

HEALTHWATCH HERTFORDSHIRE

Enter and View Visit Report

Name and Address of Service:

River Court Residential and Nursing Home

Explorer Drive

WATFORD

Hertfordshire

WD18 6TQ

Name of Provider:

BUPA CARE HOMES

Healthwatch Hertfordshire Enter and View Visit Report

Premises visited: River Court Residential Care and Nursing Home.
Colne House (Residential Frail Elderly Care) and
Gade House (Residential Dementia Care)

Date and time of visit: 24th November 2014. 10.30am - 1.30pm

Visit conducted by: Jean Brown and Edie Glatte

Accompanied by Doreen Bratby

Acknowledgements:

To the Area and Site managers for their welcome and helpfulness to us. To all other staff for making time at short notice to talk to us and show us round. And especially to the residents and their carers who were so willing to speak to us.

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:

This is a rolling programme of visits to care homes/nursing homes in groups of 12 in order to review results, methodology and outcomes at defined intervals.

We have consulted with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Care Providers Association and our local Care Quality Commission Compliance managers as well as looked at feedback from the Community to choose our first 12 homes.

Announced visits using questionnaires for residents, staff and observation from 10.30 am to 1pm

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

This is a large facility consisting of four distinct 'houses', 2 of which provide nursing care and two which are residential care. Gade House offers long-term care to residents with Dementia diagnoses. Colne House provides long-term for frail elderly residents. Respite care is also provided where needed. Our visit was focussed on residential care services, so included only these two houses.

We were welcomed by the BUPA area manager who supervises 9 BUPA facilities, whose day for visiting River Court this was, and by the Manager of River Court itself. We were also able to meet and interview the Managers of each of the two houses we were visiting.

2. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

2.1 On arrival we were easily able to park. The garden was very well designed and kept. The quality of the buildings externally and internally was impressive and welcoming. The signage was excellent, the administrative block entrance readily identifiable, and the door was protected by a secure keypad. The main admin block did not have a keypad, though Gade House and Colne House did. But they did have someone on reception to welcome us. We wore Healthwatch Hertfordshire identity badges as identification and, for Health and Safety reasons, were asked to sign in and out at the end of our visit. There were very few other visitors arriving at the same time.

2.2 Staff for each house were identifiable from a poster in each entrance lobby, though we did not see a publicly displayed staffing roster for the day. It was displayed in the Manager's room in Colne House. Residents were clearly able to move about the house at will, including sitting in the communal sitting/dining rooms but also the smaller quiet sitting rooms. They were also able to remain in their rooms and watch their own TVs if they wished to.

2.3 There was an atmosphere of friendly, open calm, and residents who were contented and happy in their environment. No residents were using the gardens as it was clearly too cold. However, weather permitting, residents from Colne House can walk in the garden, and Gade House residents can be accompanied to use the garden if they wish to.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Environment

3.1.1 Both houses were very well kept. They smelt very fresh and clean, and all the floors, carpets and furniture were kept very clean and in a good state of repair.

3.1.2 We inspected the toilets, bathrooms and shower rooms, which were likewise very clean. One shower room in each house was equipped with a very impressive modern electric shower with a chair lift. The second bathroom in each had a mechanically operated chair lift. All bedrooms have en-suite toilets with hand-basins, but the bathing and showering facilities are communal in each corridor.

3.1.3 The staff aim to be approachable and friendly and develop trust with residents.

3.1.4 Residents have access to medical facilities and personnel, including doctors, district nurses, a chiropodist, an oculist and a hairdresser within the home.

The Manager stated:

This is correct but limited to facilities also available:

Dentist, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Advocacy, Mental Health Team, Dieticians, Speech and Language Therapist's, Religious Ministers of all faiths.

3.1.5 Each house accommodates 30 residents, who each have private rooms. Corridors are mixed male-female and not segregated. Each resident is able to personalise their own room, provide their own TV and other furnishings within reason.

3.1.6 Each house has a system to ensure that no resident can leave the premises without staff being aware.

3.1.7 Residents do attend the quarterly residents' meetings but not in great numbers. Though sometimes families and carers attend.

3.1.8 One resident has been enabled to re-house their own pet in the home and the home has a resident cat with which residents interact.

Gade House.

3.1.9 There is a system to ensure that no resident can leave the premises without staff being aware. Each resident's room has a memory box containing photos and items they have chosen to help them remember, and their name in large letters, outside the door to enable them to readily identify their own room. Their privacy in their own room is very much respected.

3.1.10 For further privacy, there is a small sitting room providing a quieter environment than that in the large communal dining room/lounge. The larger room has been sensitively furnished and decorated to provide a tasteful atmosphere of cosiness appropriate for older residents, despite its size. The chairs are also grouped to enable as much interaction as residents require. It was clearly possible for residents to participate in different activities, or not, as they wished, and to use different parts of the room as they wished. We arrived during a session of singing of old songs which most residents were clearly enjoying. Throughout, the temperature was very appropriate. There are air conditioning units in the lounges.

