

Report of Enter and View Visit

The Willows

Published 17 February 2017



Care Home Visited	The Willows
Date and Time of visit	Friday 25 November 2016, 10am - 3.30pm
Address	38-39 Westminster Road, Earlsdon, Coventry, CV1 3GB
Size and Specialism	Residential care for up to 32 adults aged 65+ some who have dementia.
Authorised Representatives	Denise Blyth and 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 3 of the 31 residents, 3 members of staff plus 1 manager and 3 visitors. 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.

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

Summary of findings

We found this to be a friendly and homely residential home. The facilities were consisted of three floors with capacity for up to 32 residents in single rooms. We were told that 7 of the rooms had en-suite facilities.

There were three communal lounges, a sensory room and a dining room all of which were well utilised. Staff and residents told us that the rear garden was well used when the weather permits.

On the day of our visit there were 31 residents and all had various degrees of dementia. There was a mixture of male and female residents.

The home is one of a chain of care homes owned by Adept Care Homes Ltd. Information on the company's website was a true reflection of the facilities we found during our visit.

During the Enter and View, we spoke to the home Manager and 3 other members of staff; 3 people who were visiting residents and 3 residents. We received 2 completed visitor questionnaires in which visitors praised the quality of the facilities and the standard of care provided.

¹ <http://adeptcarehomes.co.uk/homes/the-willows/>
<http://www.carehome.co.uk/carehome.cfm/searchazref/10002502WILC>

² <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-132432309>

We observed staff being caring and attentive and saw staff regularly interacting with residents and doing some 1-to-1 activities with them such as painting nails and getting them involved in simple DIY tasks around the home.

We were told by staff and residents that there were opportunities provided for residents to go out for a walk with staff and on organised outings. The visitors we spoke to praised the quality of care and activities provided by the home.

The home was clean, secure and well maintained. Staff told us that they felt well supported and happy working at The Willows.

Initial Impressions

The home did not have a front garden or a car park and from the outside had the look of a hotel frontage with a ramp for wheelchair access.

There was a secure entrance to the building by use of a coded keypad. There was also a door secured with a coded keypad at the rear of the building to access the rear garden. We rang the doorbell and the door was opened by the Deputy Manager who greeted us, asked us to sign the visitor's book and took us to the Manager's office.

The home is owned by Adept Care Homes Ltd. We found the home on the Adept Care Home's website and also on the carehome.co.uk website. Both sites gave an accurate description of the home with pictures which were a true reflection had clearly been taken on the premises.

Facilities and environment

There were three floors with a lift and stairs to access all floors. There were 32 single rooms, we were told by the Manager that 7 of the rooms were en-suite and throughout the building there were five communal bathrooms/shower rooms. The home was well maintained, clean with no unpleasant odours and looked safe and secure.

As we walked by some of the rooms we saw that doors were left open and staff pointed out that they left doors open when residents were in their room. Staff told us that during the day if residents are not in their rooms their doors are locked to prevent other residents going in and out. We looked at 3 of the bedrooms and could see that they had a wash basin but did not see a toilet or shower in them.

We were shown that there was a separate room used as a laundry room on the ground floor. There were three communal lounges which staff told us were well used, we saw that the majority of residents were using the communal lounges. Chairs were laid out around the edges of the lounges. The main lounge had the dining area and a sensory area combined. It felt welcoming and had plenty of natural light.

Another of the lounges had a table and chairs, comfortable sofas and three reclining chairs. We sat at the table and one resident came to join us, she seemed to be saying that she did not like the television programme that was on (it was a hospital programme, showing operations in detail). The televisions were on in all three lounges. In one lounge the temperature seemed a bit cool to us but we were shown that the temperature gauge was showing 20 degrees.

We noticed that there were wheelchairs being stored in one of the lounges which made access to the table difficult.

There was a quiet area off the main lounge if residents wished to sit there. A resident told us that they also had the option of sitting near the main entrance or sitting in their bedroom if they had visitors or wanted to be somewhere quiet.

The Manager told us communication is very open for staff, residents and their family members; that family meetings were held monthly and residents meetings were held quarterly. On one of the completed visitor questionnaires, a visitor commented "*The place is always very clean and tidy*".

