

Healthwatch Bolton

Bolton Care Home Websites Review

Dec 2020-Jan 2021

Background

Social Care is one of Healthwatch Bolton (HWB) priorities this year. Covid-19 has affected all health and care services across the country with care homes being significantly affected in terms of the number of older residents sadly dying from Covid-19. To add to this, care homes, staff and residents have also been impacted by the pandemic with regards to discharges to care homes from residents who have been in hospital and care home visiting arrangements imposed by the Government. This report aims to highlight good practice and recommend areas of improvement.

Rational/purpose of the report

With the absence of face-to-face interaction due to the Coronavirus, more than ever, there has been (and will continue to be), a strong reliance on virtual access and engagement. In the light of this, it is important that relevant and up-to-date information can be found on websites so people are aware of their available options which will enable them to make informed decisions about theirs or their loved ones care.

Methodology

Two Healthwatch Bolton (HWB) volunteers, with support from staff, undertook a website review of 57¹ adult care homes, with and without nursing care, contracted to Bolton Council² to ascertain whether, in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, their online information is both relevant and up to date. The review covers the period from 18th December 2020 to the 31st January 2021.

As the reviews were carried out in a non-invasive way -by visiting the websites online and completing the checklist, no consent was required from the care homes. All data collected is within the public domain, and as such, explicit consent was not required from the care homes to carry out the reviews.

This website review also accessed Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection reports to obtain and/or cross reference information that was not readily available on individual care home's website or on www.carehome.co.uk

Healthwatch Bolton consulted Bolton Social Care commissioners to ascertain whether there were any specific areas they wanted us to consider. No additional suggestions were made.

¹ Two of the care homes included in this review are care facilities for children and young people.

² Care homes contracted to Bolton Council (05.10.2018) - [Care homes and care homes contracted to Bolton Council](#)

Summary of findings:

Question 2. Does the home have a website?

Not all care homes have a website. However, it was identified that most care homes have a web presence on www.carehome.co.uk.³

What is carehome.co.uk?

Carehome.co.uk is an online hub for UK care homes (both residential and nursing) and home care providers to have an online presence. Carehome.co.uk is hosted by Tomorrow's Guide which states (on the Tomorrow's Guide website) that they are "*leading website publishers in the Care Home, Home Care and Nursery sectors*" [Welcome to Tomorrow's Guides \(tomorrows.co.uk\)](http://www.tomorrows.co.uk). For a fee, care providers can advertise themselves on carehome.co.uk without having to own a website that they must personally maintain and keep up to date. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this project to ascertain whether all care homes contracted to the LA are featured on carehome.co.uk.

Healthwatch Bolton found Carehome.co.uk website very easy to navigate, user friendly, relevant, fit for purpose, and reliable with excellent levels of details. For example, visitors to their website can insert their postcode to ascertain a list of local care homes/home care providers. Below is a screen shot of an extract from carehome.co.uk (taken on 08.04.2021). Visitors to this site can access a lot of information on the care provider such as:

- a direct link to the care home's website (if they have one),
- name of the person in charge,
- registered care categories,
- type of service,
- specialist care categories,
- the number of residents the care provider can accommodate⁴ (this links to Q11),
- and a comprehensive reviews section.

There is also a wealth of excellent information about 'How to fund your care - self funders v state funders.' This specific information was last updated on 21st April 2021.

³ Question 6, who is the website host, related to Question 2, does the care home have a website. the review identified that 15 care homes have their own website, no information was available for 39 care homes, and three care homes website were hosted by Methodist Homes for the Aged, Morgan Care and Coulsin and Collins Care Home.

⁴ HWB review identified that 55 of the care homes publicised information about the number of residents their service can accommodate.

Meadow Bank House Care Home, Bolton

Book a Tour Visit Website Send Email View Phone Number Request a Brochure Jobs

Overview Reviews (103) Photos (61) Video (00) 360 Tour (00) Performance Bed Vacancies Awards (91) News (45) & Events (00) Staff (10)

Many residents take pleasure in hobbies, including baking, writing, gardening, dancing, painting, quizzes, and playing chess. Some enjoy being a member of the residents' forum.

