

# HEALTHWATCH HERTFORDSHIRE

**Enter and View Visit Report**

**Ashwood Place**

**Sunnyside Close**

**Hitchin**

**SG4 9JG**

**Caretech Community Services (No 2) Limited**

## Healthwatch Hertfordshire Enter and View Visit Report

**Premises visited:** Ashwood Place

**Date and Time of Visit:** 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016, 10.30am - 1.30pm

**Visit Conducted By:** Roger de Ste Croix and Jane Brown

### **Acknowledgements:**

We would like to thank the Manager Jason Cox, the staff and the residents for taking the time to answer our questions and for welcoming us into their home.

### **Purpose for the Visit:**

To look at the individual's quality of life in respect of environment, leisure and services, digital inclusion and food and drink.

To see if NICE guidelines 1 and 2 of Quality Standard 50: Mental Wellbeing of Older People in Care Homes 2013 are being considered by providers.

### **QS50 states:**

1. Older people in care homes have opportunities during their day to take part in activities of their choice that help them stay well and feel satisfied with life. Their families, friends and carers have opportunities to be involved in activities with them when the older person wishes.
2. Older people in care homes are given support and opportunities to express themselves as individuals and maintain and develop their sense of who they are, for example, this can include helping people to maintain their relationships with family, friends and carers.

### **Methodology:**

Healthwatch Hertfordshire (HwH) is the independent health and social care champion. Local Healthwatch is in place to gather the views and experiences of people accessing services, to use this information to influence decisions and to provide information and advice to the local community about health and social care services.

Legislation allows HwH authorised representatives to 'Enter and View' health and social care premises to see and hear for themselves how services are provided.

Healthwatch Hertfordshire is conducting a rolling programme of Enter and View visits to care homes/nursing homes in groups in order to review results, methodology and outcomes at defined intervals.

They are announced visits using questionnaires for residents, staff and observation from 10.30am to 1pm.

Hertfordshire County Council, as commissioners, are aware of this planned piece of work and will receive the reports and recommendations from our visits. Reports will also be shared with the relevant Clinical Commissioning Groups, Care Quality Commission and Hertfordshire Care Providers Association and will be published on our website [www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk).

### **Disclaimer**

The report relates only to a specific visit (a point in time) and the report is not representative of all service users (only those who contributed within the restricted time available).

## Healthwatch Hertfordshire Enter and View Visit Report

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Ashwood Place is a small care home situated in a housing estate close to Hitchin Town Centre. The home was purpose built in 1998 to provide accommodation and care for up to 8 people with learning and physical disabilities. At the time of the visit 7 people were living at the home as there had been a recent death. 2 residents are living with Dementia. 3 Residents were re-settled from Cell Barnes Hospital in 1998.

Apart from the manager, there is a shift leader and 3 care staff on duty at any one time who support the residents in all aspects of their life including the caring, cooking, cleaning and driving to appointments and activities. Some of the staff and residents have been at the home since it opened.

### 2. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

2.1 It was difficult to find the home at first as it is tucked away down a small Close off Sunnyside Road, behind housing and the sign is only visible once you go down the driveway. Parking is available on the main road in off - road bays. Spaces next to the home are used by staff and the home also has its own minibus.

2.2 The entrance was secure and on arrival our badges were checked and we were asked to sign in. We were greeted warmly by a staff member and the manager. There was an immediate feeling of 'homeliness' on approaching the home and a friendly calm atmosphere on entering. This was despite the home having to call 111 earlier for one of the residents who they were concerned about and who was then taken to hospital as a precaution.

2.3 During our visit we saw 3 residents and 3 staff members (plus the manager). Due to their level of disabilities we were unable to communicate fully with the residents but were able to observe and also to ask questions of the staff.

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Environment

1. The home has wide corridors (to accommodate wheelchairs) with grab rails on either side of the walls. The pictures that line the walls were interesting but have probably been there for some time. There are notice

boards with one dedicated to an activities schedule for each of the residents and another that has various items of information including the menus, photos of a visiting theatre company and an out of date poster for a garden competition (run by the parent company).

2. There is a dining room that opens into a sitting room with a modern wall mounted television. Seating around the room looks comfortable and is of varying sizes and there is space for wheel chairs.
3. The dining table is used as a focal point for staff and the residents to meet and interact during activity sessions as well as for meals.
4. Bedrooms and bathrooms are at the far end of the building with each resident's room having a name and in some cases a photo (we were unsure if other residents did not want photos) and other decoration on the door. The manager asked one of the residents if we could take a look at their room to see how it is personalised to the resident's taste.
5. We heard from a member of staff how they had worked with that resident to choose fabrics and designs using the knowledge they had of the resident and bringing in fabrics and items from a local shop for them to select. Family (where applicable) also has an input.
6. Two of the bedrooms have ensuite facilities but all have washbasins.
7. An extension that led into the garden housed a 'sensory' room for residents that could be used with or without the doors to the garden open. The garden itself was a quiet area where there was a bird table and seats. Around the side of the house was another patio type garden with pot plants and other decorations. The manager had plans to install raised beds for residents.
8. Overall the décor is in reasonable condition and suitable for purpose but could possibly benefit from updating. The manager confirmed that he regularly reports on maintenance to the parent company. The building is bright and airy with natural light.

