
Acorn Lodge

July 2016

Healthwatch Blackpool



Resident's Voice - a Healthwatch Blackpool Review

1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service Address	183 Reads Road, Blackpool
Service Provider	Pro Care Homes LTD
Date and Time	25 th July 2016 at 11am
Healthwatch Representatives	Steven Robinson, Laura Zakubinska
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. 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 people using services and feed them back to those who run them to make positive change.

Part of the local Healthwatch Blackpool program is to carry out reviews of health and social care services to find out how services are being run from the service user perspective and make recommendations for improvement where possible.

Local Healthwatch are granted the ability to *Enter and View* premises to observe service delivery and talk to service users. Visits can take place if there are reported issues with a service, but equally, they can occur when services receive praise so that examples of good practice can be shared.

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 privacy and dignity, quality of care, and choice of activities and food.

2.2 Why did we do this?

In June 2016 Healthwatch Blackpool produced a [report](#) which asked Blackpool residents which health and social care services were of concern to them. Care Homes were reported as the 5th most concerning service in Blackpool.

As a result of this Healthwatch Blackpool set out a statutory annual work plan which included reviews of all Blackpool care or nursing homes deemed to be “requiring improvement” in any of the five inspection areas in their latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) reports.

The Blackpool [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) notes that “*Dementia is the single most frequent cause of admission to care homes, and of the need for community care services for older people. The demographics of an ageing population indicate the number of people with dementia in Blackpool is predicted to rise to around 3,841 by 2020*”.

2.3 What were our aims?

Our aim was to allow the residents to have a say in the care that they were receiving. To do this, we required the cooperation of residents, family/carers, and the management and staff of the home. By collating this information, we could evaluate the quality of care within each care home we visited.

2.4 Methodology

We did not wish to perform an enforced *Enter and View* visit to this home. 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 management. To do this we wrote to the care home we intended to visit with a comprehensive outline of our intentions and purposes of a review. We also supplied the home with a poster confirming the date and time of our visit and its aims. We asked that the home place the poster in a prominent position for residents, families/carers and staff.

All Healthwatch representatives wore identification badges during the review. Before speaking to any residents, it was explained 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 the information they gave us would be anonymous and that they were free to end the conversation at any point. Healthwatch representatives also made informal observations throughout the visit and made notes of what was seen around the home.

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 they have a query about, they will inform the lead reviewer who will either discuss with the service manager or make a judgement on whether this requires reporting to the Blackpool adult social care team.

Also, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer, they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to find out more about whistleblowing guidance.

Acorn Lodge's most recent CQC report ([November 2015](#)) gives an overall rating of "Good", although the home is deemed to be requiring improvement in its safety.

Healthwatch Blackpool aimed to assist the home in recognising any potential improvements in its safety from the service user perspective, as well as all other areas of its service delivery.



Overall Good

Read overall summary

Safe	Requires improvement ●
Effective	Good ●
Caring	Good ●
Responsive	Good ●
Well-led	Good ●

2.5 Summary of provider

Acorn Lodge is a small home in Blackpool situated on a quiet street in the centre of the town. The home has ten available beds, and at the time of our visit the home was operating at full capacity. The home specialises in adult mental health, and as such, all the residents are long term mental health service users. We spoke to the registered manager Joyce Cleg Gregory on our arrival who explained that they have quarterly residents' meetings where people can voice any issues they may have. Due to the size of the home and the nature of issues and complaints, it was felt by management that regular meetings were not required and that the residents and staff had good communication together.

On arrival, the home was clean, free from odours, and had an open and welcoming environment. Representatives were shown around after speaking to residents, who went on to have their lunch. The bedrooms were all decorated by the staff, but Healthwatch were informed that on admission to the home, residents are given an opportunity to paint and decide the layout of the room. One of the rooms in the home was an en-suite and there was one bathroom on each of the two floors.

The home employs eight staff, and there is a system of ongoing training and supervision in place.

We spoke to 5 residents during our visit.

2.6 Results of visit

General

Residents reported that the best thing about Acorn Lodge was the feeling of “brotherhood” and “community” they feel living together. Healthwatch Representatives observed staff and residents laughing together and this was reported to be very important to the residents. Four of the five residents who were spoken to said that they would recommend the home to anyone who wanted to live there. Residents also gave positive feedback about the activities and the trips out the home.

Food and drink

Residents said that the food was “okay”, though no respondents went so far as to say the food was not nice. When asked about food, residents often changed the subject to talk about other things. Residents did report that food was varied and that portion sizes were good.

Activities

Residents told us that they very much enjoyed the activities which were put on by the home. Their favourite in-house activity was a hoop game where they won prizes. Even with different levels of mobility they all enjoyed the game and it contributed towards their wellbeing and sense of community in the home, although they explained that the same people won the game every time.

Residents said that they were never rushed or pushed to take part and the staff were always patient with them when doing activities. When asked if there were any other activities the home could provide, one resident told us that personal grooming and specialist beauty services would make a big difference to them. We later asked the registered manager about this who explained that these services are offered to residents and that they have people come in regularly to do this.

The residents were very vocal about their trips out and other outdoor activities. Staff support residents out of the home and go with them to visit places around the country. These trips out meant a great deal to them. When we attended a visit had been cancelled due to bad weather and instead the home had organised a party, which a few residents said they were looking forward to. Only one person told us that they do not get to do the activities they would like to do.

Staff & Safety

All residents said that they felt safe at all times, and that they had no issues with the staff and their care. Residents reported that there was a “*community feel*”. It was explained that staff are friendly, and respect their dignity and privacy. Healthwatch representatives observed staff spending time interacting and supporting residents, noting that all staff knew the residents by name. Residents explained that they like that the staff came with them to the shops and supported them in the community.

Involvement in key decisions around their care

Some residents found it difficult to answer questions around choice and involvement in their care due to their capacity and mental ill health. Healthwatch representatives did ask if the residents were ever offered advocacy support and none said they had.

Comments, Concerns & Complaints

All residents who were spoken to reported that they had no issues and that if they did have any in the future they felt comfortable speaking to any member of staff and the issue would be resolved.

2.7 Recommendations

This report highlights the practice that Healthwatch Blackpool 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 and Healthwatch Blackpool felt that the following areas could be looked at for improvement:

Activities

- One resident told us that activities were designed around their needs and that this helped them. This good practice should be the case across the home for all residents and could be encouraged in other homes.
- A timetable in the house showing when other services are visiting the home would help people remember to register their interest and book in time.

Food and Drink

- Residents wishing not to discuss the food implied that they did not wish to give any negative comments. A review of food and menus would encourage the residents to have more of a say in their day to day choices.

Involvement in key decisions around their care

- No residents told us they had been offered an advocate to support them in key decisions around their care. Health and social care advocacy, and Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) should be promoted as appropriate.

2.8 Service Provider response

Service provider response goes here