Care Provided

- Type of Service**
Care Home with nursing - Privately Owned, Registered for a maximum of 47 Service Users
- Registered Care Categories***
Old Age
*Registered with regulator 'Care Quality Commission' (CQC) to provide these categories of care
- Specialist Care Categories**
Hearing Impairment
Speech Impairment
Stroke
Visual Impairment
- Other Care Provided**
Convalescent Care
Own GP if required
Palliative Care

Good to Know

- Group/Owner**
HC One
- Person in charge**
Jane Green (Home Manager)
- Local Authority / Social Services**
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council (click for contact details)
- Admission Information**
Ages 65+
- Room Information**
Single Rooms 47
Rooms with ensuite WC 47

Facilities

- ✓ Gardens for residents
- ✓ Minibus or other transport
- ✓ Pets by arrangement
- ✓ Residents internet Access
- ✓ Television point in own room
- ✓ Wheelchair access

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Review from G P (Resident) published on 17 February 2021
Submitted via Postal Card + Report * G P is Extremely Likely to recommend Meadow Bank House Care Home.
Average Rating: ★★★★★ (4.4)
I'm very happy at the home. The staff are great and caring.

Review from Jon B (Husband of Resident) published on 1 February 2021
Submitted via Website + Report * Jon B is Extremely Likely to recommend Meadow Bank House Care Home.
Average Rating: ★★★★★ (4.9)
I can't praise Meadow Bank House enough. Every member of staff that I have come to know have been wonderful. There is genuine compassion and caring from them all, which is such a comfort to me, to know my wife is being looked after so well! I have to give a special mention to the well-being co-ordinators who have shown incredible understanding, especially during this Covid lockdown, they have been my lifeline! Big thanks to everyone!

Review from E A (Resident) published on 15 February 2021
Submitted via Postal Card + Report * E A is Extremely Likely to recommend Meadow Bank House Care Home.
Average Rating: ★★★★★ (4.4)
The staff are so nice, they are always able to cheer me up. We have some good parties too with good music.

Overall Standard ★★★★★
Facilities ★★★★★
Care / Support ★★★★★
Cleanliness ★★★★★
Treated with Dignity ★★★★★
Food & Drink ★★★★★
Staff ★★★★★
Activities ★★★★★
Management ★★★★★
Safety / Security ★★★★★
Rooms ★★★★★
Value for Money ★★★★★

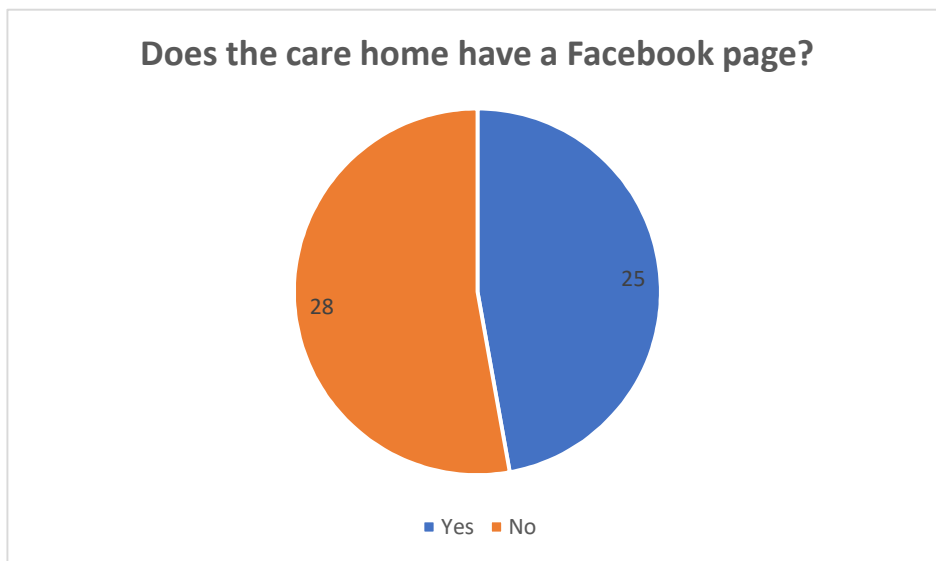
A drawback of the Carehome.co.uk website is that not all care homes have updated Covid-19 information. However, there is a disclaimer on the homepage of the website that advises “Covid-19 information - care homes have procedures in place to protect residents, service users, visitors and staff. For more information on a particular care home or care homes in your area please search below.”

We deducted from this disclaimer that it is the responsibility of those seeking care to contact individual care providers directly for information on their Covid-19 policies and procedures.

Q4 Is the website updated?

