

## Enter and View – Visit Report

Name of establishment: Speedwell House, Sheltered Housing Plus (Origin Housing). Woodside Grange Road, London N12 8SD

Staff met During Visit: Scheme Manager, Nicky Ward.

Date of visit: 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2016

Healthwatch authorised representatives involved: Linda Jackson, Maureen Lobatto, Derek Norman

### Introduction and Methodology

This is an announced Enter and View (E&V) visit undertaken by Healthwatch Barnet's E&V Volunteers, as part of a planned strategy to look at a range of care provision within the London Borough of Barnet to obtain a better idea of the quality of care provided. Healthwatch E&V representatives have statutory powers to enter Health and Social Care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services and obtain the views of the people using those services. The aim is to report the service that is observed, to consider how services may be improved and how good practice can be disseminated.

The team of trained volunteers visit the service and record their observations along with the feedback from tenants, relatives, carers and staff. They compile a report reflecting these, and making some recommendations. The Report is sent to the Manager of the facility visited for validation/correction of facts, and for their response to the recommendations. The final version is then sent to interested parties, including the Head Office of the managing organisation, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Adults and Safeguarding Committee, CQC, Barnet Council and the public via the Healthwatch website.

***DISCLAIMER: This report relates only to the service viewed on the date of the visit, and is representative of the views of the staff, visitors and residents who met members of the Enter and View team on that date, and those who completed and returned questionnaires relating to the visit.***

## **Enter and View – Visit Report**

### **Executive Summary**

Speedwell House is a Sheltered Housing Plus unit, which provides for Tenants who have been designated by Barnet Social Services as needing day and night care. Other Tenants may have care during the day, or no care at all. The scheme is run by Origin Housing Association.

The Manager's role is in helping the Tenants by giving advice and support when dealing with the authorities. She also helps with other concerns the Tenants may have, such as making GP appointments. She is not responsible for care, but will monitor the state of Tenants' health. She oversees building maintenance. The Team felt that Speedwell House was a well run unit, with the emphasis on helping Tenants lead as an independent life as they could, with timely support.

Origin completes records for new Tenants, and the designated Care Agencies fill in their own records for Tenants needing Sheltered Housing Plus care. End of Life Care is an option if the Tenant's flat is suitable. There are concerns with the discharge of Tenants from hospital, without notification, between 5.00pm and 9.00pm, as there are no staff on duty between those hours.

The Team found good engagement with the Tenants who felt consulted and listened to. There was a range of activities, some organised by the Tenants themselves, which added to the feeling of community.

The Tenants had few complaints but would speak to the Manager direct if they had any concerns. Origin has a Complaints Procedure available to the Tenants. Accidents and Incidents are recorded by the Manager.

The Tenants had few security issues, but mentioned that members of the public had access to the private road around the building and this has caused problems in the past. They also felt that scaffolding left in place for a long time was a security issue.

There are difficulties with monitoring those Tenants occupying flats with direct outside access, whose mental capacity is lessening.

## **Enter and View – Visit Report**

### **General Information**

Speedwell House is a purpose built set of flats constructed in 1981. It is situated in a pleasant suburban road close to the Tube and buses, but a fair walk from any shops. There is road parking at certain times of the day, and parking within the building's grounds was limited. The flats are divided into three units, Sheltered Housing Plus, and in Speedwell Court, the Asperger and Autism Service, and the General Needs temporary flats, all managed by Origin Housing. The Team's remit was a visit to the Sheltered Housing Plus unit. The Manager's role is in dealing and with Tenants, giving advice to enable Tenants to remain independent as long as possible, making GP appointments if requested. She will make daily or weekly check-up calls if requested. She will help Tenants in dealing with outside agencies, such as the Benefits Office and Social Services. She oversees the maintenance of the building. There is no garden, except for a small square of lawn at the front, and a few communal patios with chairs and tables.

The scheme is sheltered housing for people able to live independently. There are twenty-five flats for single occupation, and they are at full capacity at the moment. The flats are situated on four floors with lift and staircase access. Four flats are on the ground floor with direct outside access. There are six one bedroom flats with a separate bathroom and kitchen, and the rest are studio flats. Each flat has a pull cord alarm system connected to the Manager's office, and after hours calls go to the Harrow Helpline. All the flats have wet rooms with shower, but no baths. The flats are redecorated before a new Tenant comes, but the Tenant provides carpet, white goods and furniture. There is a small communal lounge with a television and internet access. The Manager said that internet access throughout the building will be available soon. The lounge has a small galley kitchen. It has been redecorated recently, but seemed to have a lot of chairs and tables, preventing easy access for less mobile Tenants.

Access to the building is by keypad and telephone connection to individual flats. Having ascertained the caller, Tenants can let them in. Tenants also have a fob key to open the front door and keys to their flats. The Manager's office is situated beside the front door with a window looking onto the front. A visitor comes into a narrow hall with a table and signing in book. There is a Notice board informing Tenants of items of interest

## **Enter and View – Visit Report**

including a copy of the Complaints Procedure, and the Healthwatch flyer announcing our visit. The communal areas were clean, if a little bare and institutional looking. Tenants mentioned the former weekly gardener had been replaced by another who came far less often, so was unable to clear away the Autumn leaves regularly. Some Tenants complained that the scaffolding erected outside to clear gutters, had not been taken down and this presented security concerns. The Tenants thought that on the whole the building was well maintained.

