

Report of Enter and View Visit

Amber House

Published 24 May 2016



Care Home Visited	Amber House
Date and Time of visit	Friday 15th April - 10.00am - 3.00pm
Address	11 Moseley Avenue, Coundon, Coventry, CV6 1AE
Size and Specialism	Up to 15 residents. Adults 65+ requiring residential care. Mixed Gender, specialising in Dementia.
Authorised Representatives	Kerry Vieira, Robert Bicker & Mary Burns

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

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What is Enter and View?

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe and report on service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers in premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. This is so we can learn from the experiences of people who interact with these services at first hand.

The Healthwatch Coventry Steering Group has agreed that Enter and View Visits to care homes for older people form part of the current Healthwatch work programme.

Healthwatch Authorised Representatives carry out these visits to find out how services are being run and to gather the perspectives of those who are using the service.

From our findings we look to report accurately a snapshot of users' experiences, highlight examples of good practice and make recommendations for improvements.

Reasons for the visit

To gather information about the experience of living in care homes in Coventry including quality of life factors such as activities and choices. To look at homes from the perspective of 'would I wish my relative to live here?'

Methodology

We collected our information by speaking to 5 of the 12 residents, 4 members of staff and 1 manager. We also gave out some questionnaires for visitors to complete and return in our freepost envelope.

Information was recorded on semi structured questionnaires asking open questions to establish what people liked most and what people felt could be improved.

Before speaking to each person we introduced ourselves by name, explained what Healthwatch is and why we were there. We established that the resident or staff member was happy to speak with us. We confirmed that their name would not be linked with anything they told us and that they were free to end the conversation at any point. We wore name badges to identify who we were and provided the care home manager with a letter of authority from the Healthwatch Coventry Chief Officer.

We made observations throughout the visit and made notes of what we saw around the home.

Before and after the visit we had a look at the website¹ for the home and the most recent CQC report² to see how it compared with our findings.

Summary of findings

We found the home to be a small, homely and friendly residential home specialising in dementia. There was capacity for up to 15 residents and on the day of our visit there were 12.

During the Enter and View, we spoke to the home Manager, 4 other members of staff and 5 residents. Residents and staff appeared happy and comfortable. The home looked well managed, safe and secure. We saw staff working well as a team.

The home was bright with plenty of natural light and there were dementia friendly signs and features throughout. However, some of these features were not being as well utilised as they should be.

We found the home to be clean and there were no unpleasant odours.

The home catered well for individual choices and preferences, allowing residents the freedom to choose when they got up, ate and slept.

Communal toilets and bathrooms needed to be fitted with locks to preserve the dignity and privacy of staff and residents.

¹ <http://www.amberhousecoventry.co.uk/contactus.php>

² <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-254850934>

Initial Impressions

We arrived and rang the door bell, the door was opened by a staff member and we signed into the visitors' book in the entrance hall. We were introduced to the Manager who was welcoming and happy to answer any of our questions. The home was inviting and had a homely and friendly feel. From the outside we thought that it looked like a B&B.

The gardens, interior and exterior features looked well maintained and there were hanging baskets and a bird feeder at the front of the building which could be seen from the windows.

Facilities and environment

The home consisted of two floors with a stair lift which looked new. We were told by staff that most of the residents have to use this to go up and down the stairs. There was the office, kitchen, communal lounge and dining room/lounge on the ground floor and some bedrooms were also located downstairs.

We found the home to be clean with no unpleasant odours. The home was well lit and there was plenty of natural light around the home. Most of the home was decorated in magnolia with some colourful pictures on the walls. Furniture was comfortable and fit for purpose. The temperature around the home was comfortable. There were ceiling fans in the lounge which were in use while we were there.

The TV in the lounge was on when we first arrived, the Manager switched it off as no one was watching it. There was another TV available to watch in the smaller lounge/dining room and residents had a TV in their room. The Manager told us that they supply a TV for residents and often families will provide one for their relative so they always have spare ones.

The home is a mixed gender facility but there were only female residents during our visit. There had been a married couple residing at the home but the husband passed away recently. There was one male member of staff who had worked at the home for several years, the rest of the staff were female.

We saw lots of laughing and chatting among residents and staff, there was a calm and cheery atmosphere.