Informed decision making relies upon the availability of updated and accurate information. Of the 57 care homes only 19 have a website and the information on their website was up to date at the time of this review. It was noted that one specific website was *“easy to read and informative with photographs of food, rooms and gardens.”*

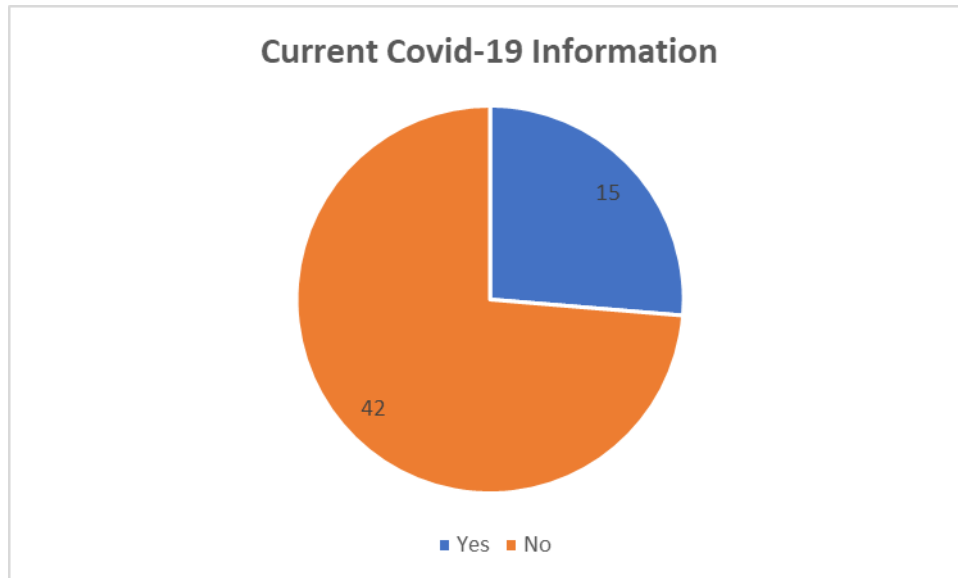
Q3 - Does the care home have a Facebook page?



Q5 Is the Facebook page updated?

Just over half of care homes have a Facebook page. However, only 11 out of the 25 care home Facebook pages were up to date. HWB understands that maintaining social media platforms can be labour intensive and, as previously mentioned, during the pandemic, maintaining social media sites may not have been a priority for care homes.

Q7 Current Covid 19 information



Only 15 care homes had current Covid-19 information. In one instance, there was no mention of Covid-19 on the webpage, but by following links - comprehensive information could be found. In several cases, CQC reports stated that Covid-19 information was in place in (individual) care homes. In addition, more insights were to be found by accessing the CQC's Thematic Review of Infection Control reports⁵.

A few websites highlighted that weekly and monthly testing, for carers and residents, was taking place to ensure the home remains Covid-free. It was observed on several websites that:

"There is impressive and extensive information about what the [care provider] has put in place across its care homes."

"The CQC noted good practice. Regular Covid-19 testing. Supporting people to maintain regular contact with loved ones through video calls and windows visits."

"There is comprehensive information on Covid-19 on the website."

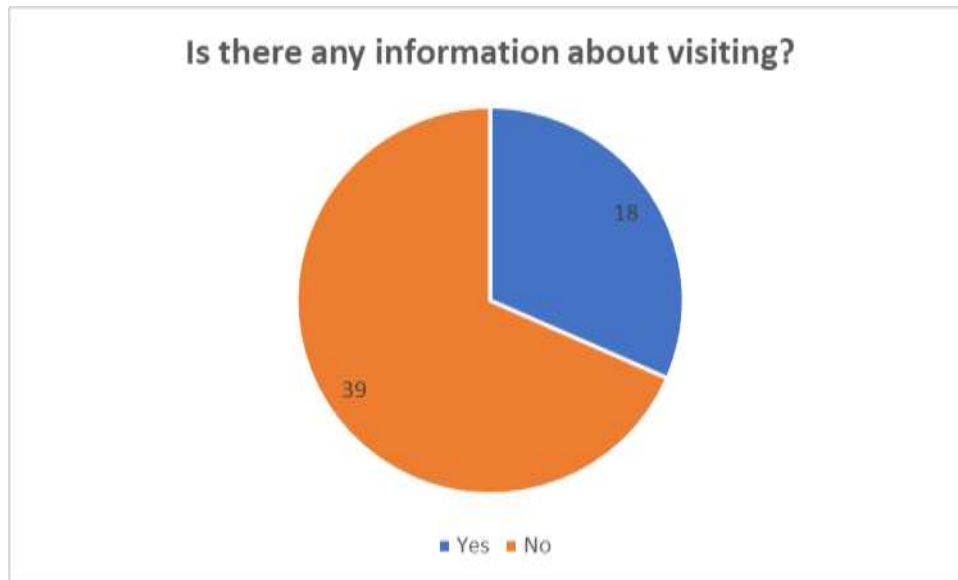
"Bullet point list of information for relative and carers."

