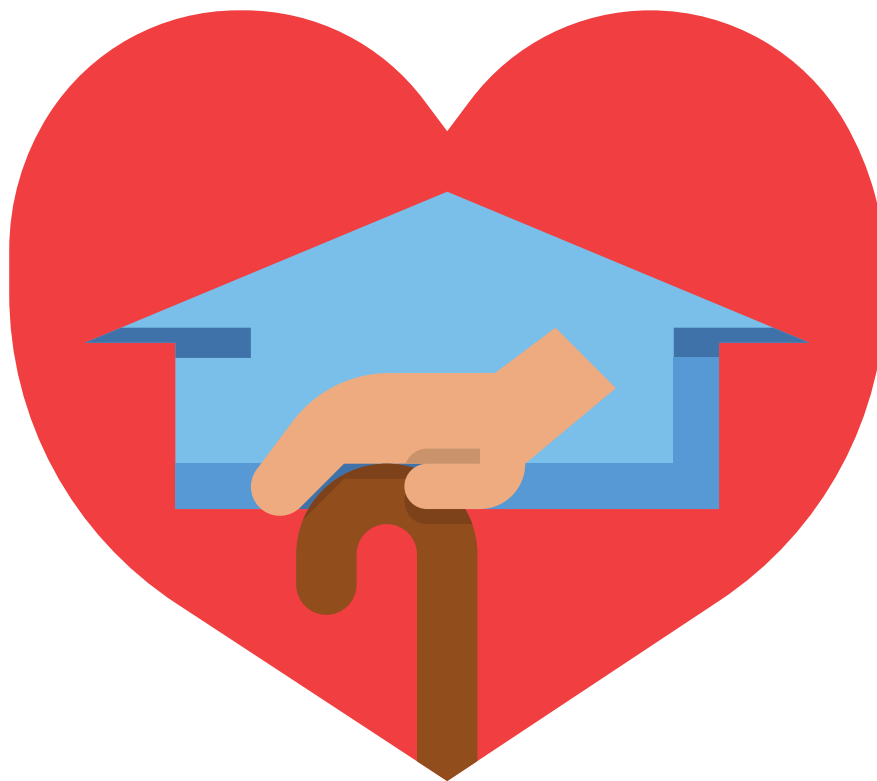


Spotlight on Care Homes in Medway

Amherst

Court 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 Amherst Court Care Home 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 Amherst Court 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 Amherst Court 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 Amherst Court Care Home on 12th February 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 4 residents and 3 members of staff during our visit and we heard from 5 families.

In Summary

- All 4 residents that spoke to us said their family chose Amherst Court Care Home, with one resident saying they were involved in the decision.
- 4 families told us that they chose Amherst Court Care Home, one family told us that their loved one was involved in that choice.
- Staff told us that the GP visits regularly as per the NHS guidance.
- The 3 staff members we spoke to said they have seen improvements since the new GP service commenced.
- All staff, including domestic staff are trained in infection control.
- One of the residents we spoke to was 100 years old.

What have we recommended?

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

- We would encourage the home to inform families prior to the GP visit in case they have any concerns or questions to send in advance.
- Ensure all residents are aware of the befriending service at the home and are given the option to benefit from this service.

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:

All four residents that we spoke to told us their family had chosen Amherst Court Care Home for them, with one saying they were involved in the decision.

We heard what was important to residents when choosing Amherst Court Care Home::

One resident commented saying, they like the staff and the Home is nice and clean.

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

One resident told us they had lived at Amherst Court Care Home for around 5/6 years and the other resident who answered this question had lived at the Home for 6 months.

One resident commented:

“It is more relaxed; I have got to know the staff now”.

We asked residents whether they had a care plan:

None of the residents we spoke to were able to answer this question.

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 guidance, GPs should carry out a weekly round in the care homes that they cover.

None of the residents we spoke to who were with the Home’s GP could recall when they were last seen. One resident told us that they were still with their own GP and had not been asked if they wished to move to the Home’s dedicated GP Practice. The resident had lived at the home for 6 months. This resident told us that if they needed to see a GP, they would contact their family.

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

Two of the residents told us that they knew that if they needed to see a GP they would speak to staff.

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 Amherst Court Care Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that the dentist does visit them.
Two residents said they recall seeing the dentist at the home.
One resident said they used their own dentist but would like to see one at the Home.

Does an Optometrist visit Amherst Court Care Home to examine residents:

Residents told us that an optician comes to the home.

All 4 residents that spoke to us said that they had been offered access to other health services such as chiropody.

Social Activities at Amherst Court Care Home:

Staff told us that there is a weekly schedule of activities.

Residents said;

“I like to walk outside, I like walking”.

“Currently making a Valentines banner - painting, using glue and glitter”.

“Plenty. Sometimes overwhelming so I choose not to take part if too loud”.

“I go outside when I feel well enough”.



What did family and friends tell us?

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:

Four families who answered this question said they had chosen Amherst Court Care Home for their resident and offered some insight to why:

"I came to look at the home as it was an 'outstanding home' and was very impressed with it".

