

# Birchmere House

**Enter & View Report  
August 2018**



**Birchmere House  
120 Warwick Road  
Knowle  
B93 9LQ**

# Birchmere House Care Home

## Enter and View Visit



### **Date of Visit:**

28<sup>th</sup> June 2018

### **Authorised Representatives**

Natalie Travers, Scott Baldwin and Jenny Marsh

### **Purpose of the visit**

Following feedback from the public and a desktop review of local social care homes, Birchmere House was identified for an Enter and View visit. With an ongoing focus on social care in Solihull, we were keen to observe the service and find out what was working well to enable us to share good practice and to share any recommendations we may have for improvement.

### **Methodology**

Authorised Representatives were able to speak with the home manager, staff, family members of residents and the residents themselves.

### **CQC Rating**

Birchmere House Care Home currently has a CQC rating of Good, in all areas following a visit in January 2018. They were found to be 'Good' in safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

### **About the home**

Birchmere House is run by Willowbrook Healthcare Ltd  
The registered manager is Mrs Rachel Alison Walker

### **Disclaimer**

**Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users, their relatives and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of our visit.**

## General Overview

Birchmere House is a care home for people who require nursing or personal care support, and for people who have dementia, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, treatment of disease, disorder or injury, caring for adults under 65 years, old and for adults over 65 years old.

## Staffing at Birchmere

Role	Total	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Night
Nurses	1	1	1	1	1
Carers		14	12	12	6
Activity Co-Ordinator	1	1	1	1	
Domestic	9	5	3	1	0
Maintenance	1	1	1	On call	
Administration	1	1	1	0	0
Management	2	2	2	On call	
Catering	8	4	0	4	0

The manager told us that very little agency staff are used, but that they were using an agency nurse for 48 hours per week. We were told the same agency is used when needed.

The home also had 8 bank staff members.

## Residents at Birchmere

On the day of our visit the home had 63 residents, the home capacity is 68.

## Arriving at Birchmere

On arriving at Birchmere House we could clearly see that the exterior of the building was maintained to a high standard. Shrubbery was kept neat and the car park was tidy and well signposted.

A button that opened the front door of the building electronically was easily accessible for wheelchair users.

We witnessed a signing in book located in the foyer area, as we were asked to sign in when we arrived. We were then introduced to the deputy manager, who accompanied us around the building.



## **Inside Birchmere**

The entrance was easily accessible and had a ramp for wheelchairs/pushchairs.

The interior of the home was well decorated and bright. Upon entering the reception area, the atmosphere was welcoming and staff were very accommodating.

The furniture all appeared to be in a good condition, and soft furnishings including chairs appeared well kept and comfy.

In communal rooms we observed photos on the walls of residents and their families, taking part in activities and special occasions.

Corridors were free of clutter and the home smelt fresh and clean on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, there was a slight odour noticed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Bedrooms were numbered and named and were all well maintained, we observed residents sat relaxing in their rooms with their doors open.

The bedrooms of the home were of a good size with room for mobility aids and rooms are personalised where the residents request them to be.

We were shown around several rooms in Birchmere, such as the activities room which was being decorated and turned into an 'art gallery' for the day using photos made by residents. We were also shown a hair studio, dining area and living rooms. All rooms appeared clean, and tidy.

## **Outside Birchmere**

The greenery was well maintained and there were many plants and trees. We observed some chairs with leaf and debris on and some seats were slightly unkept.

We spoke with one resident who has their own patch of garden to pot plants and do gardening, something they really enjoy, they told us "I love gardening and the home get me all of the things I need to pot".

The garden was wheelchair friendly, with wide pathways. Residents had free access to the rear garden, which we witnessed during our visit.

## Activities at Birchmere

We spoke to the home's activities co-ordinator about the different activities the home offer. We were told that the home offer many activities and also offer trips outside of the home.

We asked if residents have a say in what activities the home decide to put on, staff told us residents and their relatives can discuss activities at resident meetings.