It was identified on one website that *"Covid-19 information starts off on the Carehome.co.uk website with a link to updated information on the web host site, where comprehensive information covering all aspects of Covid safety procedures from health checks to environmental cleanliness."*

⁵ At the time of collecting data for the report 23 care homes had inspection reports published in 2020, two of these were inspection reports before the pandemic in 2020. Twelve CQC reports were published in 2018, three were published in 2017.

We understand the unprecedented pressures care homes have been under and therefore maintaining a website is not their highest priority. The safety of their residents and staff was and continues to be the case. People needing Covid-19 information may have turned to official sources of information such as the Government website and Local Authority departments (adult social care, public health) and Clinical Commissioning Groups' communications/key messages.

Q8 Is there information about care home visiting arrangements during the pandemic?



Most care homes websites and/or carehomes.co.uk did not have current information about visiting arrangements. It is important to consider that 'visiting arrangements' were and are, subject to change and at various point in the pandemic, varied regionally because of local lockdowns. We suspect that residents' family and friends will have contacted care homes directly or turned to the Government⁶ website for updated information. Here is what we found:

One care home referred to the lockdown and restricted visiting times were mentioned in their Newsletter (dated May 2020)

One website stated that there was no visiting due to Covid-19 and advised that contact with residents takes place by phone or on Skype only. Similarly, another care home website offered reassurance that residents are supported to contact friends and family using technology.

One website highlighted that from October to November 2020, they were working to restart controlled, socially distanced visiting, for example using visitor pods. Another website clearly stated that visiting is coordinated and supported by their Home Visitor Champion and that time slots were strictly adhered to.

⁶ Department of Health and Social Care [Guidance on care home visiting - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-home-visiting) (Published June 2020. Updated in April 2021)

One care home included the latest Covid-19 information that included updated visitor guidance as well as offering reassurance that residents and staff have weekly and monthly Covid-19 test.

“Comprehensive letter to family and friends.”

We accessed CQC inspections reports for Covid-19 information. It is important to highlight that from 16th March 2020, the CQC routine inspections were suspended in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. This review identified that many care homes had their inspection pre-pandemic and to this end it was not always possible to obtain Coronavirus-related information from CQC reports. To replace routine inspections the CQC undertook thematic reviews of infection control. However, some information about visiting arrangements was identified in a CQC report stating that robust checks were carried out for any visitors: risk questionnaire, temperature checks, smell test, and visitors were informed that parcels and mail would be quarantined at the care home for three days before being given to the residents.

Q9 Who is the Registered Manager, and is the information about them correct?



“⁷The Health and Social Care Act 2008 states that registered providers must have a registered manager, set out in Regulation 7: requirements relating to registered managers. The intention of this regulation is to ensure that people who use services have their needs met because the regulated activity is managed by an appropriate person. This is because providers who comply with the regulations will have a registered manager who:

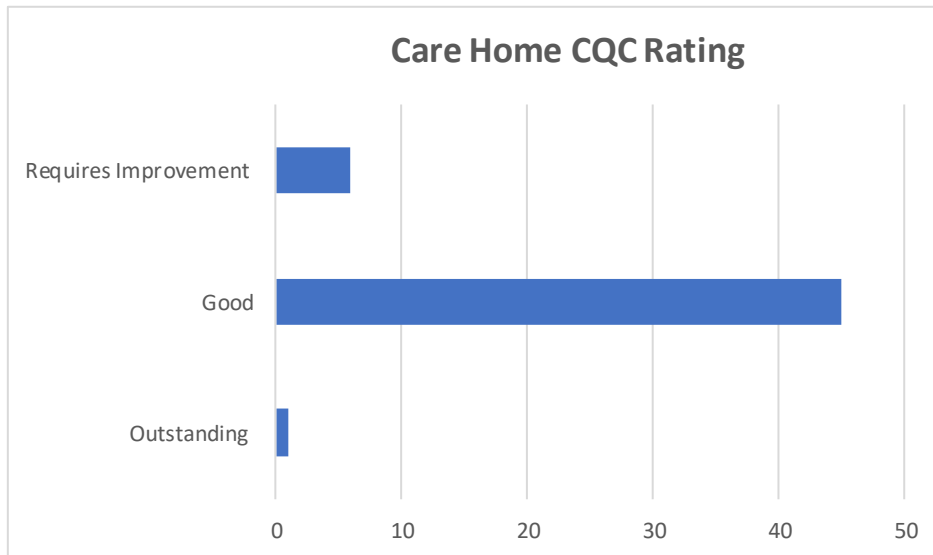
- Is of good character.*
- Can properly perform tasks that are intrinsic to their role.*
- Has the necessary qualifications, competence, skills, and experience to manage the regulated activity.*