The home catered well for individual choices and was flexible. Residents were able to get up when they wanted and we were told that some residents stay up all night and may only sleep for a couple of hours at a time. The manager told us of one resident who does not like to sleep in her room and staff occasionally managed to persuade her to come upstairs for a nap but she usually chose to sleep in a reclining chair in the lounge/dining room by the window and also kept some of her belongings there.

Staff

We felt that the home was well managed and staff told us ***"the management are very good"*** and also ***"I would like my relative to live here if they needed care"***. During our visit the home appeared to have plenty of staff. There was an experienced manager on duty and experienced staff who appeared to work well to support and work with newer staff on the team. We observed staff calling on other members of the team for assistance to ensure they could safely support residents with various tasks such as toileting and getting up from their chair or moving around the home. We saw them working well as a team. The Manager and staff told us that there were plenty of opportunities for training and that staff are encouraged to expand their knowledge and attend courses in addition to the mandatory training they all undertake. We were told that one staff member has left to explore other jobs but has returned to work at Amber House several times. We spoke to this staff member who told us ***"I love it here"***.

Food and drink

We observed a resident being given toast in their room when she woke up around 10.30am. Staff told us that this resident preferred to spend more time in their room looking out of the window and liked to eat at different times.

The dining room is also used as a lounge. There were three tables with chairs around them and several high backed chairs around the edge of the room. The room was large with a big bay window letting in plenty of light.

We were told by staff that all the food is prepared on site. The cook serves breakfast and lunch, the cook will then pre prepare something for evening meals such as sandwiches or something such as a stew cooked in the slow cooker ready to be served by the carers.

As lunchtime approached, staff asked individual residents ***"Its lunch time now, would you like to come into the dining room to eat?"*** One resident wanted to eat in the lounge and others were assisted to walk into the dining room. They were reminded what was being served for lunch. The Cook greeted the residents by name as they entered the dining room. She knew which residents wanted to eat and who didn't like sauce on their fish.

Residents were guided in by carers, residents were asked where they wanted to sit and with whom. They were reminded what the meal was, and when the meal was placed in front of them told where on the plate the food was. When the meal had been served staff also sat with the residents and ate. We tasted lunch, fish with parsley sauce, potato and vegetables, sandwiches were also offered to one resident who had tried the fish, she seemed to enjoy sweet food instead.

The cook seems very flexible telling us that this group of residents like salads and when the weather is warmer will put more on the menu. Residents said ***"if I don't***

like something, I don't eat it, they give me something else". Another said "I had a bad cold, I couldn't eat properly. They are very good".

We observed that meal times were flexible. Residents were able to have late breakfast and could eat what they fancied, we saw one resident enjoying ice cream mid morning. The manager told us that as the residents have dementia and sometimes do not want meals at specific times, they are offered breakfast when they get up and can eat when they wish.

Residents said that they liked the meals. We observed residents being offered an alternative such as sandwiches if they didn't like what was on the menu. One resident picked at her sandwich and then ate dessert and some cake. Staff said that they were happy to see this resident eating as they had been losing weight recently.

We saw snacks and drinks being offered to residents throughout our visit. Residents told us that staff provide them with a drink when they ask for one.

Dignity and Care

We saw that staff showed patience, respect and care towards residents. One resident was shouting out, staff tried to calmly reassure her by stroking her shoulder and talking to her. We observed staff trying to get this resident to engage in some activity by offering her colouring books and crayons and later encouraging her to use a 'dementia muff' (this is a knitted sensory hand muff with various textures and things to fiddle with). We also observed other residents trying to calm her, one resident became frustrated and was saying "stop shouting" and then left the room.

There were 3 rooms which were used for sharing but only one was being shared on the day of our visit. The other rooms were occupied as singles with the option to be shared if the need arises. The shared rooms had a dividing curtain and beds were arranged to preserve privacy as much as possible.

We noticed that the 3 communal toilets/bathrooms did not have lockable doors and thought that this could be embarrassing for residents and also for staff if someone was to walk in on them, especially as this is a mixed gender facility and there was no way to prevent the door being opened or to preserve dignity. There were signs on the outside of the door which could be altered to say when the toilet/bathroom was in use but the Manager agreed that this has not been very effective.

