



Enter and View report

Highfield House Residential Care Home, Castle Cary

27 February 2024

healthwatch
Somerset

Details of the visit

- Highfield House is a Grade 2 listed house converted to a care home and situated on the High Street, in the centre of Castle Cary
- The home specialises in the care of older people and provides end of life care
- The home can accommodate a maximum of 22 residents. At the time of our visit 21 people were living there
- Accommodation is provided on the ground and first floors. There is a lift to the first floor
- Residents have their own bedroom – some are ensuite and some have their own toilet
- Residents benefit from a lovely, spacious and accessible garden
- The home employs 38 members of staff. Most staff had worked at the home for several years. The home does not use agency staff

Purpose of visit/how it was conducted

- This was a planned visit. We were invited to visit by the home manager
- The home knew about the visit in advance, so they were expecting us. Our Healthwatch posters were displayed around the home to advertise our visit
- Four Healthwatch representatives carried out the visit
- Information was collected from observations of residents in their day-to-day situations and interviews with staff, residents and relatives
- We spoke to the manager and deputy manager as well as four other staff. We spoke to eight residents and six relatives

Visit overview

Healthwatch carried out this visit following an invitation from the home manager.

On the day we were welcomed by the manager who gave us an overview of the home and introduced us to residents and staff. We were later given a tour of the home.

During our visit we were given open access to move about the home.

We observed morning activities and lunch being served.

At the end of the visit the team met to share their findings and observations and agree any recommendations.

These were then shared, together with our recommendations, with the manager.

Key findings

- The Healthwatch team all reported great first impressions of the home
- There is a real sense that this is the residents' home, and staff appear to be like family within that home. The manager and deputy appear very caring and committed to ensuring each resident is happy and healthy
- The environment felt homely and welcoming, calm and organised
- Interactions between residents and staff were very personalised; staff know residents well. This was the same for staff interactions with relatives
- It was apparent the home sought to get the right staff to fit the ethos and culture of the home

Key findings

- The home has good relationships with the GP also the local community
- Residents all appeared clean, smart and well looked after
- Residents are able (within reason) to choose when they eat and what they do throughout the day. We were told the ethos is to manage risk but to allow as much freedom and choice within the constraints of those risks
- Residents have regular contact with family members and there is an open-door policy for relatives to drop in
- Relatives speak highly of the manager and staff and the way their family members are cared for
- There are lots of things going on as reflected by the activities calendar and residents can choose whether or not to be involved

Comments from relatives



"I feel very welcome here, it's like being part of a family."

"We came to view this place and it felt so homely, I'm glad we chose it."

"I visited so many care homes before choosing this one. It's just so friendly and they have a stable workforce."



What relatives told us



- Relatives told us that residents always look clean and tidy. And that residents are treated with respect and dignity
- Relatives spoke very highly about how the home is managed and the care and support they receive
- There is open access to families and relatives
- Relatives' meetings are held monthly. One relative who is frequently in the home is the 'relatives' representative'
- There is a suggestion box in the hallway

Recommendations

- We liked that the home had strong links within the local community, including the local coffee shop, primary school and church (who deliver Holy Communion) and would recommend this continues
- We suggested the home consider a photo board of staff who were on duty that day
- We like that a resident has been asked to be the Resident Ambassador
- We really liked the 'wish board/what matters to me most' as this reflects the personalised nature of care in the home. Healthwatch would like to use this as an example of good practice to share with other providers

Recommendations

- Could the quiet area on the first-floor landing be used more – is access preventing residents from using it?
- A couple of relatives told us they would like to be able to make themselves a drink when visiting, rather than being dependent on the staff to do this. This could be a topic for discussion at a relatives meeting
- We asked if there was a quiet room away from the busy communal areas for staff to use and, if needed, for sensitive conversations. We were told there is a staff/quiet room on the second floor