⁷ For more information see [Regulation 7: Requirements relating to registered managers | Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](https://www.cqc.org.uk/about-us/regulation-7-requirements-relating-to-registered-managers)

- *Has supplied them with documents that confirm their suitability.”*

Overall, the name of the Registered Manager was readily available. The name of the Nominated Individual was also available on care home websites, CQC report and via the Carehome.co.uk website. Only two care homes did not have this information present.

Q10 What is the Care Home’s CQC Rating



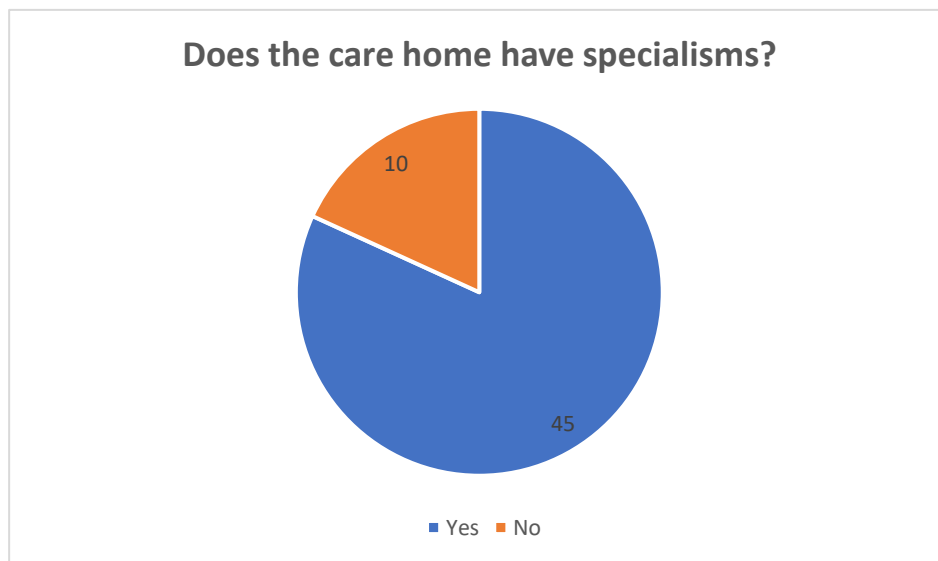
The CQC rate health and social care providers under the headings of⁸:

- **Outstanding** - *The service is performing exceptionally well, with little to no need for improvement.*
- **Good** - *The service is performing well and meeting expectations, with small needs for improvement.*
- **Requires improvement** - *The service is not performing as well as it should and has been told how it must improve.*
- **Inadequate** - *The service is performing poorly, and action has been taken against the person or organisation that runs it.*

Information about care homes' Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating was and is visible and easily available on care home websites, CQC reports and on the Carehome.co.uk website. No care homes contracted to the Local Authority at the time of this review were rated Inadequate.

⁸ [What Are CQC Ratings and How Do They Work? | The Bridge Blog \(bridgecontractinteriors.com\)](https://www.bridgecontractinteriors.com/blog/what-are-cqc-ratings-and-how-do-they-work/)

Q12 Is there information about care homes specialisms?



When residents and/or their families are choosing a care home it is important for the service to have homely surroundings where residents are comfortable and treated with dignity and respect. It is paramount that residents and family members are confident that care providers possess the right expertise, knowledge, and skills to care for someone living with specific health conditions and are able to keep them as safe as possible at all times. Thus, there is an expectation that each resident will be cared for as a caring relative would. This review found that 45 out of the 57 care homes had available information relating to their specialisms, for example dementia care, learning disability. Below are some of the categories listed as care home specialisms:

“Caring for people under 65 years old, whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act...”