The maintenance person told us on a Monday they meet with the Manager to find out what their jobs were for the week and talked to us about plans for the garden and residents helping with gardening activities during the summer. They also told us about their plans to lighten up the hallways and make the resident's doors sky blue so that their names would be clearer. We saw one of the male residents helping with some maintenance tasks; staff told us that this resident looks forward to helping with small tasks around the home. On the day of our visit they were painting a wall in the lounge/dining room in a plant design, the design led up to a beautiful, large clock which we were told the residents had chosen. The clock had large clear digits and the painting made the clock look like a flower growing up the wall.

Staff

A staff member told us that the home was a caring home and that they felt well supported in their job. They added that they felt able to take any concerns or suggestions to the Manager and were confident that they would be acted upon.

We observed that the carers wore uniforms which had their name embroidered on. The Manager told us that Seniors Carer Assistants wore a turquoise tunic and the other care assistants wore purple tunics.

The Manager told us that there is always a Manager available including at weekends and there was a total of 36 staff, which includes a maintenance post and three housekeepers. The Manager also said that all staff had a probationary period of 6 months, annual appraisals and supervision every 3 months or more frequently if required.

Shift patterns were mornings, 7am-2pm with a total of 6 staff; afternoons, 2-9pm with 5 staff and at night there were 3 waking night staff. The Manager said that

they tried not to use agency staff if possible as they liked the residents to have continuity.

One staff member told us that training had recently moved to E-learning, their most recent training took 45 minutes and was done in their own time. However, Dementia awareness training was done in house. They also told us that in general 1-to-1 supervision was provided every 8 weeks and staff meetings were monthly.

Two of the staff members we spoke to commented that their day would be made easier if there was an extra member of staff on duty during the morning. They felt that later in the day the home is less busy and quieter as many residents become sleepy in the afternoons. Another staff member told us that their average morning shift started with looking at care plans and giving hot drinks, as well as helping residents to wash and dress. They added that mornings are a very busy time for staff, getting residents up and ready for the day.

The Maintenance person told us that they felt supported in their job but that sometimes for larger tasks they could do with some extra help. They suggested that they would like to have an apprentice to help them.

On the completed questionnaires that we received, one visitor commented that staff are, ***"Excellent...helpful and friendly, receptive and willing to help"***. Another said, ***"Staff are fab with my dad and other residents"*** and also said they felt they could approach any staff members if they had a concern.

Food and drink

Adjacent to the kitchen there was a dining area which felt very homely. Most of the residents used this room at mealtimes. We were told by the Manager that the food was prepared and cooked on the premises.

Residents told us that if they wanted to stay in their room staff would bring them food and a drink. Staff told us that a few of the residents like to stay in their rooms but most residents will use the dining room and go to their rooms after having a meal.

We observed that there was a choice of two main meals at lunch time. On the day of our visit there was fish, chips and mushy peas or corned beef hash, served with mash and mushy peas. There were also choices of dessert, homemade apple crumble, a creamy custard dessert or yoghurt. Cold drinks were placed on the table in plastic jugs for residents to help themselves or for staff to assist them. Hot drinks were also being offered. The food was very well presented, looked appetising and portions sizes were adequate. Residents we spoke to told us that they never feel hungry.

We were given lunch during our visit and both chose to have salad which was beautifully presented; for dessert one of our reps had the hot option, while the other had a yoghurt.

The tables were laid out with tablecloths and had menus on them, however, only one meal choice was showing on the menu and staff were telling residents what choices were available.

We saw that residents were being assisted to the table and staff were telling them that it was lunch time and that they were going to have a meal and what the choices were as they led them into the dining room. One resident did not eat her lunch and was offered another choice of a sandwich or an omelette. The residents appeared to be enjoying their meals and those that were in the dining room were able to eat unassisted. A resident told us they sit with their friends at the dining table.

We found that all of the residents had some level of dementia and therefore many of them did not say a lot about the food, only to say that they enjoyed it. One resident told us the *"food is marvellous"* and that they had 3 big pieces of toast at 5.30am.

Some residents told us that their favourite meal was a roast dinner and that they were able to have a drink whenever they asked for one. We were told by staff that hot and cold drinks and snacks were available to all residents on request throughout the day.

We saw a visitor taking their relative out to lunch and another visitor helping their relative with eating. Both visitors were complimentary about the home and took away our questionnaire to complete. On one of the completed visitor questionnaires we received, a relative said *"they have a varied daily choice of meals which my mother always says she enjoys"*.