3.1.11 We were particularly impressed with the thoughtfulness of the corridor decor. Each was different and designed to provide a different stimulating experience for residents. One had lots of very colourful and cheerful large flower pictures. Another had pictures of local places taken some years ago. Another provided memories of past events for residents to contemplate and think about.

3.1.12 Each house has a satellite small kitchen in which residents can make themselves a snack or drink if they are able to.

Colne House

3.1.13 This unit houses residents who are frail but not living with dementia, so certain features are different. There is a quiet lounge; residents can choose their own room decor and pictures, etc. Subject to Health and Safety regulations they can bring their own belongings into the home, including some furniture. Each room has a lockable drawer and there is a central safe available for valuables.

3.1.14 Again, each room has an en suite toilet and wash hand basin, but showers and baths are shared with other rooms in the corridor. In Colne House and Gade House residents can open their own windows to regulate the temperature if they wish to.

The Manager also stated:

Window restrictors are in place throughout the home in line with Health & Safety Regulations.

3.1.15 Residents are enabled to plan their own day and each has an individual care plan. Some residents self medicate some of their drugs and concern was expressed regarding their timely replacement and fear of them not being replenished in time.

The Manager's response:

Bupa has a robust medication management system in place with weekly GP visits at the home, monthly GP medication review, prescribed medication ordered in advance and checked by the Pharmacy Supplier and then again on receipt at the home in advance of the changeover date.

3.2 Leisure and Services

3.2.1 The notice-boards contain evidence of the activities and entertainments planned and also a Healthwatch Hertfordshire poster for the information of residents and families.

3.2.2 Residents have access to a landline phone to call relatives and friends. Several of the residents interviewed had their own mobile phones to keep in touch with friends and family.

3.2.3 In Colne House there was evidence of a wide range of available activities, including music, quizzes, carpet boules puzzles and games, exercise to music and reminiscence sessions. These take place twice a day.

3.2.4 There is an activities programme organiser on the staff in Gade House who plans and organises a programme each day from Monday to Friday in each unit. If activities are not well attended, they can be changed and residents' suggestions are taken into account and used where possible. The programme includes fitness activities, Jumbulance outings, other communal outings to places of interest, singing, etc.

We did not, however, see a copy of a typical programme, or any photographs of past outings and activities involving the residents in Gade House.

The Manager's response:

The weekly programme can be found in each resident's room as well as displayed on the relative notice-board in the foyer area. In the entrance of the unit a large display board on the wall is covered in photographs of various residents enjoying various activities and events.

3.2.5 In Colne House and Gade House every resident receives a weekly newsletter, which we were shown by a resident. This has information on all activities and church services. This is also displayed on the noticeboard. Photographs of residents enjoying various activities and events were on display on the walls of the corridor.

3.2.6 Residents in both units occasionally help with small tasks around the unit, such as folding napkins, but there was no mention of anything more demanding or responsible than that. Two of the residents interviewed did not want to be involved in any tasks either through age or infirmity.

3.2.7 During the summer, picnics, parties, etc. are held in the gardens, and also the Annual Summer Fair and there are visits to the Lido, Aquadrome, Garden Centres, Restaurants, Woburn Safari Park and Christmas pantomime.

3.3 Community Resources

3.3.1 In terms of community resources, the mobile library visits both units and helps with the memory boxes and the creation of reminiscence collections for residents. Local churches, schools, visit regularly and work with residents or provide entertainment. The Alzheimer's Society and the Peace Hospice visit every second day and there are coffee mornings in Cafe West nearby. There is also an allotment provided for residents of Colne House to work in if they wish to.

3.3.2 River Court is in the process of applying to become a member of the HCPA (Herts Care Providers Association). When this process is completed, they will have a Dementia Champion, a Nutrition Champion and will use the HCPA Smile service.

3.3.3 We were not able to interview residents or staff on whether these community facilities have made any major differences yet.

3.3.4 There is also a church service every Saturday in the home for those residents who wish to attend. This is single denomination.

The Manager's stated:

There are weekly church services at the home rotated with Baptist, Church of England, Roman Catholic & Methodist services. Communion is given monthly and Jehovah's Witnesses visit at weekends. We currently do not have residents with other requirements, but have a full listing of all religious organisations along with contact names and telephone numbers should their services be required (in line with planning for End of Life).

3.4 Digital Inclusion

3.4.1 Both units are equipped with WiFi access for residents, but mainly it is used by residents of Colne House though this is rare.

3.4.2 They can also download their own e-books or audio books, but these are not yet provided by the mobile library which visits regularly.

3.4.3 The home does not yet provide iPads or tablets to engage residents but this issue is under discussion with BUPA HQ for the future.

3.5 Food and Drink

3.5.1 Residents in both units are carefully consulted about the food menus and all residents have a choice of two dishes for each course as well as the alternative menu which is available, presumably for people on special diets. Hot meals are available at both lunch and dinner with a cold option for dinner too. The menus are published to residents in pictorial form and all allergens are clearly notified to them. Bowls of fruit are left in the dining room for residents to take when they wish.

