

Day time support centre at Tarleton Sheltered Housing Scheme

Report on services provided by Age UK Lancashire

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Contact Details: Day Support Centre at Tarleton Sheltered Housing Scheme
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V1.0

Introduction and rationale

Age UK Lancashire has a number of daytime support centres at locations across Lancashire and requested an independent assessment of four of their daytime support centre services by Healthwatch Lancashire to gather views of service users and their next of kin to inform their quality improvement programme.



Methodology

All participants gave their consent to being approached by Healthwatch Lancashire. The assessment was undertaken in 3 stages:

Stage 1, Service User Questionnaire:

Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers spoke with and completed a questionnaire with 10 service users that focused on:

- Access
- Environment
- Food and nutrition
- Activities
- Dignity, enjoyment and well being
- Conduct of Age UK Lancashire staff and volunteers

Stage 2 Next Of Kin Telephone Survey:

Healthwatch Lancashire spoke with the next of kin of 7 service users, using a telephone survey. The aim was to identify whether both service users and their next of kin benefited from the service.

Stage 3 Environmental Assessment:

Healthwatch Lancashire undertook environmental assessments of each centre. Assessors completed an environmental assessment focusing on food, cleanliness & safety and identified whether the environment was fit for purpose.

Observations

Access

Service users said that the main reason for attending the service was to socialise and meet other people and to experience a change of environment or change of company from that at home. Next of kin stated varying reasons for their relatives in accessing the service, ranging from their relative generally wishing to have a day out and company to offering the next of kin with respite. Both service users and their next of kin stated that the days and times suited them. In general, all next of kin stated that they found it easy to find information about the daytime support centre for their relative. Service users said that they would like more information about the service.

During the environmental assessment Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers observed that in general, externally access to the centre was adequate. There was a car park but with only one disabled parking bay. There was a sloping access but this was not 'non slip' and limited lighting to the entrance. There seemed an absence of signage at the entrance and no handrails on approach to the entrance. There were limited outdoor facilities for socialising and the outdoor seating was poorly maintained.

Venue environment

In general, service users reported that the cleanliness was deemed acceptable. The condition and decoration in general was seen as fit for purpose but some comments that it could do with an upgrade. In general, all service users responded they were comfortable and the ambience was rated as either satisfactory or good. Some service users stated that they had issues in accessing some areas with their walking aids due to limited space.

A considerable number of service users were not familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures and no visible notice of assembly points for evacuation.

During the environmental assessment Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers observed that the venue would benefit from general maintenance and cleaning. They observed some potential hazards relating to poor lighting in the corridors, issues with wheelchairs stored behind doors, lack of handrails, floors being wet but no use of a hazard sign. They also observed that waste bins were left open, hot and cold taps label worn and therefore could not identify hot tap - potential for scalding and also no facilities for incontinence or sanitary products.

The lounge area was clean, comfortable, well lit, though would benefit from some general maintenance. Service users seemed to be cramped when seated round the table. The lounge appeared quiet and calm.

Food and nutrition

All service users stated they ate meals and had light refreshments whilst using the centre. There was mixed opinion between the service users as to whether they had a choice of food, with the majority of service users stating that they were offered biscuits, toast and muffins and occasionally fruit for their light refreshments. All stated that portion sizes were sufficient and all were happy with the presentation and temperature of the food.

Next of kin were of the impression that the food was adequate or good and in general felt assistance with feeding was provided when required.

Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers were unable to observe the meal time as the service users were having an excursion to a restaurant.

Activities on offer

The majority of service users stated that activities on offer utilised their skills and experience and in general what was on offer was deemed as adequate, however, service users stated that there was not a varied selection and limited facilities to do any activities requiring space. Only one service user stated that they were involved in

Observations continued

planning activities. Next of kin were unsure about the range of activities on offer and whether the activities catered for their relatives' skills, interests or experience.

Dignity, enjoyment and wellbeing

All service users enjoyed using the service and felt safe, with two stating that engagement at the service addressed their isolation and boredom. All but one of the service users stated that they would know who to talk to, to comment or complain about the service. All stated that they did not have any complaints.

All next of kin thought that their relative was treated with dignity and respect and two stated that their relative enjoyed attending the centre. One next of kin was unsure and relied on the staff to inform her. Two next of kin stated that they had noticed an improvement in their relatives' mental and physical health as a result of using the centre and also stated that they had noticed an improvement in their own mental and physical health as a result of their using the centre as it provided them with some respite.

Conduct of staff and volunteers

Service users and their next of kin reported that the centre staff and volunteers were friendly, helpful, kind and responsive to the service user needs.

Other comments

There was mixed views by service users on whether the Day Time Support Centre offered value for money, in general next of kin thought the service offered value for money.

All next of kin said they would know what to do if they were unhappy with the service, by telling the staff, but seemed aware of formal processes of commenting.

Quotes

During our visits we gained many comments, this is just a selection:

Service user quotes...

“I prefer to sit outside more when weather permits”

“This is my only day out”

“Initially nervous about attending, but staff and volunteers put me at ease”

“I attend the centre as I get lonely and love attending”

Next of kin quotes...

“The centre is supportive”

“My relative always came home with prizes”

“My relative is really disappointed when he is unable to attend”

“I feel confident that my relative is in safe care”

Areas for improvement

Following on from our observations and from the opportunity of speaking with service users and their next of kin to gain their opinions and suggestions for improvements, the following have been identified:

- Ensure that there is information offered about the service including raising awareness of how to formally comment, compliment or complain about the service.
- Ensure that potential hazards are minimised.
- Ensure greater awareness of emergency evacuation procedures for service users.
- Provide choice of menu and offer fruit as light refreshment on a more frequent basis.
- Involve service users in the planning and decision making of activities on offer.
- Improve maintenance and aesthetics in relation to cleaning and the up keep of the building.
- Improve access specifically relating to handrails, lighting, signage and footpaths.

Response from Age UK Lancashire

Age UK Lancashire requested this independent review of our Daytime Support Centres to support us in our ambition for continuous improvement across all services we deliver to and for older people across Lancashire.

Before we received the report from Healthwatch Lancashire, we had recognised that this venue's maintenance and aesthetics has become a little tired. In addition, as the service has become more popular the venue lacks the space required. We have therefore identified an improved venue and we will be moving there in the next few weeks.

Our Quality Improvement Plan incorporates all venues and all feedback will be incorporated into this plan. However, some very prompt operational changes have already been implemented, for example the removal of wheelchairs stored behind doors, and improvement of the evacuation procedures.

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