Dignity and Care

During lunch time a resident was taken ill and staff had to call in paramedics to assess them. Staff worked well to ensure that this did not disrupt the other residents.

After lunch, we observed the medication round. The staff that were administering the medication, wore tabards which said "Drugs Round, do not disturb". A record of the drugs that were administered was entered onto a laptop.

A member of care staff told us that residents are encouraged to be as independent as possible when getting up and ready for the day. Residents are shown a choice of outfits from their wardrobe to choose from and all clothing is labelled with the resident's name.

We noticed that the residents did not interact very much with each other but saw that staff were constantly chatting to residents and showed a genuine interest in what they had to say.

One female resident told us that she always asks for a female carer to provide her personal care and that the staff respect her dignity. Another resident said *"I have the women help me wash and dress"*.

We spoke to three visitors, each of whom spoke highly of the care that their relative was receiving. Two spoke of their relative being in other care homes previously and told us that The Willows was far superior in comparison.

In one resident's bedroom, we noted that her radiator was broken and that a portable oil filled radiator was in its place with no guard. This was hot to the touch.

We were told that residents had a call bell to use when needed. There were also pressure sensory fall mats by the beds and pressure mats for chairs and wheelchair users. There were also 'rotundas'³ available to enable residents to transfer from a chair to a wheelchair or walking frame.

The GP surgery is located next door to the home and doctors make weekly visits. Staff told us that medication is dispensed in house by medically trained staff and pain relief is monitored and provided when needed.

Residents told us that they are provided with pain relief when they need it. One resident said, ***"I ring a bell and I am supported straight away"***.

Staff told us that a chiropodist visits the home every few weeks and a hairdresser comes every fortnight. A resident said, ***"Every fortnight I have my hair done, washed and cut"***.

On the two completed visitor questionnaires we received, the home was scored 5/5 for the standard of care provided. One visitor commented ***"always friendly, helpful and willing to talk about any concerns regarding my mother."*** A visitor also said that their mother was very unhappy when receiving care in her own flat and would not let carers touch her when providing personal care, ***"since being at The Willows she is much better cared for"***.

Visitors told us that they feel they are kept well informed and one visitor said ***"my mother had a fall and we were assured by the Doctor and staff that saw to her that there was nothing to worry about"***.

Activities

The Manager told us that there is an Activity Manager, who oversees all of the homes within the company and that there are activities that take place during the week which included arts and crafts, knitting, adult colouring, dominoes, skittles, quizzes, one to one reminiscence and memory boxes. A member of staff told us that staff take some residents to 'Singing for the brain', with Dave Willetts at the local church which is a short walk away.

Staff told us that residents are encouraged to be active by walking or joining in with activities. We observed that all the carers stopped to chat with residents as they passed.

At the time of our visit, no group activities were seen taking place.

³ <http://www.enableaid.co.uk/patient-transfer-aid/rotunda.php>

We were given a copy of the 'monthly social programme for the month of November which showed a variety of activities planned 7 days per week. It also had information about the star sign, flower and birth stone for the month as well as some memorable dates i.e. Remembrance Sunday, Guy Fawkes Night and Saint Andrew's Day.

A resident told us that activities included playing cards, doing crosswords or word searches and watching television. Another resident said that they sometimes go out walking and like playing games.

We observed that one resident in the main lounge was colouring in a book and another resident was reading the weekly magazine, called 'The Sparkle' which is produced for residents. This magazine has large print and contained information from the era that most of the residents would remember such as prefab housing, famous people and clothing of the day.

There were handmade poppies on the windows, which staff told us residents had made for Remembrance Day. We saw that one female resident was having her nails painted by a member of care staff and the carer was chatting to her about her relative who she clearly knew by name.

There are plans next year, with the help of the maintenance person, to create a sensory area in the garden and to include a raised bedding area. Whilst we were there, one resident went into the garden, although it was a cold day.

All of the residents spoke to us about enjoying going in the garden when the weather is nice and sitting on the benches and that they like having the opportunity to go out for coffee and shopping. Some residents told us they like to look out for the cat that visits from next door and staff told us that residents like it when the Manager and deputy Manager bring in their dogs

The home did not have a dedicated mini bus but the Manager told us that there are two within the organisation and that there are trips available for the residents. There was a planned trip to the pantomime at The Albany Theatre and summer trips including visits to garden centres or a day trip to the seaside. There is a coffee shop nearby and those that are able go out with staff. Residents told us that they like the organised trips and one told us they were looking forward to going to the pantomime.