3.5.2 All meals are cooked on site and are not pre-chilled or pre-frozen. We did have the opportunity of tasting some of the food. The vegetables were not very tasty but the meat dishes were well cooked and the dessert was appetising and tasty.

3.5.3 There is a night menu for those residents who feel hungry, particularly in Colne House and the satellite kitchens can be used by residents to make drinks and organise small snacks between meals. Use of the satellite kitchens by residents of

Gade House is only possible together with a member of staff. We were not able to visit the main kitchen/food preparation area.

4. MONITORS' CONCLUSIONS

4.1 There is evidence from interviews and observation of good active social interaction between residents.

4.2 Residents are generally very happy in both units. They seem relaxed and calm going about their lives and are pleased to meet visitors generally. They very much appreciate the care they receive from staff.

4.3 However, there are indications of staff turnover, and of staffing levels which causes some disquiet for vulnerable residents

4.4 The activities are very much appreciated, though we did see evidence in the BUPA's own resident survey results that some residents felt there were not sufficient activities, but it was a minority view.

4.5 There was only one complaint about the food to us.

4.6 Perhaps a look at how residents' valuables are protected would relieve them from some anxiety which seemed to be evident at times. None of the residents in Colne House expressed any concern about the safety of their valuables though they were unaware of the availability of a central safe. In Gade House one resident did express concern to the manager in our hearing that her slippers had disappeared, but the staff went away immediately with her to find them.

5. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

5.1 Relationships between staff and residents are aimed at making residents very happy and relaxed.

5.2 Residents benefit from regular visits from a chiropodist, an oculist, a dentist, doctor, district nurses and a hairdresser.

The Manager confirmed:

As mentioned in section 3. (3.1.4). This is correct but limited to facilities also available:

Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Advocacy, Mental Health Team, Dieticians, Speech and Language Therapist's, Religious Ministers of all faiths.

5.3 Activities are very varied and seem to be appreciated by residents generally

5.4 Food is freshly cooked.

5.5 The environment is well maintained, both inside and in the garden.

5.6 Staff are kind and genuinely committed to their work with residents.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Complete membership of HPCA to access all training, etc. which that organisation offers. Particularly useful for new staff.

Manager response:

This has been completed now. We have also arranged a mentorship course for our activities staff through S.M.I.L.E.S. as you recommended, this is in progress and is proving beneficial in improving the service we provide.

6.2 Ensure that residents' requests for help are responded to immediately.

Manager response:

A new call bell system has been installed at the home, recording all waiting time. A Call bell log is recorded and monitored by the Homes Management team to ensure that residents are responded to immediately 24/7 and if issues are identified this is addressed immediately.

We also have regular supervision sessions for staff as well as ongoing training which instil the importance of person centred and individualised care ensuring that residents' choices and wishes are at the forefront of our provision.

6.3 Review staffing complements to ensure staff can be fully responsive to very vulnerable residents.

Manager response:

This is reviewed on a daily basis dependant on the needs of the residents.

6.4 Review practice around relating to the particular needs of residents with restricted sight and hearing with a view to establishing that they are being communicated with effectively and not being somewhat isolated as a result.

Manager response:

We support the particular needs of a resident through individualised & specific care planning. We also have links to services such as RNIB & RNID to provide further guidance.

6.5 Consider extending the religious support in some ways to cover the needs of residents across a range of denominations and religions. Religion tends to become more important as people get older.

The Manager confirmed:

There are weekly church services at the home rotated with Baptist, Church of England, Roman Catholic & Methodist services. Communion is given monthly and Jehovah's Witnesses visit at weekends. We currently do not have residents with other requirements, but have a full listing of all religious organisations along with contact names and telephone numbers should their services be required (in line with planning for End of Life).

6.6 Review provision for residents of varied cultures and main languages should the profile of residents' cultural and linguistic backgrounds become more varied.

6.7 Investigate the possibilities of encouraging some of the more able residents to undertake more real tasks in the units to help them pass their time more productively in their eyes.

Manager response:

This will depend on individual residents, whether they wish to undertake more real tasks as well as whether they are able. Additionally the mentorship from S.M.I.L.E.S. is providing further guidance and ideas for staff to implement in the home including products adapted for residents with particular needs.

6.8 Investigate increasing the uptake of opportunities for digital inclusion.

Manager response:

We are currently working in partnership with our GP service to install a pioneering telemedicines system at the care home, part of this project will involve a full Wi-Fi upgrade across the home ensuring availability for all residents in the home.

6.9 Ensure that those residents self medicating receive replacements in a timely fashion to avoid anxiety.

The Manager confirmed:

Bupa has a robust medication management system in place with weekly GP visits at the home, monthly GP medication review, prescribed medication ordered in advance and checked by the Pharmacy Supplier and then again on receipt at the home in advance of the changeover date.