

Enter and View – Visit Report

Name of establishment: Jewish Blind and Disabled Charity, Frances & Dick James Court Sheltered Housing, 35 Langstone Way, Bittacy Hill, Mill Hill East, London, NW7 1GT
Tel: 020 8371 6611

Staff met During Visit: Karen Zeff, Head of Housing Management and Tenancy Support
Debbie Clarke, Resident House Manager

Date of visit: 2nd May, 2017

Healthwatch authorised representatives involved: Linda Jackson, Lisa Robbins, Helena Pugh, Melvin Gamp

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 Sheltered Housing Units within the London Borough of Barnet to obtain a better idea of the services 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 residents, 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

Enter and View – Visit Report

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.*

Summary

The unit is a modern Sheltered Housing unit in a very convenient location. There are 35 self contained flats for single tenants, and 5 for couples, with 2 flats for the full time resident House Managers. All flats are fitted to accommodate the needs of disabled and vision impaired tenants. The building is clean and well maintained but due for refurbishment. There is an attractive garden.

The Management draw up a Support Care Plan for new tenants, and Care Plans, if needed, are provided by a tenant's care agency. Tenants can stay at the unit for as long as they wish, dependent on their health or mental capacity. If this deteriorates beyond the remit of the unit, other agencies are consulted to find a suitable placement.

The Jewish Community supports the unit with donations and volunteers to run a full programme of activities. JBD have an activities team who arrange activities across all of their schemes and the tenants organise some their own activities. Tenants appreciated the community spirit in the unit.

Tenants were happy with their accommodation and the Management, but would like to be consulted, and have an input into, matters of general concern, such as the upcoming refurbishment and furnishings in the communal lounge.

General Information

Frances and Dick James Court is a purpose built unit, built in 2003, situated in a very convenient location within a few minutes' walk of a supermarket, doctor's surgery, a private health club, a tube station and bus stops. It is situated off a main road, but the access road is busy and

Enter and View – Visit Report

difficult for disabled people to cross safely. The Charity's Head Office is also located in the same building.

The building is approached from the road by a fairly steep drive, but there is a wheelchair lift by the side of the road. Parking is restricted and limited to disabled tenants, visitors and staff. The approach to the building is attractive and well maintained. Access to the building is via a touch pad or intercom with the office. There is also a CCTV camera over the front door. Two sets of double doors lead into the front hall.

The flats are available to disabled and blind or partially sighted people from the age of 18+. There are currently 42 flats situated on three floors, each consisting of a bedroom and sitting room, a small kitchen, and a wet room, with toilet, wash basin and shower. Two of the flats are used by the resident House Managers and five of the flats are doubles. The cost is dependent on the tenant's circumstances, as some tenants self fund and others are on benefits. There is a guest room for family members to use for a small charge. At present there is a communal bathroom with a bath on the first floor, but as this is rarely used, there are plans to turn it into a scooter charging and storage room. There is also a laundry room containing three washing machines and dryers available to tenants and their carers on a rota basis. There are stairs and lifts to each floor, and the carpets are colour coded on each floor to help tenants and visitors orientate themselves. The flats are decorated every seven years, or more often if a new tenant moves in, and are fitted out to accommodate the needs of the tenant. There are pull cords in each room of the flat, fire alarms are fitted and night visible switches. Amie pendants are provided for tenants who require them. Wi fi is not available throughout the building, and at present tenants provide their own access. There are plans to install it during 2017/18. There is an annual inspection of flats for maintenance and repair.

The front hall is spacious and uncluttered, with the House Manager's office on one side. There was a large notice board with items displayed for the information of the tenants. The Team noticed the Healthwatch flyer advertising our visit amongst them. The large communal sitting room has a kitchenette to one side. Double doors lead onto patio with a covered pergola. The garden is exceptionally attractive and tranquil, with wide flat paths for wheelchair access.

Enter and View – Visit Report

The building is well maintained and clean, but the fixtures were a little worn and dated. We were told that there will be a refurbishment during 2017/18.

