

Dignity in Care Enter & View visit to Hamilton House

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

Brighterkind
West St, Buckingham, MK18 1HL
12.12.18 - 11 am
Alison Holloway, Jean Button, Liz Baker

Summary of findings



- Residents said staff were caring and they were happy in the home
- Staff seemed to try to accommodate lots of residents’ preferences from meal choice to activities which might be with others or alone
- Caring, attentive staff who seemed to have a good rapport with residents

The Visit

At the time of our visit, Hamilton House was providing nursing care for 39 people over 3 floors. Around 40% of the residents live with dementia. We talked to 4 residents, 4 visitors and 3 members of staff and observed another 9 residents, 1 visitor and 5 staff.

How people are treated



We saw staff address everyone by name and always talk to residents at eye level. They sat next to anyone who needed assistance to eat and many knelt next to residents they spoke to. Residents said they were almost all lovely and we heard comments like “I cannot fault them” and “they are absolutely amazing”. One resident said staff “had a good sense of humour”, were “very respectful” and “not patronising in any way”. We were told that staff respond to buzzers quickly and visitors said, “nothing is an inconvenience for them”. “They will bring me a cup of tea or something else if I ring my buzzer in the night.” We were told staff often have time to pop into bedrooms and say hello. A resident in the lounge was not feeling very well. A staff member offered them various alternatives to try to make them feel more comfortable.

Although one visitor was unaware of the quarterly residents and relatives’ meetings, another confirmed they took place. A resident also told us that they were confident in where they lived “I say what I feel...this is my home although it took some getting used to (moving into a care setting).” A visitor said that whenever there was an issue staff, would phone them immediately.

Personal Choice



Residents told us they can get up when they want. However, one did say that they are sometimes woken earlier than they should be to take their medication. People can eat in their rooms, the lounge or the dining room. We heard residents being asked if they’d like a warm drink. There are also cold drinks stations in the corridors where residents and visitors can help themselves. A resident told us there is a choice of food at every meal with cooked meals at lunch time and a choice of a cooked meal or sandwiches in the evening. A staff member told us about a lady who prefers ham salad and the kitchen happily caters for her. We also saw how a meal had been adapted to reduce

Dignity in Care Enter & View visit to Hamilton House

the risk of choking for one resident. Comments about the food ranged from “fantastic meals” to “the food is alright; it’s freshly made which is important.” We were told that picture cards of the meals are available, but staff generally just ask residents what they would like to eat. Two residents told us they can have a shower when they like although they had to take these in communal bathrooms as there was only a bath in their ensuite ones.

Just like Being at Home



One visitor said, “As soon as you came here, you could feel it was different to the rest.” Bedrooms were personalised with many decorated for Christmas by relatives. We saw a birdcage in another. The communal areas also sparkled with tinsel and trees. They were warm, clean and tidy and felt very homely. Pansies and geraniums were planted up in large containers in the conservatory. Although only one resident was seen using the lounges, the dining rooms were busy at lunchtime. Staff told us that some residents find it too much effort to move from their rooms. “I encourage one lady I know who will enjoy it when she gets there.” Visitors came and went when they chose, and many came several times a week. We met two who helped their loved ones to eat, creating a social atmosphere in one dining room. There was little conversation though in the other dining room where staff were assisting some residents to eat. However, near the end of lunch, we did hear a seated staff member join in with the carols being played in the background.

The home has lots of internal doors along similar looking corridors which can be confusing. One lift was out of order in one part of the home.

Privacy



People told us they kept their bedroom doors open by choice, but staff would close them when appropriate to protect their privacy. However, one did also say doors were too heavy to open so that was another reason they preferred their door not closed. We were also told that most staff knock on bedroom doors before entering and we saw this almost consistently across the home. Only one staff member forgot to knock.

Quality of Life



The local GP visits every week and the chiropodist once a month. The hairdresser visits twice a week and there is a church service in the home every week. Students from Stowe school also come to sing and talk with the residents weekly. The minibus took the activity coordinator and four residents to the local school for carols and lunch soon after we arrived. In the home, we only saw one person in a lounge until lunch time. However, we talked to some residents who choose to spend most of their time in their rooms. Several had books, others were watching TV whilst many were snoozing. They did not want to get involved in any activities but said that “the activity coordinator is excellent; she gets everybody going”. We saw a written schedule showing art and craft sessions and exercises and were told about a pony coming to visit. The chef also baked cakes for birthdays and wedding anniversaries. A visitor said residents had helped decorate the Christmas tree. We were also told the

Dignity in Care Enter & View visit to Hamilton House

activity coordinator goes around the bedrooms to spend some time with individuals. However, another visitor told us that sometimes the home “were low on staff” in the early afternoons.

A staff member said that the home was being updated. Several people told us that there was an issue with ensuite rooms only having toilets very low to the ground and baths, not showers.

Recommendations

We recommend that Hamilton House:

- introduces pictorial signage on toilet doors to assist those living with dementia
- looks to decorate different corridors in different colours to help with orientation
- replaces low-to-the-floor toilets with higher ones
- continues with their refurbishment plans for the home
- ensures the smaller lift is more reliable to allow residents to access services easily

Service Provider Response



The provider has chosen not to provide any comments for this report.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bucks would like to thank the residents and staff at Hamilton 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.