



healthwatch
Brent

Healthwatch Brent

Experience of Covid-19 in care service providers in Brent Care Schemes June 2021

June 2021

A brief analysis of care service providers within Brent Care Schemes with previous high levels of dissatisfied staff or residents: response, comments and adaptations



Document Control

Version	1.0
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Date approved	21 June 2021

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Executive Summary



In February 2019 Healthwatch Brent undertook Enter and View visits to three extra care schemes:

- **Rosemary House** - London Care Ltd.
- **Tulsi House** - Westminster Care Homecare Ltd.
- **Willow House** - London Care Ltd.

During the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic, April 2020 to June 2020, these schemes suffered significant levels of virus-related fatalities, compared to the other schemes previously visited by the Enter and View team.

We contacted the care provider managers in June 2021 to see what had happened with our findings and recommendations from the 2019 visits.

The manager of London Care at Rosemary House, Romany Chapman, was able to share details of recent adaptations during the pandemic and has shown clear improvements which are reflected in the CQC Inspection report November 2019, where it was rated overall good.

The manager of the care services at Willow House Mr Atuar Rahman, London Care Ltd., did not respond. It should also be noted that no response was received to the initial Enter and View report in 2019. The CQC inspection in November 2018, two months before the Healthwatch Brent visit, gave a rating of requires improvement.

No updated response was received from Tulsi House; only responses from the 2019 visit was available. The original visit recorded 13 complaints from staff and relatives regarding staffing levels.

Of the three schemes, only Rosemary House responded with details of how they adapted to the pandemic. Clear improvements have been made by the Manager Romany Chapman, who was transparent and cooperative.

More investigation is needed with regards to the other two schemes, to understand the nature of the difficulties that have been faced by staff and residents.

Methodology

All visits were announced Enter and View (E&V) visits undertaken by Healthwatch Brent Staff and E&V Volunteers, as part of a planned strategy to look at a range of health and social care services within the London Borough of Brent. We aimed to obtain a better idea of the quality of care provided. 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 Healthwatch Brent team visit the service and record their observations along with the feedback from residents, relatives, carers, and staff. Report is compiled based on observations and interviews with residents, relatives, carers, and staff and making recommendations.

Background

All three schemes visited were classified as extra care housing schemes. The main goal of extra care schemes is to support the residents, especially in the rehabilitation process, preventing unnecessary admissions to hospital or mental health institutions. The E&V visits aim to cover various aspects of life in the extra care scheme, such as psychological & social well-being, care planning, complaints, and staff or workforce. The residents interviewed were from a diverse range of backgrounds. Extra care housing schemes in Brent offers a new way of supporting older people to maintain their independence and is an alternative to residential care for many people.

The three extra cares schemes listed below were visited. It should be noted that Network Homes managers were only responsible for the building, while the on-site care providers, London Care Ltd and Westminster Home Care Ltd. are responsible for the care services provided on-site. The Network Home managers were recorded as providing a high level of service. This report is focused on the views obtained from staff and relatives regarding the care service providers.

	Name of Sheltered Housing Scheme	Housing Scheme Managed by	On-site Scheme Manager [Yes/No]	On-site Care Provider Manager
1	Rosemary House	Network Homes	Yes	London Care Ltd.
2	Tulsi House	Network Homes	Yes	Westminster Homecare Ltd.
3	Willow House	Network Homes	Yes	London Care Ltd.





Findings

The announced E&V visits during February 2019 revealed that staff and residents from the three schemes had high levels of dissatisfaction with the care service provider. During the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic, April 2020 to June 2020, the following schemes suffered significant levels of virus-related fatalities, compared to the other schemes previously visited by the E&V team. Although extra care schemes could be considered more vulnerable than other types of sheltered schemes; the E&V team encountered a significantly higher levels of staff/resident dissatisfaction with the care service providers operating at the schemes during the initial visits.

The concerns were shared with the scheme manager and care provider managers, as well as commissioners at Brent Council that fund them in March 2019. The reports were published on the Healthwatch Brent website.



Rosemary House

Uffington Road, Willesden, NW10 3TD

Care provided by London Care Ltd. 40 flats. On site care staff with visiting management staff.

Care Service Manager: Romany Chapman

Findings regarding the Care Services provided in February 2019

At Rosemary House, there was a lack of confidence with London Care's ability to handle complaints as residents and family members shared that previous issues raised had not been dealt with adequately.

Compliments/Complaints/Incidents

At Rosemary House, residents and family members would like London Care to improve its complaints handling.