As part their tenancy agreement tenants have the use of their flat, free laundry facilities, a regular shopping bus, window cleaning and TV licences. 50% of the House Manager service charge is subsidised by donations from members of the Jewish community. A volunteer co-ordination team arranges activities and events each week and at major Jewish holidays.

Care Planning

New tenants are shown the building, and introduced to other tenants. Staff explain how things work in the flat, for example the heating, alarm system and door entry. All tenants are given a copy of the tenants' Handbook, and the monthly events diary. A support plan is completed and after 4-6 weeks this is reviewed. This is also reviewed annually or before if the tenant's health circumstances change. There is also an ambulance folder with details of the tenant's medical requirements should the tenant need to go to hospital. If the tenant has care, the care agency draws up their own care plan which is kept in a red folder in their flat.

There have been no problems about late discharge from hospitals. The hospital generally calls the Duty Manager, but if not, the tenant generally pulls the cord to say they are back. If a tenant has a long stay in hospital the Manager calls to check on what is happening and when the tenant is likely to come back.

If it was noticed that the tenant was losing mental capacity the Manager would liaise with the Tenancy Support Adviser and the family. The unit does not support tenants with dementia, as their remit is to provide sheltered accommodation for tenants with disabilities and/or limited sight. They will liaise with other agencies such as Jewish Care to provide the appropriate accommodation.

Tenants stay as long as they like, and as long their deteriorating health allows. At this stage Jewish Care or Barnet Council will be contacted about alternative accommodation.

Enter and View – Visit Report

Tenants have sometimes expressed the wish to have end of life care in their own flat, and this is possible. Tenants are asked early on about their wishes in the matter. Staff will discuss contacts, wills, Power of Attorney and associated matters.

Management of Residents' Health and Wellbeing

Most tenants attend the GP surgery across the road. Tenants make their own arrangements unless they specifically ask the staff to help them. Some tenants still go to their previous GP if they are willing to keep them on their list. The Handbook gives details of the details of the local GP, and the nearest pharmacy.

If a tenant pulls the alarm cord, the duty Manager will attend to a minor problem, or else refer tenant for other treatment. Equally if the Manager notices, or is told something is wrong, they will refer the tenant on. They will also review the support plan.

Staff

There are two full time resident house managers who work on a split rota, which means that there is a member of staff on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The rota is supported by a team of non-resident house managers who cover for training sessions, annual leave or sickness. The House Managers are also supported by the Tenancy Support Adviser and Head of Housing Management and Tenant Support. There is usually little need to employ Agency Staff. There are also window cleaners, a gardener and cleaning staff. A document called the Role of the House Manager explains to tenant the remit of the House Manager. They help the tenant to live independently, and assist in emergencies.

The Charity provides internal training sessions with House Managers from other units, and the staff also attend Barnet Council training and Jewish Care training. The Team were told that staff had received the Purple Angel dementia awareness training, fire training and health and safety risk assessment training, and safeguarding for adults. Staff have also received training on how to conduct end of life discussions with tenants.

Enter and View – Visit Report

Activities

The Charity has strong support from the Jewish community either through donations or a volunteer network. For example the son of one tenant ran in the recent London Marathon and donated £2,500. A volunteer co-ordination team with 4-6 volunteers runs activities and organises the celebration of Jewish festivals at the unit.

The Charity provides a mini-bus to take tenants shopping to Edgware or the Broadwalk twice week. It can also take wheelchairs.

The Charity does not organise external outings for tenants because they do not have the resources, but another charity, the Milly Days Charity, supported by the Management, organise and invite the tenants on a trip to the Thames at Henley every year. As the charity has 7 buildings different tenants are invited each year. Tenants have lunch tea and entertainment which includes a trip on a river boat.