One resident told us they prefer to play games and that staff will sometimes have time to do this on a 1-2-1 basis.

The home celebrate special events and families can ask to 'hire out' rooms for family get togethers.



Residents can go shopping with staff once a week and regular trips are made into Solihull.

We asked if staff accompany residents to medical appointments and we were told that in most cases relatives will take residents, but staff will go if needed and if there is someone available.



We were told that risk assessments are carried out for all trips.

## Observations

Staff spoke with residents and offered them drinks, choices were offered, and residents were spoken to with respect.

We observed medication administration although we did not observe proper communication between the nurse and resident, the nurse handed the resident the medication but did not offer it.

Carers supported residents to walk, one resident requested to eat their lunch on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and staff helped them to get upstairs and get seated.

We observed a carer encouraging a resident to walk with an aid as opposed to using a wheelchair. We were told this resident is regularly encouraged to try and have short walks to and from the dining table.

Families were in the home sat with their relatives and they were also offered a choice of drink.

Whilst outside we observed some pieces of wood across the garden pathways, which we notified staff about.

## What people told us..



### Residents

We spoke with several residents who were positive about the home and its staff. They told us;

“I love it here, I feel very at home”

“We got to go strawberry picking recently which was great”

“The staff are kind and always helpful”

### Relatives

We spoke with some relatives who felt that they were always welcome to visit and that residents were being well cared for, and respected. They told us;

“Mum’s happy so I am”

“I can always pop in, nothings ever too much trouble”

“I don’t feel they have enough staff always”

### Staff members

We spoke with different staff across the home, some staff explained that they felt well supported and that they could approach management, whilst other staff said they felt under appreciated and not valued. One member of staff said staffing is sometimes an issue, but staff will support each other and step in when people are ill. We were also told that the home has a tiered rewards system known as ‘refer a friend’. Domestic staff are not included in the reward system.

“The new manager is so supportive and I feel I could go to her about anything”

“We are regularly understaffed but we all try our best”

“I don’t feel valued at all, the reward system alone tells me I’m not valued”

## Summary

Overall, we felt that the home was a well presented and welcoming place. The focus of all staff was on the residents and their needs were considered by all staff.

Residents were well respected and given choices in all aspects of their daily living. Residents were complimentary about the home and the staff.

Residents families seemed happy with the home and all of the staff. We felt the staff team were hard working and caring of residents and each other, staff were good communicators and made us feel welcome during our time at the home.

The managers were accommodating and appeared to have a good working relationship with staff and a good rapport with residents.

## Recommendations

- Ensure garden pathways are kept clear of any potential trip hazards.
- Keep garden chairs tidy and accessible for residents.
- Where possible ensure management deal with arranging staff cover, so that staff do not feel responsible for finding cover.
- With the company's rewards system in mind, find ways of ensuring all staff feel valued.
- When administering medication, where possible nurses or carers should explain to residents what medication they are being offered.

We would like to thank all staff, residents, and management for accommodating us during our visit. We look forward to the provider responding to our report and recommendations.

<b>Green</b>	Most of our observations, and feedback from service users were positive.
<b>Amber</b>	Some of our observations, and feedback from service users were positive.
<b>Red</b>	Most of our observations and feedback were negative. This rating is also used if safeguarding issues are identified.
<b>We graded Birchmere Care Home Green based on our visit.</b>	

### **Provider Feedback**

Thank you for your report and the feedback.

We have requested new garden furniture but in the meantime our existing furniture has been given a face lift. We are also having new gardening contractors in 2020.

Management do deal with arranging staff cover and covering absence. I personally compile the carers rota and spend an inordinate amount of time checking and rechecking. We also have reception staff who do a lot of ringing round for cover under direction from management. It would be very rare that staff on the floor have to find cover themselves.

The reward system is open to all grades of staff. We also do staff appreciation day every week.

Kind regards  
Rachel

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