Main Conclusion and Recommendations of 2019 visits

Since a number of residents and family members raised issues concerning London Care staff the following actions are recommended by Healthwatch Brent:

- London Care to review the training needs of the staff and liaise with the residents on how they are affected by reported variation in the quality levels of the staff.
- To review the complaints system, ensuring it is responsive and feedback is provided to residents.



Tulsi House

Church Gardens, Wembley, HA0 2RA

36 flats. On site care staff and non-resident management staff.

Operational Manager: Tina Hurn

Findings regarding the Care Services provided in February 2019

Relatives of residents at Tulsi House felt that Care Plans needed to be reviewed as the needs of the residents change over time.

Several family members complained about having to take their relative to the GP with no assistance because the care package did not reflect the current needs of the residents who had both severe mental health issues and physical disabilities.

At Tulsi House, 13 individuals (2 staff members & 11 residents) informed the Healthwatch Brent team that they were not satisfied with the staffing levels.

Compliments/Complaints/Incidents

Residents and staff mentioned the staffing problems faced by Westminster Home Care as the biggest problems at Tulsi House. Residents did enjoy the home and felt safe and secure; but the main issue mentioned was staffing shortages and the need for more staff training.

Main Conclusion and Recommendations of 2019 visits

- Review staff levels in light of comments by residents and relatives.
- Review and increase staff training in light of comments by residents and relatives.
- Review the format of the Care Plans to ensure they are fit for purpose.



Willow House

Victoria Court, Wembley, HA9 6EB

Care provided by London Care Ltd. 40 flats

On site care staff with visiting management staff.

Manager: Mr Ataur Rahman

Findings regarding the Care Services provided in February 2019

Residents and family members at Willows House wanted more consistency in care worker quality and more visits from outside organisations to hold activities that benefit residents' wellbeing (e.g. Art groups, choirs etc).

At Willows House, residents and family members want more coordinated activities between residents, London Care staff and Network Homes staff.

Compliments/Complaints/Incidents

In general residents were happy with the home; however, two points were raised by several residents -

The need for co-ordinated activities - some expressed a desire for there to be more activities for residents and closer collaboration between Residents, Network Homes, and London Care.

The need for more consistency with regards to the performance of Care Workers.

Recommendation for London Care Ltd:

- Increase the number of activities for the residents.
- Residents wanted their carers to provide more consistency in the level of service.



Responses from Care Service Providers

Response on coping with COVID-19: June 2021

Rosemary House, London Care

The biggest problem faced by the care provider during the pandemic was getting families to understand social distancing and staying away.

Two families were particularly challenging. Families were worried in general. The pandemic happened so quickly and took everyone by surprise.

Staff were good throughout. They followed instructions and if they were not sure, they would seek advice.

We had a lot of problems with setting up the testing at the beginning. This was out of our hands and was due to registration issues. We had PCR testing, and the Lateral Flow Test came in a lot later. Some found the PCR testing a bit alien at first, but they got use it quickly.

PPE was abundant and we received excellent support from the Council.

We received training and on-going advice from the Council, and we supported staff throughout this period.

We made sure staff used PPE correctly, and we gave them extra support during this period.

Our quality assurance surveys were used to continually monitor the quality of care delivered during this challenging period.

The moral was staff was good and they coped very well.

Willow House, London Care

No response received.

Tulsi House, Westminster Homecare

No response received.

Response to original Enter and View Visit: February 2019

Rosemary House, London Care

As the recently Registered Manager of Rosemary House (joined 7th January 2019), I take all concerns very seriously and welcome the feedback from Healthwatch.

Concerns were raised around the training needs of our care staff and the variation between staff members in the quality of care that is being delivered. Due to the regulated nature of the care workforce, specific learning and development arrangements apply to front-line care and support staff. These are intended to ensure good practice and the provision of a quality service and include induction, mandatory and further learning and development.

The care worker induction programme is designed to teach all new care and support staff about their role and to equip them with the knowledge and skills they will need to fulfil that role competently and confidently. However, induction should be properly viewed as the start of an ongoing process of learning and development. London Care has designed its mandatory induction programme for care and support staff to meet the requirements of the Care Certificate. Whilst the Care Certificate itself is only mandatory in England, London Care endorses its aims and believes it provides an appropriate underpinning for care and support worker competence across London Care and has therefore implemented a Care Certificate-based programme across its operations...