### **3.2 Leisure and Services**

1. Residents have access to a Day Centre Monday to Friday. 3 of them attend on a regular basis and each has a timetable of attendance according to

their needs. They are driven to and from the venue in the home's mini bus by a member of staff.

2. On the day of the visit a resident had been out shopping with a staff member and showed obvious delight as the staff admired her purchases.
3. The manager told us that there is a programme of activities in the home including manicures, music, arts and crafts, reflexology. They can also go out for lunch to the nearby restaurant.
4. Activities do not usually have much physical activity content though there is the sensory room and occasional 'dancing'.
5. A theatre company that visits the home is very popular as using public theatres/ cinemas can be problematic. The Healthwatch Monitors commented that the recently formed North Herts Dementia Action Alliance is looking to set up a regular film viewing session in Hitchin for people with dementia and this may be something the residents at Ashwood Place could also use.
6. The local catholic church comes in periodically around religious festivals such as Christmas and Easter.
7. The manager is keen to develop relationships with the local college or schools to see how volunteers may enhance the lives of the residents but this requires more support to get this working effectively for both residents and volunteers.
8. A more personalised approach to activities is also being looked at with more emphasis on inbuilt activities to promote individual/ one to one interaction. The manager has evidently researched how to do this but may benefit from some additional support to get the project started.
9. Relatives (where available) are included at the resident's annual review if they visit. The manager has also tried inviting relatives to events.

### **3.3 Digital Inclusion**

1. The home has full Wi-Fi availability and a tablet in the sensory room. There are SMART TVs and Netflix availability.

2. The manager hopes to make more use of specialist Apps in the future, such as music, which may support personalisation.

### **3.4 Food and Drink**

1. Food has to be pureed for all the residents. This is freshly prepared in the kitchen by a member of staff (everyone takes it in turns to cook). The main meal is lunch time and it was Spaghetti Bolognese on the day of the visit. We saw the staff member preparing it with a resident observing from their wheelchair.
2. Feeding of food is very much a 1:1 activity with the staff member concentrating, encouraging and interacting with the resident that they are feeding.
3. Some residents require PEG (Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastronomy) feeding which staff are able to do.
4. The dining table was not specifically laid for a meal and often a number of residents are out at appointments or at the day clubs they attend but on special occasions the table would be set. Social interaction is generally more attainable during group activities.
5. We did not see any snacks or drinks outside of the lunch time but the manager said these would be available. This is a difficult area to accommodate due the complex needs of the residents but something the manager wants to develop.

## **4. MONITORS CONCLUSIONS**

This is a well-run home that appears to be like a large family unit which suits the needs of the current residents. Some staff members have worked at the Home for many years and all those we spoke to are committed to providing good care and have built lasting relationships with the residents. The atmosphere in the home is friendly and welcoming.

Activities are planned and structured around the day to day requirements but more could be done to develop and enhance these. This is an area for improvement recognised by the management.

## 5. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Committed caring staff that demonstrated fondness and affection for the residents they care for.
2. Continuity of staff.
3. Friendly and welcoming atmosphere.
4. Understanding the person and providing individual care is seen as paramount by the staff.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

*Thank you for your constructive report and recommendations - all of which I feel will enhance the service we provide. Our reply to each individual recommendation is printed in italics - Jason Cox, Home Manager, Ashwood Place.*

1. Develop links with the community such as schools and colleges who may be able to help develop activities e.g. with digital resources or providing entertainment.

*We did explore this previously but the member of staff co-ordinating this has since left the service. We will look to revisit this in the near future.*

2. As Ashwood Place is a member of the Herts Care Providers Association, investigate if they can support the development of activities or other areas such as suitable snacks for people with complex needs.

*We are keen to explore all avenues of support and have recently contacted Support Me In Life Engagement service at HCPA to see if they can support or complement our activity provision.*

3. When the home is due to be redecorated, consider updating the paintings and décor with input from residents and staff.

*We are currently looking at ways in which to decorate the communal areas with photo boards and service user artwork.*



4. Consider developing the sensory room further. This could include the garden and may be a project for volunteers.

*Allocated time for service users to use the sensory room will be an integral part of the forthcoming personalised leisure plan. We have had quotations for raised garden beds to be built in the garden to enable service users to take a fuller part in garden activities and now have the funds to purchase this.*

5. Continue to find ways of involving relatives or friends of the residents.

*We held a barbecue for service users and their families on 24<sup>th</sup> September and will continue to invite relatives to social events such as our Christmas party. The feedback we have had suggests that service user's families feel welcome to drop in to Ashwood at any time and most take the opportunity to input at their annual review.*