
The Willows Care Home Report

May 2016

Healthwatch Blackpool



Resident's Voice - a Healthwatch Blackpool Review

1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service Address	The Willows care home
Service Provider	Olivia Josephine Care LTD
Date and Time	04/05/2016 at 10:00am
Healthwatch Representatives	Steven Robinson, Steven Garner
Contact details	hello@healthwatchblackpool.co.uk

1.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackpool would like to thank the service provider, service users, and staff for their contribution and for facilitating us to carry out our consultation.

1.3 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, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

The views expressed in this report are primarily from those who reside in the home. It is acknowledged that some of the participants in our studies may suffer from conditions such as dementia or other memory impairments which do not enable them to give fully balanced and reflective views. However we feel that it is essential that every voice is heard and recognise our duty to all who receive care in Blackpool. In order to allow for this to happen we request feedback from the care home for clarification of the issues that are raised.

2 What is a Healthwatch Review?

Healthwatch Blackpool is the independent consumer champion for health and social care. Its purpose is to listen to the experiences of service users, and feed this back to those who run the service to make positive change. Part of the local Healthwatch Blackpool program is to carry out regular reviews and visits to health and social care services. Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to find out how services are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) grants local Healthwatch the ability to *Enter and View* premises to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Our visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but equally they can occur when services have a good reputation, so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch reviews are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Blackpool's safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about they need to inform their lead who will inform the service manager, ending the visit.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

2.1 Purpose of Visit

To gather information about the experience of living in a care home in Blackpool directly from those who reside in them, including quality of life factors such as choice of activities, food, and whether they would recommend the care home to others.

2.2 Why did we do this?

Healthwatch Blackpool undertook a review in December 2015 of a sample of care homes to trial a new person-centred reviewing system. The success of these reviews allowed us to roll this out for a larger scale project in 2016.

2.3 What were our aims?

Our aim was to allow the residents to have a voice and a say in the care that they were receiving. Were they living in comfort, did they have privacy, did they receive wholesome cooked meals daily, was their housekeeping and laundry services met etc. To do this we needed the help and the cooperation of not only the residents but also the care homes, their staff and the families/carers of the residents. By collating this information we were able to evaluate the quality of care within each care home we visited.

2.4 Methodology

It was decided beforehand that we did not wish to perform an enforced *Enter and View* visit to The Willows Residential Care Home in Blackpool. We felt that to be invited to attend the home would give us a more balanced view and encourage openness and co-operation with the care home. To do this we wrote to the care home we intended to visit, outlined our intentions and the purpose of the visit. We also provided the home with a full colour poster confirming the date and time of our visit and its aims. We asked that the care home placed the poster in a prominent position where staff, residents and resident's families/carers could read it.

On the day of the visit all Healthwatch representatives wore identification badges. Before speaking to any resident we explained fully who we were and the purpose of our visit. Those residents that were happy to speak to us were asked a series of open ended questions about what they liked most and what they felt could be improved. We confirmed that their name would not be linked with anything that they told us and that they were free to end the conversation at any point. We also made informal observations throughout the visit and made notes of what we saw around the home.

2.5 Summary of provider

Willows care home is located on the outskirts of Blackpool and is surrounded by fields in a very picturesque part of the rural areas surrounding Blackpool and Lytham. It currently has 14 beds and has been open operated for 7 years by Olivia Josephine care LTD. The grounds of the care home are well maintained and very much appreciated by the residents. The rooms all feature en suite shower rooms and all have ground floor disabled access to the gardens. The communal areas inside the home are bright although the corridors are narrow. The conservatory featured a pleasant mix of both old vintage décor with modern but stylish features. In the garden there is an orchard, and a good size garden to amble around freely. A majority of the residents we spoke to spoke highly of the good practices at the home, such as responsive staff, flexibility and choice of meals, and the range of person centred activities.

The staff we saw were very friendly and open to us speaking to residents and let us to go about our business freely and fully supported our visit. The poster we sent them was placed on the notice board and some residents were informed of our visit and had asked to speak to us. In 2013 the home won best recommended care home in the UK and while we were there the owner Paul Swithenbank showed us the planned 11 bedroom extension and respite improvement due to be started in 2017. Tracy Otterman is the registered care manager who showed us around The Willows Care Home. During our time we spoke to **5 individuals**.

Many of the resident of The Willows suffer from dementia or memory impairment problems and some lack the capacity to fully understand and provide coherent answers to some of our questions. We felt their voice was still important to our review and have included their answers where applicable.

