

Dignity in Care Enter & View visit to The Croft

Care Home Provider:
Care Home Address:
Date and Time of Visit:
Authorised Representatives:

Heritage Care
The Penningtons, Chestnut Lane, Amersham, HP6 6EJ
14.01.16 – 10 am
Alison Holloway, Barbara Poole, Janice Milsom,
Elizabeth Abbott

Summary of findings



- Very homely although one end of the first floor was cool whilst the other was a better temperature
- Residents seem very comfortable , physically and emotionally

The Visit

Residential care is provided by the Croft for up to 60 older people many of whom live with dementia. We visited two of the four self-contained living areas in the home. One relative, 5 members of staff and 10 residents spoke to us and we observed another 9 residents and staff.

How people are treated



In one area, staff and residents seemed to know each other very well; “I have lots of friends here”. There was a lot of interaction and humour in the lounge and everyone seemed very comfortable in their surroundings. Staff and residents all knew, and used, each other’s names and there were some staff who had worked in the home for many years. Residents quite happily asked for a drink whilst we were there and staff asked what they’d like and quickly brought it to them. Drinks are routinely served, morning and afternoon. We were told that staff have time to chat and often knock on bedroom doors to see if residents are alright. In the other area, only one member of staff came into the lounge during our visit. There, one resident that they “would prefer to live in a quieter place”. In both areas, we were told that the staff “are very good”.

Personal Choice



We were told that residents can get up and dress when they want to and one resident was happily chatting to her friends whilst still wearing her dressing gown. They told us they’d had porridge, bacon, mushrooms and toast for breakfast. The daily menu was on each table in the dining room and residents tell carers what they’d like to eat the day before. “The food here is very good”. There is a choice of two hot meals at lunch time and a range of soup, sandwiches and today quiche in the evening. Some residents help fold napkins or set the tables and visitors and the more able residents can make their own cups of tea.



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Just like Being at Home



We saw individual bedrooms which were personalised and the residents very proud of them. The communal areas were welcoming with a homely atmosphere and decorated with flowers, pictures and tables in the lounges, on which were a pile of magazines and a bowl of fresh fruit and dried figs. One lounge was the right temperature but the other had a lukewarm heater and a resident told us they were cold. In one lounge we saw a box of card games and in both books on shelves. Residents were not allowed to go out on their own but the activities coordinator, or visitors, would often take them outside to the woods, to town, down the road or just into the garden. Most of the residents we spoke to used walkers but would use wheelchairs when they went out. Also for those who are interested, there is an opportunity to meet in a lounge to sing hymns once a month.

Privacy



We did not have much opportunity to see any experiences where privacy would be important. Most residents were dressed and no medication was being administered that we could see. One care assistant we saw being very observant as some individuals made their way slowly using walkers to the lounge. She was careful though to remain outside their space and let them be. However, we were told that there had been problems with a shortage of staff at weekends in the past and residents had not liked their personal care being undertaken “by strangers”. Now, consistent agency staff were in place, the problem had gone away.

Quality of Life



Everyone was well dressed and residents told us about the visiting hairdresser and chiropodist and someone who comes round to paint the ladies’ nails. In both areas, access to a GP was praised; “if I ask for a doctor, they come straight away”. However, another resident was fed up as the GP had failed to arrive on the previous day to visit them. One person said they were “a lot happier here” after being lonely living on their own at home; they enjoyed the sociability of the lounge although others preferred their own company and stay in their bedrooms.

There are two activity coordinators and lots of choice from poetry readings to dominoes. We were told by some they enjoyed the craft activities on a Tuesday and the sing-a-longs. However, another resident said there weren’t activities they particularly enjoyed. Trips are organised annually to the seaside, they hire minibuses to visit the local garden centres, and cubs and brownies visit to e.g. sing carols at Xmas. A theatre group was bringing a panto to the home this month and a visiting golden retriever was being petted whilst we were there. On a Saturday evening in one lounge, a visitor brings in sausages & chips and has made some CDs of 50s and 60s songs for residents to dance to.

Recommendations

We recommend that The Croft:

- maintains a reasonable level of heat in all areas of the home.

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Service Provider Response

Thank you for the visit that you and your colleagues made to The Croft earlier in the week. Many thanks also for your very prompt and complimentary report. My comments regarding the report relate to

–“Residents mentioning that they are not being allowed to go out on their own”.

Residents choose to go out whenever they wish and several of them go out daily on their own. Others prefer staff or families to accompany them. For those who are deemed not to have capacity to make certain decisions which may put them at risk if going out alone a Deprivation of Liberty authorisation is sought. A Best Interest meeting would be held first for the resident prior to any DOLs application being made. We would always endeavour to meet a residents wishes regarding going out independently but taking into account their safety. The garden is always accessible for all residents and when the weather is warmer residents and visitors make use of these facilities daily.

Regarding the comments –“Certain areas of the Home being cooler”

I will contact our maintenance service today to request that they check the heating thermostats for us and attend to any radiators that may not be operating efficiently. We are regularly informed that the Home is too warm by visitors but I appreciate that our older residents feel the cold easily and we will certainly look at the areas that they have highlighted.

Once again, many thanks to you and your team. I will share the report, once it is published, with our residents, staff and families and encourage them to feedback their thoughts and comments.



Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bucks would like to thank The Croft residents, their visitors and staff for their contribution to the Enter and View visit as part of the Dignity in Care project.

Disclaimer

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

Methodology

This was an unscheduled Enter and View visit in that the care home were given up to 2 weeks' notice of our intention to visit but not the time and date. Authorised representatives noted what they observed and were told.