The Manager explained that the home was re-designed recently in consultation with the Dementia Society and the two way doors were recommended to the home owner and installed as part of the refurbishment, but she advised us that she was in negotiations with the contractors after requesting that the doors be fitted with locks which can be opened from the outside in an emergency.

We were told by the Manager that a Chiropodist comes in every 6 weeks.

Activities

On the wall there were pictures of some of the activities that the residents had enjoyed such as a beach party in the garden last year. There was a small rear garden with a high fence around it. The Manager said the garden was an adequate size for the amount of residents and in the summer they put out some chairs and a table and some parasols so that residents can sit outside.

Residents told us that they had been on a trip to the theatre and said "***that was very enjoyable***" another commented "***I liked that***". One resident told us that there are some activities but not regularly. "***Sometimes singing, sometimes piano, sometimes keep fit so we do that.***"

The Manager told us that staff sometimes took residents for a short walk to local shops or to the nearby pub. Staff told us that they took residents to the local pub at Christmas for their Christmas lunch. The owner also brings in her dog to visit the home which she said the residents enjoy.

The Home Manager is responsible for organising activities and told us that someone comes in to do seated exercise classes (Extend) with residents and a singer comes in and someone comes in who plays the guitar. She also told us that there is a creative music therapy session held twice a week, reminiscence sessions every month, manicures and hand massage every six weeks, Zoo Lab visit twice a year and bring in animals for the residents to see, annual celebrations are organised for Easter, Christmas etc and visits to the Herbert museum have taken place sometimes. Staff told us that they like to have activities in the garden when the weather is nice but it has to be on very warm days otherwise residents complain about being cold and won't take part.

There was a piano and an electric keyboard in the lounge, we were told that one of the owners sometimes comes in and plays the piano and also brings her dog in for residents to pet. We also saw a doll and pram, cuddly toys and other toys and games in the dining room. The Manager said that some staff will come in and spend extra time doing activities with residents such as baking.

Staff told us that they try to encourage all residents to take part in activities. In the lounge there is a large calendar and weather chart which the residents help to change each day.

On the day of our visit the hairdresser was doing resident's hair and they were looking happy and pampered. Staff and residents told us that the hairdresser comes in every 7 - 10 days.

Dementia Friendly Design

In the dining room there was a sensory board on the wall with a variety of handles. We didn't observe anyone using it because it was behind the door and blocked by a chair. We mentioned to staff that this could do with being placed somewhere else to encourage use or not having a chair in front of it which restricted access.

We saw dementia friendly signs being used throughout the home. Each resident had their name on their door and a photograph. Except one resident who had chosen not to have one on their door.

We noticed a board on the dining room wall next to the serving hatch. It used words and pictures to show what meals were being served each day. However, this had not been updated with the day's menu. We raised this with the staff and the Manager as we felt this feature was a very good dementia friendly idea which should be better utilised. We discussed this with the Manager and agreed that it should be located somewhere else so that staff are reminded to keep it updated each day and it would be more visible to residents.

We were impressed to see an attractive optional cover being used to disguise a mirror in the upstairs communal bathroom. The Manager said had this been adapted using a framed mirror with shutters that one of the staff found when they were out at a garden centre.

Healthwatch Recommendations

Following our visit Healthwatch recommends:

1. Locks should be installed on communal toilets/bathrooms, which can be opened by staff from the outside if necessary.
2. We were impressed to see so many examples of dementia friendly tools and features but some were not being utilised effectively. Changing the location of these items may help such as:
 - a) The sensory board on the wall in the dining room with various locks and handles. This was behind the door and had a chair placed in front of it so it could not be easily seen or reached by someone who may like to explore it.
 - b) The board which displays the pictorial menu should be relocated so that it does not get forgotten and can be better utilised. We would like to see residents being involved in helping staff to keep this up dated as suggested by the Manager.

Response from Care Home Manager

Thank you for visiting our home. We found the visitors to be friendly and unobtrusive, showing due regard for our resident's welfare.

1. We have commissioned our handyman to install new locks on bathroom and toilet doors week commencing 16th May 2016.
2. We have decided to move some of our dementia friendly activity resources to more prominent areas to make them more accessible to residents as suggested.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Coventry would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors and staff for their contribution to the Enter and View visit.

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