Tenants felt safe and secure on the whole. They did mention that the private access road round the building was used by members of the public as a short cut. One Tenant had had their car vandalised.

### **Care Planning**

Speedwell House is designated a Sheltered Housing Plus service which provides day and night care for five Tenants between the hours of 9.00pm and 7.00am. Eight Tenants have day care which is funded or part funded by Barnet. Some Tenants pay for care, for cleaning their flats, preparing meals or shopping. The rest of the Tenants have just have their sheltered housing flats.

A prospective Tenant is shown the property, and notified of the facilities of the scheme. They then have a six week settling in period. New Tenants are given important numbers, such as application for repairs provided by Origin Housing.

The Manager said that Origin used to do Care Plans for new Tenants, but as the funding was stopped, Origin now provide their own record notes. Tenants registered for Shelter Plus have folders that the Sheltered Plus staff keep up to date and are kept in their rooms. The Sheltered Plus service is CQC registered for the five tenants currently on it. Two Barnet approved Agencies provide care to nominated Tenants. When asked, some Tenants were not aware of the record notes, but felt consulted about their care. The Manager said that if she noticed a Tenant was losing mental capacity, she would consult relatives, offering support to refer to the GP or social services. Asked what she would do if a Tenant wished to have End of Life care, she said this was possible if the Tenant's flat was suitable, and a guest room was available. She would also involve the relevant agencies.

## **Enter and View – Visit Report**

We asked the Manager if she had any issues with the late discharge of Tenants from hospital. She said that problems have arisen when Tenants have been returned to their flats between the hours of 5.00pm, when she goes off duty, and 9.00pm when the night staff come on duty. This means that she or the out of hours monitoring company are not informed of the Tenant's return. The Tenant has to let themselves in to an empty flat, with possibly no food.

Some Tenants have told us that they have been living at the unit for many years. The Manager said that as Origin is a social housing landlord, the Tenants have a tenancy agreement that allows them to remain in their property for as long as they wish, unless their needs change to such an extent where the support they require cannot be provided for, or that they are assessed as not being safe to live independently. Tenants to whom we spoke said that they were very happy at Speedwell House. They said "Nothing wrong with this place. I have been here for twenty years". Some had been there with three different Managers.

### **Management of Residents' Health and Wellbeing**

The Manager said that Tenants make their own GP appointments, unless they ask for help. Staff can support with medical appointments if required. Tenants said that they would go to the Manager if they felt unwell, or else would call Harrow Helpline. The Manager said that she can suggest a medical appointment if she thought it was necessary, but a Tenant's permission (if they have the capacity to give it) is required to make a GP appointment. Or else she would speak to relatives or the social worker.

She has concerns about Tenants in flats with direct outside access, when they start to lose their mental capacity, as she cannot monitor them going in and out. Tenants do not always wear their GPS watch or pendant.

### **Staff**

Speedwell House has a Scheme Manager, who is on duty five days a week, 9.00am-5.00pm, and a handyman service one afternoon a week. The Staff have the mandatory induction training, and ongoing relevant training thereafter. A cleaner maintains the communal spaces twice a

## **Enter and View – Visit Report**

week and there is a window cleaning service. A gardener from Origin maintains the outside spaces. Bank staff from Origin who are familiar with the scheme cover any of the Manager's absences. A member of the Sheltered Plus Night Staff works Monday to Sunday from 9.00pm-7.00am. They also provide care during the day.

### **Activities**

A coffee morning takes place every Thursday morning in the communal sitting room. The Manager is beginning to organise a fish and chip supper every four to six weeks. There are board games in the communal lounge, and Tenants have the use of the television. The lounge has wi-fi available. The Tenants themselves organise a weekly film show every Friday. The Tenants say that they used to have an annual outing to the seaside, with all expenses paid, but it did not happen this year. The Manager said that she hopes to organise an outing for next year. A number of Origin staff from other Schemes volunteer to help with events, and are given time off to do this. Barbeques are also occasionally organised, and there is a Christmas Party. Tenants told us "You don't have to mix, but it's there if you want it". Tenants' suggestions and preferences for activities are discussed at the Tenants' meetings, or the coffee mornings.

### **Engagement with Relatives/Residents/ Carers**

The Manager told us that Origin telephone, text or send letters to Tenants on a regular basis to ascertain their satisfaction. Tenants are also asked for their views on the Service Charge. One tenant told us they thought it was too high, but did not say if they had discussed it with Origin. Tenants can also speak to the Manager or Retirement Housing Manager about any concerns and Tenants feel they can do this, and are listened to. The Manager makes monthly inspections, accompanied by a Tenant. There is a regular Tenants' meeting "where you can bring up what you like, but there isn't much to bring up". They said the meetings were "occasionally helpful", but they generally had no complaints. Some Tenants do not attend.