Tenants themselves organise other activities including Bridge, bingo, Quiz nights and Quiz competitions with the Charity's sister unit in Redbridge. There are film shows in the evening, but one tenant suggested that it would be good to alternate with afternoon shows, as they got tired in the evening. Some films can only be shown if a licence has been purchased and so this prohibits some of the opportunities for tenants to watch films because of the costs. Fish and chip suppers and a Breakfast Club are also organised. The Friday night prayers (Shabbat) are led by the tenants themselves. More able tenants go for walks, or to the local gym. In the lounge we noticed a snooker table and a magnetic darts board, board games, a TV and a piano. The lovely garden is used for events, and there is a covered pergola used as a succah on the Jewish festival of Sukkot. A newsletter is produced listing the events happening that week and distributed to tenants. During the week we visited, people's birthdays were listed, a visit from a synagogue choir, a clothes show, and Shabbat times.

Tenants say that there used to be a creative writing group, and the Team were shown an impressive folder containing examples of work. One tenant suggested that as a result of a Holocaust commemoration day involving school children, it would be good for interested tenants to record their family history and memories.

Enter and View – Visit Report

Tenants said that there were enough activities to engage people if they wished to join in. They said that there was a good community spirit, and they give each other advice and support if required “everyone knows everyone. We can knock on neighbour’s doors for a chat or help or a cup of tea.”

Engagement with Tenants/Residents/ Carers

The Charity sends out a tenant satisfaction survey every three years. This can be anonymous if the tenant wishes. One tenant said they were not aware that there was a survey. Tenants’ meetings are held two or three times a year and are minuted and actioned. One tenant said that some actions are done, but not others, for example information on refurbishment or cleaning of furniture “niggly things become major”. One tenant said they have a say “up to a point”. Another said that they would like the lounge to look more like a hotel’s, not an old peoples’ home. At the moment they feel the furniture and layout makes it look “institutional”.

Refurbishment of the building and replacement of furniture was mentioned by several tenants. The Management told the Team that this was taking place during 2017/18, but tenants were concerned that they were not told what was happening “why don’t they tell us in meetings?”

Several tenants mentioned that there was quite a delay in the automatic front doors closing. They felt that someone could slip in behind them, especially at night.

Tenants mentioned that there used to be a hot water urn in the sitting room. This could be used for making hot drinks during Jewish holidays such as Passover or Pesach when the kitchen was closed. They felt it would be appreciated if another one was installed.

Tenants say that the Management is very helpful and approachable. They can ring or knock on the office door when they need help. They also react quickly to emergencies and pulled cords in the tenants’ flats.

Enter and View – Visit Report

Tenants told the Team that they felt lucky to be in the Unit, especially in view of the long waiting list. They felt happy and secure, but would like to be more involved in some decisions about making changes.

Compliments/Complaints/Incidents

There is a comprehensive file in the lounge containing all the current tenant policies and procedures. This includes a complaints form. The complaints procedure is explained to new tenants. It is also included in the tenant magazine Foundation that goes out to tenants and family members. Tenants said they would either fill in the form, or go the Manager. The form is dated with the action taken.

Accident report forms are sent to Head Office, who will advise on the action to be taken. The Team did not see a complaints or accidents book although we were told they are available.

Tenants can show their appreciation of staff who have “gone the extra mile” by filling in a form.

Conclusions

The Team enjoyed their visit to the unit. We were made welcome by the Management, and were impressed by the efficient manner in which our questions were answered. We considered that the unit was well run.

We felt that the building was well maintained and fit for purpose, although some of the fixtures and fittings were well used and getting worn. We understand that a refurbishment is taking place in 2018. Tenants felt that the location of the unit was excellent, but that crossing the busy access road could be hazardous for disabled people.

The Team were told that the Jewish community support the Unit with donations and volunteers. We understand that there is a comprehensive activities programme, some run by the tenants themselves. The tenants said they liked the community spirit in the unit, and their willingness to help and support each other. The tenants we met, although disabled in different ways, were friendly, outgoing, and quite able to express an opinion.