"Relative has dementia but we chose this home based on cleanliness and quality of care we saw and the outstanding rating".

"Yes, the resident was fully involved in choosing a care home. The care home is rated outstanding and the care given is extremely good".

"We chose this care home as it best suited the resident's needs".

Health and GP service at Amherst Court Care Home:

To gain an insight into the impact the new enhanced GP service was making on the resident's lives at Amherst Court 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 Amherst Court Care Home, was the new enhanced GP service discussed with you?

Over half the people who answered this question said yes, however 2 families answered no to this question but did not offer any further comments.

All families were made aware that the resident had a choice of keeping their own GP or joining the Home's dedicated GP.

We asked whether residents had encountered any problems in seeing a GP when the need arises:

No one had encountered any problems with the Care Homes GP. One family commented:

"GP comes to the home every Monday but if unavailable during the week another Doctor will visit".

Our Findings in Detail cont.

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?

There were no negative comments in response to this question.

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

Three families answered this question saying yes, the resident is asked whether they wish to be seen when the GP visits. One commented:

"We are always contacted after the GP has visited with an update".

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

From the people whose family member had seen the GP:

Four families responded to this question, three saying they were satisfied and one saying they were very satisfied with the GP service at the Home.

"I'm satisfied. We would like to be informed when the GP visits so that we could discuss their diagnosis first-hand".

Are family members involved in the Medical Care of the resident?

From the people whose family member had seen the GP:

Four families responded to this question, three saying they were satisfied and one saying they were very satisfied with the GP service at the Home.

"I'm satisfied. We would like to be informed when the GP visits so that we could discuss their diagnosis first-hand".

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

All five families told us that their loved one was unable to go outside alone. One family said that their loved one was often taken out on activities.

How often is the resident taken outdoors?

All families told us that their loved one was taken out weekly, sometimes more than once a week. One family told us:

"Taken shopping, visits family and is due to go on holiday"

What did the Staff at Amherst Court Care Home tell us?

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

All three staff that we spoke to said there has been an improvement since the enhanced GP service commenced.

“Yes. It is much easier; we can ring or email. This brings continuity to the resident’s needs. GP gets to know staff and residents. Sometimes paramedics come then they refer to the GP if needs be for medication”.

“If a resident is permanent, they are given the choice to join the home's GP - this is discussed with the family”.

“Yes, bringing continuity and relationship building”.

“The GP is here more”.

How often does the dedicated Homes GP visit?

Staff told us the GP visits weekly.

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?

A list of residents who wish, or need, to be seen is sent to the GP prior to the visit. The GP takes the time to see all the residents who 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 the GP did refer residents frequently onto other professionals as needed. Staff also told us that they could refer residents to the dietician..

Do you have an Infection Prevention Lead at this residence?

All senior staff act as infection control leads we were told. All staff are trained in infection control including domestic 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 they use charts for fluids and food. Staff take advice from the dietician. Refreshments are always available and offered and there are refreshments stations all around the Home. There are regular meals and snacks. Residents’ weight is monitored regularly.

There is always a choice of food and a menu is shown on the wall. There is also a vegetarian/vegan option.

What did the Staff at Berengrove Park Nursing Home tell us cont.

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

Staff told us that refreshments are offered to residents through the night. Staff change over at 8pm. New staff offer snacks and drinks.

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

Yes, all staff are trained we were told. Training is updated regularly, and all training is done in house, face to face or at the company's headquarters.

If staff are worried about a resident, the Senior is notified and if necessary, the District Nurse is contacted.

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 said that there is a good mix of activities each week with day and evening activities. There is a cinema room available where staff show old time movies. They also have an 'old school' sweet/popcorn trolley while movies are playing.

An outside nursery visits the residents and the residents that we spoke to said they enjoyed seeing them and speaking with them very much.

There is a pamper room where residents can have their hair and nails done.

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 have a choice to go outside if they fancy it. Staff organise activities outside, especially when the weather is warmer.

On the day of our visit we were told that some residents were off to Asda to buy things for Valentine's Day. Staff said that they make use of the grounds as much as possible.

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

Staff said that residents are taken out less due to their own health & safety needs, but all have access to communal grounds.

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 member of staff told us that the Home has a befriending service in place.

Four families felt that their loved one would like a befriending service, one commented: "Very much so, to prevent boredom/loneliness".

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 is clean and bright with attractive décor. The Café was busy and spacious and a great place for families to meet and share a coffee together.

The door frame to each residents' rooms was painted a different colour with a photo of the resident which is great to assist the residents with recognition of their room and where they are within the Home.

There was music playing in the communal areas which was pleasant and relaxing. There was a bird in a cage in one of the lounge areas which was lovely for residents to observe and communicate with.

During our visit we saw the menu boards clearly showing the food offerings for that day. There was a good choice, including special dietary needs.

The Home had a kitchenette in the lounge area where we met with residents. Residents can use this to wash up their cups, use the sink etc supporting residents to undertake daily tasks instilling independence.

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

CQC rating:

Current CQC Rating of Amherst Court Care Home - Outstanding. Visited on 15th August 2018.

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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