

Care Home Provider:
Care Home Address:
Date and Time of Visit:
Authorised Representatives:

Abbeyfield Ltd
Quill Hall Lane, Amersham, HP6 6LU
12.07.18 – 11 am
Alison Holloway, Susan de Kersaint-Seal

Summary of findings



- Residents and visitors spoke highly of staff and care given although we saw minimal informal interaction between them
- Some corridors and rooms upstairs were cluttered with equipment.
- There were no menus and only a hand written daily activity board

The Visit

Pratt House provides residential care for 29 people, many of whom live with dementia. We talked to 6 residents, 2 visitors and 2 members of staff. We observed a further 11 residents and 5 staff. The building is being extended, from October, at both ends to provide an additional quiet lounge, a larger kitchen and 8 more bedrooms.

How people are treated



We were told staff were consistent and no agency staff were employed. Visitors told us several staff had worked at Pratt House for many years. “Staff are superb.” “Whatever you need, they’re there for you.” However, sometimes staff “are pretty sparse” and call bells can go unanswered. Sometimes, residents must wait some time for assistance. Managers had come and gone more frequently. “It’s difficult for residents to get used to one way of working only for the manager to leave and to have to start over.” Residents’ meetings are every quarter and are followed by relatives’ meetings a week later. We were told staff had time to chat to people who preferred to stay in their rooms or who are bed-bound. However, we didn’t see too much informal interaction between some staff and residents in the lounge or over lunch. However, staff assisting residents to eat were very good at explaining what the meal was, what was happening and encouraging those individuals to eat. Some residents also had a very good rapport with each other.

Personal Choice



Residents told us they were woken when medication had to be given or when staff had decided each resident should get up. We were told that all the residents choose to have breakfast in their bedrooms and that there was no option of a cooked breakfast. However, there were 17 in the dining room for lunch. We met one resident eating lunch in their bedroom. Another resident said that they didn’t always get staff listen to small requests such as brown not white bread. However, everyone said that the food was very good. We also saw vegetables being served to everyone as staff went around to ask what they would like with their pie. There are no written or pictorial menus. However, the manager later showed us the start of a picture menu file in the office. Cold drinks were served with lunch and coffee and tea afterwards. Several residents in the lounge took a sherry at noon. There was a huge array of drinking receptacles in use.

Just like Being at Home



Bedrooms seemed very personalised and, whilst all communal doors were painted white, bedroom doors were a choice of four colours to aid those living with dementia find their own bedroom. The home was reasonably decorated with pictures on the walls but corridors, a 'dining' area and a bathroom upstairs were cluttered with hoists, Zimmer frames, wheelchairs, hoovers and a mop and bucket. A chocolate biscuit had been trodden into the carpet in the lounge but it took a while before this was tidied up. The communal areas downstairs were bright and spacious with lovely views onto all the flowers beds in the garden. The latter seemed fully accessible although we saw no one use this. Residents told us they rarely use the garden. We were told this is often because there are insufficient staff to look after both those indoors and outside so residents must stay indoors. However, the manager did say some residents went outside on a Friday when the gardener visited. The manager told us that a few residents choose to spend one-to-one time, with the activity coordinator, being pushed in a wheelchair to the local newsagent. However, another resident said that they had not left the home for two years. There is no minibus. The manager did say that Abbeyfield head office had just allocated them some money to ensure free transport for outings over the next 12 months.

Visitors said they could come and go when they liked and were made comfortable if they felt they needed to stay overnight. We did see one resident help a staff member put napkins out on each table in readiness for lunch. "I like helping the girls." It was also heart-warming to see staff and residents at lunch replicating a family meal where everyone eats together.

Privacy



Everyone we spoke to said staff always knocked on bedroom doors before entering and closed curtains and doors when personal care was given. "Ooh yes, my privacy is respected."

Quality of Life



There was no activity schedule, written or in pictorial format to help residents know what might be taking place on any day. There were a few photos stuck to the lounge door showing residents involved in previous activities, the dates for communion and a poster for the upcoming summer fête. Today's activities were hand written on a white board. One-to-one time occurs at 9am. A chair-based exercise class was taking place when we arrived and, as we left, Tickled Pink, were setting up a musical theatre show although not in the garden as advertised. However, some residents did say there was not enough going on that matched their interests. Those in the lounge were left to their own devices with the TV on at one end and music playing in the adjoining dining room. No one seemed to be watching the TV. A five-minute news quiz took place just before lunch but did not seem to get much involvement from the residents. There were jigsaws and tambourines around but we didn't see them in use. No one was reading, but the local newsagent will deliver papers or magazines if the residents wanted them. The manager told us there were 56 hours of activities each week including a Pets as Therapy dog and a singer.

