

## **Enter and View – Mealtime Visit Report**

Name of establishment: The Sunridge Court Care Home  
(Sunridge Housing Association)  
The Ridgeway, London NW11 8PT

Staff met During Visit: Rachel Jones, Director  
Julie Nelson, Registered Manager  
Care and Serving Staff

Date of visit: 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2018

Healthwatch authorised representatives involved: Linda Jackson, Tina Stanton, Marion Kafetz

### **Introduction and Methodology**

This is an announced Enter and View (E&V) visit undertaken by Healthwatch Barnet's E&V Representatives, as part of a planned set of visits investigating the mealtime experiences of residents at a range of care and nursing homes within the London Borough of Barnet. 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 Communities Committee, CQC, Barnet Council and the public via the Healthwatch website.

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This is the second visit that the team of E&V Representatives have undertaken looking specifically at the mealtime experience. The team undertook some specific training lead by the Barnet Council Care Quality team to fully understand the latest good practice around mealtimes and hydration for residents in care homes.

***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.***

### **Executive Summary**

Sunridge Court is a non-profit making charity providing care but, not nursing care, for non-orthodox Jewish elders. The brief of the visit was to observe mealtime provision.

Most residents are fairly mobile and independent, and a few have early stage dementia. Two residents need soft food and to be assisted with eating.

Residents eat together in a large attractive dining room. Lunch is the main meal of the day, and residents can choose where to sit. Care staff assist less mobile residents.

The Home employs outside caterers who provide and cook fresh food every day, which is served and cleared by three domestic staff. Portion sizes are tailored to the preferences of individual residents. Residents choose mealtime options on a tick list at breakfast, which is served in their rooms. Residents can also have other meals in their rooms. Regular meetings are held to discuss residents' preferences for particular dishes. On the whole residents were happy with the choices and quality of the meals, and had only a few minor complaints.

### **General Information**

Sunridge Court is run by a non-profit making charity with a Director and Board of Trustees. The Home has been established in the area for fifty years, providing non-nursing residential care for non-orthodox Jewish elders. The food provided is kosher but non-supervised. The Home has a 43 bed occupancy, but at the moment has 38 residents. Two residents each occupy two rooms.

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The residents are mostly mobile, but with some care needs. The home takes in residents with no dementia diagnosis at the time of admittance, but will continue to support residents who develop dementia at a later date until they need nursing care.

### **Mealtime Environment**

The Home uses outside caterers who employ the chef and catering staff, deliver fresh food every day. The catering staff's hours extend from 7.00am to 8.00pm. The food is cooked from scratch in the kitchen adjacent to the dining room, and lunch is served by three domestic staff. The kitchen had a recent visit from the Environmental Health Team, and was awarded the top rating for hygiene.

Lunch is the main meal of the day, and is served at 1.00pm with supper at 7.00pm. Residents have breakfast in their rooms.

Residents are assigned seats in the dining room on their arrival in the Home, but can change their places as often as they wish. They can also have a table to themselves. Residents needing assistance are helped into the dining room by care staff, and Zimmer frames are taken out of the room until after the meal. Wheelchair users are encouraged to sit on chairs and assisted to do so. There is no music or television at mealtimes at the request of the residents. Two residents who need assistance with eating their meals, were taken into the conservatory before the main meal and care staff supported them to eat their meals.

Residents can have meals in their rooms if they wish, but are encouraged to come down to the dining room to socialise if they are well enough.

### **Dining Room**

The dining room was a large sunny room with big windows and a wooden floor overlooking the attractive garden at the back. The tables were spaced well apart from each other, and were set with white tablecloths, cutlery, glasses and white napkins. Each table had a jug of water, and glasses of juice for each resident. Condiments were on a tray with bottles of sauce as required. Each table had a pretty vase of flowers arranged on this occasion by residents. The general effect was calm and attractive. The daily menu was displayed on the notice board, but there were no menus on the tables, as the residents had already made their choices on the tick list at breakfast time.

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The dining room also doubled up between meals as an area for showing films or other entertainment.

### **Food**

The meals arrive from the kitchen already plated up, but attractively presented, and served to the residents. We were told that portion sizes are tailored to individual resident's preferences, but they can ask for second helpings if there is any food left. We were told that this cuts down on food waste. On the day of our visit one resident was eating food that had been brought in by a relative. Relations or friends can have a meal with the residents for a small charge.