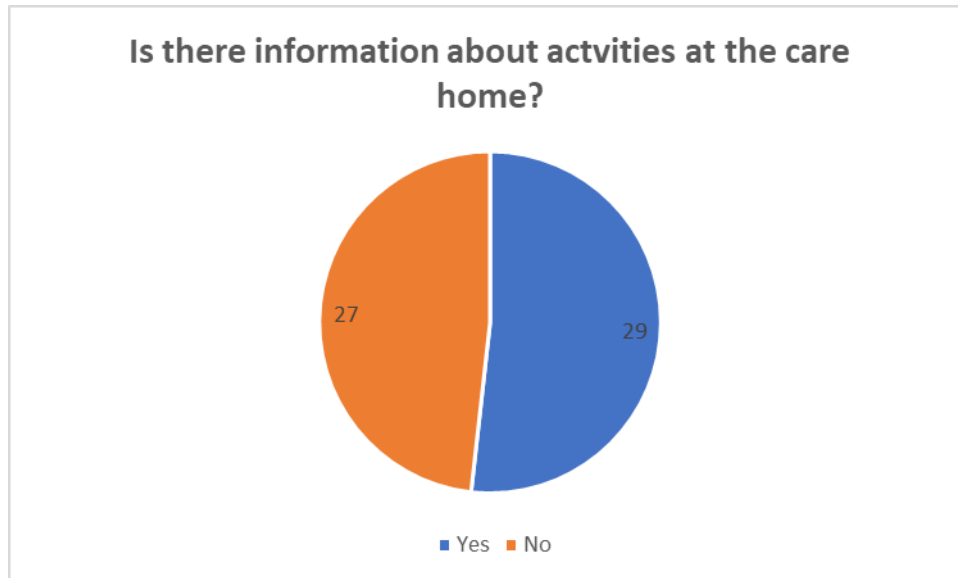
“Old age, physical disability, younger adults. Special categories: cancer care, epilepsy, head/brain injury, Motor Neuron Disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s Disease.”

“Dementia, mental health conditions... Special care categories: alcohol and /or drug dependency, Bipolar, cancer care, stroke, end-of-life care.”

“Stroke, frailty, heart disease, diabetes, sight or hearing impairment.”

Three care homes stated that all residents are free to have a GP of their own choice, with the Registered Manager providing a list of GP Practices in the area.

Q13 Is there information about activities at the care home?



When choosing a care home it is important that residents are supported as much as possible to maintain and/or to achieve their independence. They should still have access to, and be encouraged to engage in activities and hobbies such as days out, knitting, singing, and personal care services such as accessing a hairdressers. Only 29 care homes provided information about the range of activities they provide.

“Staff assist young people to develop their independent living skills, such as domestic tasks, cooking and decorating their living space...”

“There is a downloadable brochure available. It also states on the website that residents are encouraged to enjoy activities of their choice.”

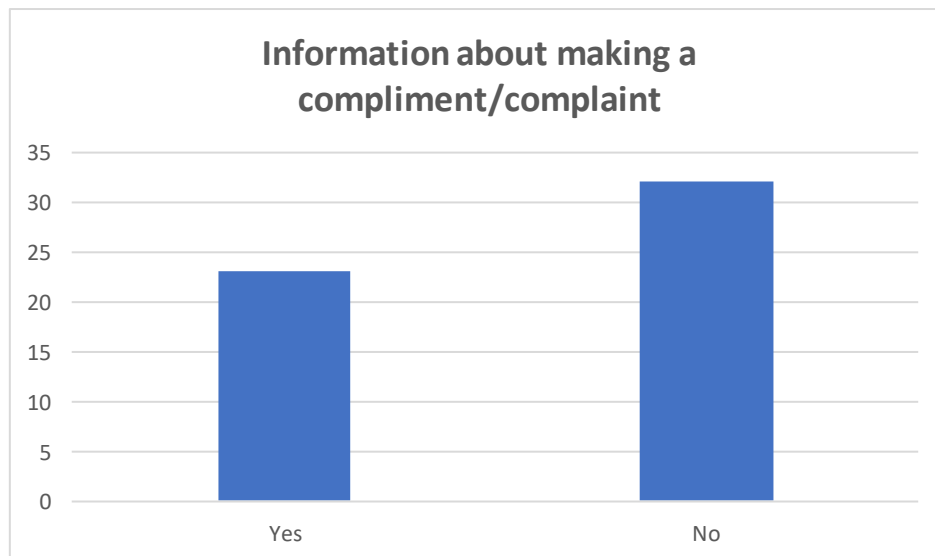
“A newsletter had information and photographs of residents colouring, completing jigsaw puzzles, and enjoying music/signing.”