We heard from visitors about a range of nutritional needs which are all catered for whether that was thickened drinks or pureed food. One visitor said their relative was turned frequently and they could wish for nothing more than what was already being done. A GP visits every Tuesday, and residents can invite their hairdresser to use the hairdressing salon. A physiotherapist can be employed privately by a family although one resident was cross they hadn't had as much help as they would have liked. The manager said it was very difficult to get a dentist to visit but an optician occasionally visited.

Recommendations

We recommend that Pratt House

- encourages staff to interact informally more with residents in the communal areas and at mealtimes
- creates both written and pictorial menus for residents and relatives to see
- creates a pictorial and written activity schedule and makes this easily accessible for residents and visitors to look at
- changes grab rails in communal toilets and bathrooms from white to a contrasting colour to assist those who live with dementia
- change the clock in the dining room from one showing roman numerals to one with large clear digits
- increases the time residents can spend in the garden even if for short periods.
- ensures all activities match with the interests of the residents and that they are person-led
- creates better storage facilities, with the opportunities the new extensions will give, for all the wheelchairs, hoists etc presently stored in less than ideal areas.

Service Provider Response



Personal Choice

- All residents are given the choice of when they wish to get out of bed in the morning. Some residents are woken due to specific medication needs, i.e. Alendronic Acid to be given early and 30 minutes before consuming foods
- All residents, when the menu is taken are asked for preferred choices of white or brown bread. This is evidenced by the kitchen staff who retain these menus.
- There are indeed pictorial menus in the manager's office, however these have not been suitable for the residents we currently have. As the new manager I am looking at changing the dining experience and implemented shortly a continental breakfast served in the rooms then the option of a cooked breakfast in the dining room later. Also, we will be, at mealtimes, offering those who find choices more difficult, the choice of 2 plates of food. This will enable them to choose their meal, not only by sight but also by smell.

- I am pleased to hear plenty of fluids were being offered. We now also have a fridge in the dining room with a choice of cold juices and water should some residents wish to help themselves to a drink.

Just like being at home

- We will be ordering a skip very soon to clear the clutter around the home. We also have NRS booked to come and collect equipment which is not needed. The mop bucket and hoover were out due to cleaners working and are normally stored in the cleaning cupboard.
- The chocolate biscuit occurred at lunchtime and was cleaned up as soon as noticed.
- The weather on the day was 25 degrees at hottest and although there is shade in the garden with the gazebos and parasol many residents find this too hot. During the heatwave most residents preferred to remain inside with the breeze from having the patio doors open. Residents may ask to outside at anytime and are encouraged to do so when weather permits. Our ratio of staff allows for this. We have also over the last few months been trialling a project at Pratt House called Dementia Adventure, encouraging people to spend time outdoors enjoying nature.
- The resident who has not been out for 2 years has chosen to stay in, however she came out on one of our Dementia Adventure trips last week to Henley where we enjoyed a boat trip down the Thames and afternoon tea. We have 2 full time activity coordinators who offer one to one time and take residents out for short walks, spend time in the garden and assist them to attend the local shop.

Quality of Life

- I have been working with the activities coordinators to produce an activity schedule. We have researched with the residents how they would like this displayed and will be tailoring this to the needs of each individual. Some resident's will receive theirs daily and others weekly as per their choice. The coordinators also complete paperwork daily displaying what activities take place and comment on this 'what went well' 'what didn't go so well'. This enables them to change or add activities as necessary.
- Tickled Pink contacted us before the day to ask if we could have the show indoors due to the current heatwave.
- Newspapers and magazines are delivered to residents who ask to purchase specific ones. Pratt House are also involved in the daily sparkle reminiscence newspapers and magazines and these are available for each day of the year. Pratt House also purchase the once weekly Bucks Examiner for residents to enjoy and New Life Newspapers and delivered regularly.
- Pratt House also arrange physio through NHS for those accepted by their local GP.
- The optician regularly visits.

Recommendations

- Staffing ratios are increasing, enabling staff to spend more time with residents during the day. At present staff eat meals with the residents and always say hello when passing people, asking how they are and would they like anything.
- Since becoming the new manager and reflecting on the visit I have also thought on my previous experience in other homes. As mentioned above the dining experience will be changed.
- Activity Schedule in progress
- Job raised with property team to change grab rails.
- Additional clock will be purchased. Current clock belongs to a resident and they have requested it remains in the lounge.
- Current activities do match the interests of residents in the home. Residents do get time in the garden with carers and activity coordinators. During the heatwave the residents are choosing to spend more time indoors.
- The new extension starting in October will give opportunities for better storage facilities.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bucks would like to thank the residents, visitors and staff at Pratt House for their contribution to the Enter and View visit as part of the Dignity in Care project.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report, on dignity in care, relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all residents and staff, only an account of what was seen and heard at the time.

Methodology

This was an unscheduled Enter and View visit in that the care home were given up to 2 weeks' notice of our intention to visit but not the time and date. Authorised representatives noted what they observed and were told.