### **Compliments/Complaints/Incidents**

## **Enter and View – Visit Report**

The Complaints Procedure is available from the Origin website or from the Manager's office. It is also available from Head Office. There is a copy on display in the ground floor lobby. Tenants are informed of the Complaints Procedure when they first arrive. Tenants said that they would speak directly to the Manager if they had a complaint. The Team did not see a compliments book, or a method of displaying compliments.

We were told that the accident book is kept in the office. All incidents are reported to the Retirement Housing Officer and Assistant Director of Care and Support Services.

## **Conclusions**

The Team enjoyed their visit to Speedwell House, and were made welcome by the Manager and Tenants alike.

The unit is well run and maintained. The emphasis was on enabling Tenants to live as independently as they could with timely support if they wished it. The Tenants, as they themselves said, had few complaints. The Manager was friendly and accessible, and obviously committed to the wellbeing of the Tenants.

The Team was aware that we did not meet a cross section of the Tenants, but only the eight who attended the coffee morning on the day of our visit, who appeared mobile and with fewer care needs. They were an articulate and independent group, but who also looked out for other members of the community "We look after each other". One Tenant said "If there were more places like this then everybody would be happy".

The Tenants had few complaints, but did mention they would like the annual seaside trip to be reinstated. The Manager said she was already considering this with the help of Origin volunteers.

The Tenants felt that there was a security issue with members of the public using the private road. They also said that the scaffolding round the building had been left for several weeks, and might also be a security issue, as well as looking unsightly.

## **Recommendations for Origin Housing**

### **Enter and View – Visit Report**

1. Clarify the extent of the Manager's caring role.
2. Make plans for a seaside outing in 2017 for as many of the Tenants who wish to go, including those with Care needs.
3. Examine ways and means of preventing members of the public from using the private access road.
4. Ensure that any scaffolding used for building repairs is removed promptly.
5. Consider ways of improving the security of Tenants with diminishing mental capacity who are occupying flats with direct outside access.

### **Recommendations for Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group**

1. To ensure that where at all possible hospital discharges take place during staff working hours, and with notification to the Manager.

### **Response from Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group**

1. With regard to the timing of discharge back to Speedwell House. Good discharge planning should always ensure that hospital discharge takes place in a planned way, with at least 24 hour notice of discharge. There may be rare occasions when the hospital is experiencing extreme pressures on their beds, and where there is a prior arrangement and agreement made, for the patient to be discharged back to Speedwell House within the same day i.e. less than 24 hours notice.

### **Response from Origin Housing**

1. The Scheme Manager role is primarily a facilitator role, signposting tenants to services and assisting them to apply for them, it is not to actually provide the care, as we are not CQC registered. Retirement schemes like Speedwell House actively promote tenants to be able to live independently in their own home for as long as possible. This having been said, Scheme Managers would assist a tenant in an emergency and in recent times the Scheme Manager has collected emergency prescriptions, done some shopping and accompanied them to hospital appointments. They can spend time having a chat with a tenant in their



## **Enter and View – Visit Report**

- flat, especially those who are more housebound than others, but as the Scheme Manager service is there for all tenants and is also about the maintenance and upkeep of the whole building, to give everyone equal access and allow the Scheme Manager time to complete their other tasks, in circumstances where this was becoming a daily occurrence the Scheme Manager would refer the tenant to a suitable befriending service.
2. We reintroduced this a couple of years ago and there were a couple of reasons why it didn't happen. The then Scheme Manager resigned and left during the summer, so for a month or so the scheme had bank staff on site whilst I recruited to the role. Also a couple of the stalwart tenants who usually got involved with the organising were unwell. The trip is fully funded by The Friends of Speedwell and Nicki, the new Scheme Manager at Speedwell has already discussed this happening with our contact at the charity. In previous years staff have volunteered to go in order to help tenants with mobility issues, so as many as possible can go.
  3. We are unable to gate the entrance and exit to the scheme as the building next door has right of way through a section at the end, but we can certainly look at improving signage in the hope of deterring people using it as a short cut. I'm not aware of it being a massive problem, less than half a dozen people are seen walking through a day, and the instances of vandalism mentioned during the visit were actually carried out by a person known to the car owner and a couple of years ago now.
  4. Scaffolding would normally be promptly removed, as there is a cost implication in leaving it up un-necessarily, but unfortunately the fact the Surveyor who commissioned this repair wanted to do a post inspection of the works before the scaffold was struck, and was taken ill and off sick for a couple of weeks following the completion of the repair. I'm pleased to say the scaffold was removed prior to Christmas 2016.

### **Enter and View – Visit Report**

5. Origin have started fitting alarms to the flat doors where direct outside access is an issue and it is working quite well, so is a method we would consider using regularly. The alarm alerts the staff or monitoring service that the flat door has been opened and they can check all is well with the tenant. In addition we have explored GPS tracker systems supplied by Social Services.

I hope these updates help and we have found it really useful to have another “set of eyes and ears” give our service the once over!

Signed: Linda Jackson, Maureen Lobatto, Derek Norman

Date: February 2017