Taken from a CGC report, *“each resident receives information when first arriving at the care home which includes information on activities, and the complaints/compliments procedure.”*

“Sensory room. Service users are supported to access generic services. High staffing levels ensure people are able to access their local community psychological interventions.”

Q14 - Is there information about how to give compliments and make complaints?

Service user feedback - be it positive or negative - is an integral part of any service. It is important that people (resident, relative, friend or professional) know who to approach and how to complain if things go wrong and for them to be confident that their complaint will be dealt with diligently, appropriately and fairly. Equally, it is important that people know how to compliment their care provider. Feedback can help a care home to monitor its effectiveness and allows the service to make improvements. Compliments about care provided boosts staff morale, and highlights what is working well. Only 23 care homes provide information about the how to make a complaint or give a compliment.



Disappointingly, no links or references to Healthwatch Bolton and/or Healthwatch England were found on any of the care homes websites, Facebook pages or on Carehomes.co.uk. We will endeavour to reach out to owners of care homes, registered managers, staff, residents, and their family/friends so they are aware of Healthwatch Bolton, what we do and how they can contact us.

Summary, Conclusions

This report reviewed the online presence: website and social media platforms of Bolton care homes contracted to the Local Authority. In sum, most care homes do not have their own website and/or have a Facebook page. However, they do feature on the Carehome.co.uk website. Healthwatch Bolton found the Carehome.co.uk website to be very easy to navigate and informative - on many levels.

There are care homes that have a website and do keep their information up-to-date and relevant. We understand the enormous pressure care homes have been

under during this pandemic and to this end appreciate that maintaining a website has not been the highest of priorities.

Where information was not readily available, CQC reports were to obtain in depth information about a care home, such as accessing the details of the Registered Manager (and Nominated Individual).

Overall, information about a care home's specialisms was easy to find. However, just under half of the care homes publicised what activities are on offer. The report identified that less than half of care homes informed residents, their family, and friends how they can give a compliment or make a complaint. None of the care homes had a link to Healthwatch.

Conclusions:

- Healthwatch Bolton is impressed with the Carehome.co.uk website. We found it very useful for obtaining holistic information about Bolton care homes.
- Healthwatch Bolton also found a wealth of information on the Carehome.co.uk website about other aspects of choosing care.
- Most care homes that do not have their own website have a web presence on Carehome.co.uk. Most care homes in this review are present on Carehome.co.uk rather than hosting their own. Healthwatch Bolton appreciates how labour-intensive maintaining a website is, especially during the pandemic - when information is changing rapidly.
- All care homes should make their compliments and complaints policies accessible.
- It is disappointing to see no links signposting people to Healthwatch Bolton and/or Healthwatch England.

Recommendations:

- For all care homes to clearly display what activities they have on offer.
- For all Bolton care homes to have a presence on Carehome.co.uk website.
- Healthwatch Network to consider approaching Healthwatch England regarding having a link on the Carehome.co.uk website.
- Healthwatch Bolton to have a link on their website to the Carehome.co.uk website.
- Care homes with a website and/or Facebook page should make clear how people can give compliments, make complaints, or raise concerns.
- Care homes with a website and/or Facebook page to consider having a link to Healthwatch Bolton (www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk)
- Healthwatch Bolton will engage with care homes (contracted to the Local Authority) by sending each care home information to let them know who we are, what we do and how we can offer advice and guidance on health and social care matters, to residents, their family, and friends.

Healthwatch Bolton is mindful that time has moved on since this review of care home websites took place. Rules around visiting etc., are changing all the time. We hope that care home managers will be able to use the information in this report to review their own websites and update them where necessary, particularly as the Covid 19 pandemic progresses.

We (HWB) also want to reiterate that we understand the unprecedented stresses and pressures placed on care homes during the pandemic, and so we send our thanks to all care home managers and staff working in such difficult circumstances.



27 Silverwell St

Bolton

BL1 1PP

Tel: 01204 394603

Email: info@healthwatchbolton.co.uk

Web: www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk

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