2.6 Results of visit

General

All the residents we spoke to told us the one thing they liked the most was the care home itself. It wasn't one particular thing they enjoyed, it was every aspect of the home we discussed, giving an overall view of a pleasant environment to reside in. The food, staff and location were all important to the residents and all of these scored very highly in their responses. We spoke with 5 residents, most of whom talked very fondly of the staff. They were often referred to as '*the girls*'. The level of confidence in the care home was very high. Often individuals were singled out as people they trusted and there was a sense of "*if we need anything the girls will sort us out.*"

One of the positive elements of the care home was the allowance and encouragement of pets in the home. One resident told us that they and their pets were well looked after and said it make a big difference in their life.

It was difficult to find any issues with the home as all of the residents said they were happy however one resident said they have a lonely life and would have liked to have more interaction from people to keep them company.

Food and drink

Healthwatch Blackpool arrived before lunch was prepared and before it was served. We wanted to know what the residents thought about the food. All of the residents praised the food as being fantastic and “*extremely tasty*”. Each of the residents we spoke to said that their mealtimes were varied and always something to look forward to. We asked what kinds of food was available and which do they prefer resident said that their favourites included pasta and curry. The food and drink was presented well and was always at a proper temperature. We asked if they ever wanted to have something special would it be possible to ask for it. A couple of residents said they have asked before for something in particular and have always been given the food they want. “*We're well fed if we want anything in particular we get it.*” None of the residents criticised the food and actually invited Healthwatch to stay and try it for ourselves. “*There is always a great selection of vegetables and they always offer seconds.*”

Activities

The activities in the home are co-ordinated by a part time worker. Paul Swithenbank (owner of The Willows) explained that Kate (activities co-ordinator) often speaks and consults with the residents to find out their interests and then organises activities based on the feedback she receives. Some of the residents also told us this. Many of the residents told us they particularly like the armchair catch session she does and felt it was a fun social activity to do.

Many residents told us they feel like they can do what they want and engage as much as they see fit. Some residents told us they like the social activities such as sitting together watching TV but some said they were fine on their own and they were happy watching TV in their room or watching the wildlife in the garden. When we spoke to staff they said that many residents have family members attending and they do have day trips regularly. None of the residents mentioned the day trips but several talked about the inclusion of families in their day to day activities.

“Kate comes in after lunch and does fantastic things. She often brings in items in like old coins etc. It was really interesting learning how much they're worth today.”

We asked if there was anything else that could be done to improve the activities and a couple of residents told us that it would be nice to listen to someone play the piano which is in the lounge room or have some live music. Other than that the residents were very happy and content.

Staff & Safety

Nearly all complimented the staff on their care and attitude. One said they didn't feel the staff knew them very well and would like to have more company and involvement with them. The resident said that they would maybe like to have more conversations with the staff as she felt quite lonely sometimes. However all of the residents felt they could approach the staff about anything and felt they would be listened to. One resident told us *"If the staff say they'll be 30 minutes you can set your watch by them, and they were very good at their job."* A few residents said that the staff have *"terrific patience"* as they have a challenging job.

Some residents told us that they like having bells beside their beds in case they needed assistance. It contributed a lot to their safety and them feeling safe in their home. *"We all have bells [in our room] and I feel very safe, the staff listen to us."*

Involvement in key decisions around their care

Most told us they felt staff understood their needs and in particular were very receptive to their issues. One resident told us they were never rushed to complete a task such as bathing or eating. The staff took the care at the pace of the resident receiving care and this was reflected by the comments.

The residents we spoke to who lacked capacity to understand this question were not sure what we meant by involvement in their care. But still indicated to us that they were included when the questions were simplified.

Concerns & Complaints

Aside from one resident saying they would like more staff involvement no one had any negative comments about the care home. We asked if there was an issue do the residents know who to talk to and all of the residents told us they knew who to contact and they were confident it would be resolved. *"If I ever was to make a complaint I'd speak to Samantha, Paul or Tracy and it'd be sorted."*

2.7 Recommendations

This report highlights the practice that we observed and reflects the feelings that residents had about the care and support that they were receiving. While it was not our intention during this visit to make recommendations, it was our intention to talk to residents and ask if there was anything that they felt would improve their quality of life within the care home. Residents felt that the following areas could be looked at for improvement:

Social activities

Group activities such as live/piano music would be well received by the residents

Inclusion and care

One resident felt lonely in the home and they would appreciate more social interaction by the staff.

2.8 Service Provider response

The service provider did not provide a response to the report or recommendations.