Enter and View – Visit Report

Residents said that they felt themselves fortunate to live in the unit, and were very happy with their accommodation. They felt that the Management was approachable and friendly. However, tenants felt they would like to have more input in matters that concerned them all, for example, the refurbishment plans. The Team suggest that more frequent tenants' meetings, and a yearly tenants' satisfaction questionnaire would help to achieve this. The tenants also felt that furnishings, particularly chairs in the communal lounge, needed to be professionally cleaned more often.

Some tenants said that there was a significant delay in the closing of the double set of front doors. They felt there could be a security risk.

Recommendations for Jewish Blind and Disabled

1. Consult tenants' views on matters of general interest.
2. Increase number of tenants' meetings a year.
3. Carry out a tenants' satisfaction questionnaire yearly, and feedback the findings and proposed actions to be taken.
4. Arrange for chairs in the communal lounge to be professionally cleaned on a regular basis.
5. Install a hot water urn in the communal lounge
6. Adjust the timing of the closure of the double set of front doors to lessen the security risk.

Responses from Jewish Blind & Disabled

Jewish Blind & Disabled thank the Healthwatch team for taking the time to visit us at Frances & Dick James Court. We are extremely pleased to hear that our tenants enjoy living with us and that they feel safe and happy in their homes. Our comments in response to the recommendations are as follows:

1. Tenants are given the opportunity to give their views about matters of general interest. But at present we are currently carrying out refurbishment in a different building and so we are not yet ready to discuss the redecoration plans with the tenants

Enter and View – Visit Report

of FDJ. As with our other buildings we will in due course invite them to a planning meeting to discuss their refurbishment before any works start.

2. We hold formal tenant meetings twice a year. If there are issues of concern we will hold additional meetings outside of this. Tenants just need to let their House Managers know that they would like a meeting.
3. We carry out tenant satisfaction surveys on a regular basis with all our tenants which is currently every 3 years. In addition to the satisfaction survey, new tenants moving in are also sent a survey that encourages them to give their feedback on the moving and settling in process. We are committed to an on-going process of consultation with our tenants and as part of our commitment to promote on going consultation we have also produced a policy document called "Do my views count?" A copy is available in the tenants lounge. We feedback the findings via our staff bulletin, volunteers newsletter and our tenant/family newsletter. We are looking at the feasibility and costs involved of carrying out satisfaction surveys annually and would it represent good value for money. It is more likely that in line with Housemark Star surveys recommendations we will look at repeating the survey every 2 years.
4. The furniture in the lounge is the original furniture from when the building opened in 2003. We are currently fundraising for the refurbishment of the communal areas to include new furniture, carpets etc. Tenants will have seen the amazing refurbishments in our other buildings that do indeed look like hotels. When refurbished Frances & Dick James Court will also meet this high standard. Jewish Blind & Disabled maintenance staff cleaned the furniture during the early part of 2017. We are currently obtaining quotes to get the furniture professionally cleaned as an interim arrangement.
5. There is a hot and cold water dispensing machine in the communal kitchen that replaced the urn which was removed following a Health and Safety Risk Assessment. The water dispenser protects against potential scolding and legionella. The kitchen is closed on Fridays nights and Saturdays during the Sabbath and on certain religious days during the year. There is a sink in the cupboard area of the communal lounge with a cold water drinking tap It is not locked and tenants are able to use

Enter and View – Visit Report

the tap for cold drinks at any time. Other than when there are activities in the lounge, tenants generally make tea and coffee in their own flats.

6. The doors have been set to allow for some of the tenants who are less able to move through safely before they start to close behind them. Jewish Blind & Disabled has tenants with a broad range of disabilities. So to more able bodied people, the doors may appear to move slowly. We have had them calibrated by Dorma Doors, who are one of the leading companies in door automation.

Recommendation for Barnet Council

7. Look into a way of providing a safe method of crossing Langstone Way.

Response from Barnet Council:

We are currently carrying out a feasibility study to provide a pedestrian crossing facility on Langstone Way, NW7 with a view to enhance pedestrian and safety improvements close to the sheltered housing unit.

Report Date June 2017