It took a while to serve all the residents, and the residents served last had a wait before their meal was served. The staff alternate serving each end of the room first, so that the same residents do not always have to wait. We noted that in some cases the coffee at the end of the meal was served before or with the dessert.

The two residents requiring assistance with their feeding had soft or pureed food, which had been piped onto the plates to make it look more attractive.

On the day we visited the residents could choose from a salad bar, lamb tagine or penne with tomato sauce, as well as poached fish, baked potato, or an egg dish which was always available. Dessert was fruit salad or poached plums and ice cream. Coffee or tea was served at the end of the meal.

Residents' meetings are held every few months specifically to discuss menus and residents are able to put forward preferences, although we were told by residents that these were not often taken on board.

Catering staff attend the meetings.

Special diets for medical conditions are catered for. We were told that residents who had missed their meal because of appointments or hospital visits were provided with food when they arrived back at the Home.

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### **Choices**

Residents have an uncooked breakfast or an egg dish in their rooms at a time that suits them. At this point they fill out a tick list for their choice of menu for lunch. One resident told us they did not receive the food they had ordered, but we were told that this was sometimes as residents tick the wrong box. If they do not like the lunch choices they can have poached fish, baked potatoes or an egg dish. On the day we visited some residents complained that lamb tagine was offered, which they understood to be slices of lamb, not a casserole. The team had the opportunity to taste the lamb tagine and the penne, which they thought was very tasty. Residents also complained that the evening choices were dull, although they enjoyed the homemade soup. A few residents would prefer the option of a vegetarian soup on Friday night, instead of the chicken soup.

Residents have access to snacks and fresh fruit all day from the dining room. They can also make themselves a coffee or tea from the hot water machines, although one resident said she had difficulty working the pump action on the machines. We were told that this particular machine was used, but that staff will make a drink for residents at any time. The team also noticed a toaster in the dining room for the use of the residents.

### **Staff**

Most residents came in to the dining room unassisted, and did not require assistance during the meal. Care staff brought in the less mobile residents, helped wheel chair users onto their seats, and then left. They returned at the end of the meal to assist those residents from the dining room. The meals were brought in from the kitchen by three domestic staff, who had changed into a separate uniform for their mealtime role. Staff are provided with free meals on their shift, and do not eat with the residents.

We noticed that the serving staff were rushed serving the lunch, and understood that the meal had to be served and cleared by the end of their shift at 2.00pm. As a result, some residents received their coffee or tea before they had finished eating, although tables were left uncleared if residents were still sitting at them.

Serving staff have in house training in food hygiene, infection control and dementia.

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### **Feedback from the Residents**

Residents said that on the whole the food was good, and their choices were catered for as far as possible.

They accepted that it was difficult to please everybody, but felt that sometimes it was not clear what constituted a dish from the title on the menu, especially if it had an unfamiliar name. Some residents felt that the size of the fish and chicken portions was rather small.

They thought the staff were “marvellous”, but that the serving staff could be very rushed.

Residents complained that the food was often cold or tepid by the time it was served to them. They also said that if they chose to have their meals in their rooms it arrived an hour early and was cold. Meals served in resident’s rooms are served 20 minutes ahead of main service to enable to staff to deliver the trays.

Some residents said they had problems accessing the hot water machines in the dining room to make themselves a drink.

### **Conclusions**

The team were impressed by the attractive and relaxed environment in the dining room. They thought that the staff and caterers made great efforts to please the requirements of a group of people with different food preferences. The residents, on the whole, were happy with their dining experiences, but did have a few minor complaints. They had nothing but good to say about the staff.

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### **Recommendations**

1. Look into solutions for keeping food warm before it is served to the residents.
2. Provide a short description, on the breakfast tick list and daily menu, of dishes with unfamiliar names.
3. Look at the tick list for meals to see if it is possible to make it clearer so that mistakes are not made when ticking an option.
4. Include a vegetarian option for soup on Friday night.
5. Discuss with residents whether they would like lunch time to be brought forward by 10 to 15 minutes, to enable staff more time to serve and clear the meals.

### **Response from Sunridge Court**

1. We are looking to purchase a hot trolley to serve meals to people in their rooms.
2. Great idea, we are looking into doing this.
3. We have spoken with the catering company and have asked for a clearer more concise list.
4. Great idea, we will see if we can accommodate.
5. We are concerned about changing times as this would disrupt resident's daily regime, but we will bring this up at the next residents meeting.