

Extra Care Re-Visits

Introduction and Purpose

The 'Enter & View Extra Care Schemes 2016' report was published in early November after visits to five of the existing Extra Care Schemes across Sunderland. The report made several recommendations aimed at the Commissioners and Extra Care Scheme managers which related to how management communicates with residents and how social activities are supported in the schemes.

As per the report, 6 months after it was published Healthwatch Sunderland has carried out a series of revisits to the 5 schemes to assess how management has responded to the recommendations. This was carried out again using surveys designed to explore what impact the recommendations have made. The findings of these revisits are highlighted below.

Findings

We spoke to 33 residents across the 5 schemes and had a response from 6 staff members across 2 schemes. The remaining managers failed to respond.

Recommendations relating to social activities

- Scheme managers could work on building stronger links to local community groups that offer further opportunities for residents. For example local providers could be linked into the residents meetings where they could be given time on the agenda to promote what they are able to offer in terms of support and activities to the residents i.e. Age UK Sunderland have spoken to Healthwatch and are willing to offer their support with a range of activities including helping with the setup of coffee mornings or offer a befriending scheme to those who have expressed loneliness etc.

Healthwatch has seen improvements as a result of the recommendation. Residents informed us about a range of new activities which have begun since our last visit. One new activity is an iPad session which is being facilitated by Age UK Sunderland and is now taking place in two of the schemes. Other schemes have also introduced new activities, residents mentioned organisations from outside coming in to deliver singing, crafts, sit and be fit and art classes.

- To help tackle loneliness and isolation, scheme managers could also encourage an in house buddy system which could be offered to new residents who are interested. This could help those who are identified as being lonely and also settle newer residents who may lack the confidence to join in activities on the first few occasions.

The engagement team's observations in one scheme did highlight that this was beginning to happen. We also heard conversations with the management team where a new resident was thanking the manager for supporting her along to new sessions whilst she settled into the scheme. Finally the Gentoo scheme also fed back that they are starting to ask new residents if they would like to participate in such a system.

- To support the provision of activities scheme managers could look at using local volunteers and/or resident's family and friends. These individuals could help managers and volunteer residents to plan and deliver some of the activities within the schemes and assist with any outings.

Those managers who did feedback on this recommendation mentioned that there hasn't been a bigger up take of support from resident's family and friends but they are still encouraging it. They also mentioned that despite this there is still a great deal of support from family who attend and support events and continue to get involved when they can.

- To encourage good practice scheme managers could come together to share good practice. For example in one scheme residents raised funds to buy a car that can be used by residents for medical appointments or trips out. The sharing of information how this was achieved would be beneficial to other schemes as it would help to address some of issues around lack of social activity.

Since the publishing of the report the Extra Care providers attend quarterly monitoring meetings with the commissioning team as a means of developing partnership working, the sharing of information and good practice. This meeting has also allowed a means for those attending to discuss the initial report and its recommendations so that the recommendations could be continually implemented.

Recommendations relating to Effective Communication

- Management could communicate with residents in a more encouraging and approachable manner, reassuring residents that they can speak to them about any concerns or issues that they have and when they do that they are actively listened to. They should also attempt to seek out residents to feedback to them in a timely manner.

The Healthwatch team have again seen improvements as a result of this recommendation. Of the residents we spoke to the majority said that they are comfortable speaking to the Management and Care Team Leaders at the Extra Care Schemes. A highlight of some of the comments are given below



“I am comfortable to speak to the Manager, but not on a Monday as she is busy then”

“I am very comfortable speaking to the Manager”

“I would be able to speak with them about anything”

- Management could communicate in a more effective manner taking into consideration resident’s differing needs. Residents would like to see less reliance on the tannoy system and increased use of paper based communication. This could also include the distribution of minutes of meetings to all residents especially to those who don’t attend so they can then still keep up to date with information.

Further improvements have been made under this recommendation also. Despite some residents speaking about the tannoy still being used as a method of communication, they did mention that there has been a significant difference in the amount of paper based communication being introduced since Healthwatch recommended it. These included an increase in newsletters, information on notice boards and letters delivered to resident’s homes.

Recommendation one wasn’t assessed during the revisits as it looked at whose responsibility it is to promote and provide social activities. As this was an issue for the commissioners and wasn’t something that could be asked during the revisits. The full response to this recommendation from the commissioners can be found on our website.