We have recently completed our Quality Assurance Surveys with service users of Rosemary House and all issues and/or concerns raised have now been addressed. We are in the process of completing spot checks on our care workers and will continue to monitor the quality of care being delivered.

We have 7 care workers onsite for morning rounds, 5 care workers onsite for afternoon/evening rounds and 2 care workers onsite during the night. On each shift, there is a senior care worker allocated for any issues and/or concerns. We also have an out of hours on-call service for our care workers where advice and/or guidance can be sort from management. This is an extra care service not a residential/nursing home. Therefore, we only deliver the requested hours of care allocated to each individual.

The second concern raised was regarding our complaints system. We have a comprehensive complaints system in place. Details of our complaints process is included within all service users guides. London Care aims for a culture in which complaints are seen as opportunities to improve services and to empower service users. We must deal with each complaint positively and in a manner that is open, clear, fair, responsive, flexible, proportionate, accessible, timely and resolution focused.

The complaints process and timeframes are now being adhered to, and all complaints received have been resolved. We have a Branch Reporting System which is checked and monitored by senior managers and the quality team, this ensure that the correct process is followed.

Tulsi House, Westminster Homecare

Westminster Homecare has been in post since 3rd September 2018 and since then have retrained all the staff including the bank staff at the basic induction level. They have completed their care certificate booklet, in addition to having a 6 and 12 week development appraisal. We inherited carers who TUPE over with no training records, so to get everyone trained to the level we have has been a good result. If it is recognised that staff require additional specialist training then that will be delivered in the coming periods

- We have put 8 new replacement staff within the scheme. In a crisis we have the back up of our community staff and from other schemes
- We do not believe we are understaffed; we have delivered the care to a very good standard.
- Management will attend some of the meeting with care workers and service users.
- If we find we are short due to sickness the allocation of care can be shared within the team.
- The TUPE staff still seem to be struggling to understand that they are not paid to hang around in the staff room they are paid to work a full roster and with 30 min break.
- Shifts are more structured, and allocations are done to ensure continuity at all time.
- TUPE care workers went through a 5 day induction training with WHC
- Should staff feel they need additional training which wasn't covered in their 5 days induction training - this will be discussed through ongoing supervision.
- Staff have been fully inducted, with ongoing spot checks to ensure they are competent in their roles.
- The staffing numbers are set according to the total number of care hours that are commissioned and is delivered by the staff employed by the company.

With respect to accompanying residents to GP surgeries - we are only providing the hours provided by Brent Council, if extra hours are requested, we will email Brent Council to authorise and if Brent Council decline the service user will have to arrange for the additional hours to be paid privately for escorting to appointments.

Willow House, London Care

No response given

Conclusions and Recommendations

Residents of extra care schemes were particularly vulnerable to the pandemic, due to the various serious health conditions, combined with the use of shared communal spaces, which presented serious challenges in containing the virus.

The manager of London Care at Rosemary House, Romany Chapman, was able to share details of recent adaptations during the pandemic and has shown clear improvements which are reflected in the CQC Inspection report November 2019, where it was rated overall good.

The manager of the care services at Willow House Mr Atuar Rahman, London Care Ltd., did not respond. It should also be noted that no response was received to the initial E&V report in 2019. The CQC inspection in November 2018, two months before the Healthwatch Brent visit, gave a rating of requires improvement.

No updated response was received from Tulsi House; only responses from the 2019 visit was available. The original visit recorded 13 complaints from staff and relative regarding staffing levels.

Of the three schemes, only Rosemary House responded with details of how they adapted to the pandemic.

Our recommendations:

Medium term, to encourage Brent Council Adult Social Care commissioners that more investigation is needed with regards to the other two schemes, to understand the nature of the difficulties that have been faced by staff and residents during the pandemic.

Medium term, Willow House to report on previous recommendations in 2019, to see whether residents' carers provided more consistency in the level of service throughout the pandemic.

Long term, Tulsi House to report on previous recommendations in 2019 to state if Care Plans are now fit for purpose and whether the residents were satisfied with the staffing levels throughout the pandemic.

We are sharing our findings with the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board, Brent Health and Wellbeing Board and Brent Council commissioners for comments. We will work with these stakeholders to follow up on the progress of improvements in these schemes.

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About Healthwatch

Healthwatch Brent is part of a national network led by Healthwatch England, which was established through the Health and Social Care Act in 2012, to give service users of health and social care services a powerful voice both locally and nationally. We are the independent voice for people's views on Brent services, both good and bad. We listen to local people and feedback patient experience and liaise with local commissioners and decision makers, to improve services.