Not all residents had a TV in their room, we were told by the Manager that this is organised by the resident's family if they want one.

Staff told us that at Christmas, those that are able and wish to do so will usually go home for the day, or stay overnight with their relatives.

On the two completed visitor questionnaires we received, the home was scored 4/5 and 5/5 for activities provided. One visitor commented that they felt, ***"Sometimes music is played too loudly in the home and sometimes it is rock type music which I do not think is very suitable for older people"***.

Dementia Friendly Design

From our observations all of the residents had some level of dementia and therefore dementia friendly design was an important feature.

We saw that there were dementia friendly signs around the home including pictures and words. Taps in communal bathrooms were marked with red and blue for hot and cold.

In the majority of the home the décor consisted of light coloured walls which contrasted with the darker coloured carpets and flooring. However, hallways were quite dark with no natural light and could have benefited from using light paint or wallpaper to improve this. The Manager told us that work is underway to address this.

There were no pictorial menus available and residents may have found it useful to have pictures of the meals available.

We were told by the Manager that there were plans to paint resident's doors and that names on resident's doors would be more visible once they had been painted in the new colours. The Manager also told us that there were plans to fit memory boxes beside or on the resident's doors.

Healthwatch Recommendations

- We were pleased to know that plans are underway to introduce lighter colours to brighten up the hallways and would be interested to see this once the changes have been made.
- We also agree that memory boxes outside the resident's rooms will be a positive additional feature and would be interested to see these when they have been introduced and gain feedback from residents about what they think of them.

Following our visit Healthwatch recommends:

1. Introducing pictorial menus in the dining room could be beneficial to those residents who have dementia or are sight impaired.
2. All rooms in the home should be adequately heated to avoid the use of portable heaters (as they become very hot to touch) and to ensure that use of such heaters is risk assessed.
3. **Staffing:** Manager to look into taking on an apprentice to work with the Handyman and having an additional carer during the morning shift.
4. Rather than having the television on most of the time in all the lounges, introduce the use of CDs and DVDs of films and songs from the era of the residents to stimulate resident's memories.
5. Find a more suitable space where wheelchairs and walking aids can be stored rather than in the lounge as this was obstructing access to the table.

Response from Care Home Manager

On behalf of the residents and staff at the Willows, we would like to thank the two ladies from Healthwatch who visited the home on 25th November 2016. They were courteous with staff and our residents and appeared very interested in the work we do at the Willows.

We thank Healthwatch for their visit and our extremely positive report. It clearly shows how we enable residents to determine their lifestyles and how we support them to have fulfilling lives.

I would like to comment on the following recommendations that have been suggested from the Healthwatch visit.

1. **Pictorial Menus** - We have laminated pictorial menus that are used for residents when required, which we could have shown the two Healthwatch representatives on the day if it had been mentioned. As we know our residents likes and dislikes we often do not need to use the signs, but they are useful for new residents and on occasions for residents with poor sight. Our staff, as observed on the day of the visit, do always inform the residents what the food is and the choices for that meal.
2. **Heating in the Rooms** - the fault with the radiator on the day of the visit has been rectified, and there are no portable radiators in any of the rooms. The staff monitor and record room temperatures, especially during the cold spell to ensure the rooms are warm and comfortable for the residents. The temperature in the home is monitored based on the guidelines set by the Department of Health for cold or hot weather.
3. **Staffing Levels** - the staffing levels in the home are in line with national guidance and Adept's dependency tool for staffing levels. The mention of an apprentice for the Handyman was made in jest, the resident that "helps" the maintenance man likes to be known as his apprentice and the resident was introduced as his apprentice.
4. **Entertainment** - in the home there is a full entertainment programme put together for every month by our Activities Manager. On the day of the visit it was the choice of the residents to have the TV on, they do have CD's and videos as well as outside entertainers coming into the home. There is a full board in the front reception area with posters outlining all the entertainment for each month.
5. **Wheelchair Storage** - Since the visit all the wheelchairs and walking aids are returned to the residents' rooms when not in use, we do keep one wheelchair in the lounge in case of any emergencies, this is stored in an unobtrusive area and is low risk for residents.

I am delighted that throughout the report a true reflection on the care has been noted as that is and always will be our priority to promote independence, dignity and happiness for all our residents.

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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