Observations: physical environment



- The home and staff are very welcoming
- We found the home to be clean, light, airy, and well furnished. The environment is homely, and residents appear to be happy and comfortable. There were no unpleasant smells
- During the morning, the lounge was busy and noisy as activities were going on
- The lounge looks out onto the High Street and residents can see what's going on and who is passing by
- Residents can choose to go into a quieter area like the dining room or conservatory
- We were told there is a staff/quiet room on the second floor

Observations: physical environment



- The conservatory is light and airy, chairs are clean and comfortable
- There are house plants and a box of toys
- Residents benefit from a pleasant garden, with trees, lawn, and garden seats
- On the first floor there is a quiet/sensory area with star effect lights. There are steps to negotiate so access for residents with limited mobility could be difficult
- We raised a concern about the unlocked laundry room and access to detergents stored inside. The manager confirmed that residents did not go in there

Observations: interactions



- Our overall impression is that care is personal and individual – always focussed on the needs of the resident
- Staff are friendly and kind and appear to have time to care
- Staff, including the manager are always around, visible and available to talk to
- There was clearly a good rapport between staff and residents. The staff were proud of what they were doing with residents
- Staff appear quietly supportive and respectful. We observed residents being asked quietly if they were ready to go for lunch. During lunch we observed staff sensitively assisting with food if needed

Observations: interactions



- We found the manager very approachable and amenable
- Staff told us they have a good and supportive relationship both with the manager and between staff members. We observed this during our visit
- There are daily staff meetings
- Staff appear happy and committed to their work. They were willing to stop and chat. Staff appear skilled and to work as a team
- Relatives told us of the good relationship they had with the manager. Relatives told us they could go straight to the manager or any other staff member if they had a concern

Observations: staff at the home

- Staff told us they all support each other and that there is a family atmosphere.
- During our visit we observed lots of asking, telling and talking between staff
- All staff we spoke to were permanent and had worked at the home for many years e.g. 9 years, 14 years
- Staff told us about a variety of training available to them; both mandatory and as refreshers e.g. manual handling, risk assessments, palliative care.
- Training is ongoing; some is offered online, some via staff discussions or delivered by the management team

Observations: staff at the home

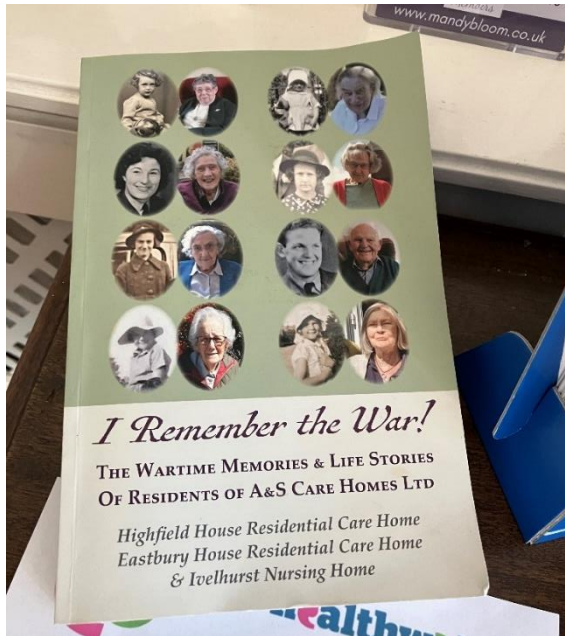
- There are daily staff meetings. It was obvious to us that staff are well supported both in their work and emotionally by the manager
- Staff had come into the home during their annual leave just to speak to us.
- Other staff told us they often pop in during their own time. We felt this demonstrated a real commitment to the home

Observations: personalised care



- The 'wish tree/what matters to me most board' reflects the personalised nature of care in the home
- Residents' rooms appear homely and are personalised with their own ornaments, photos and belongings
- There is an onsite hairdressing room
- Staff know and understand what matters to residents. For example, the local church comes in to give Holy Communion
- One relative brings the family dog into the home and the dog sits beside the resident and licks his hand

Observations: personalised care



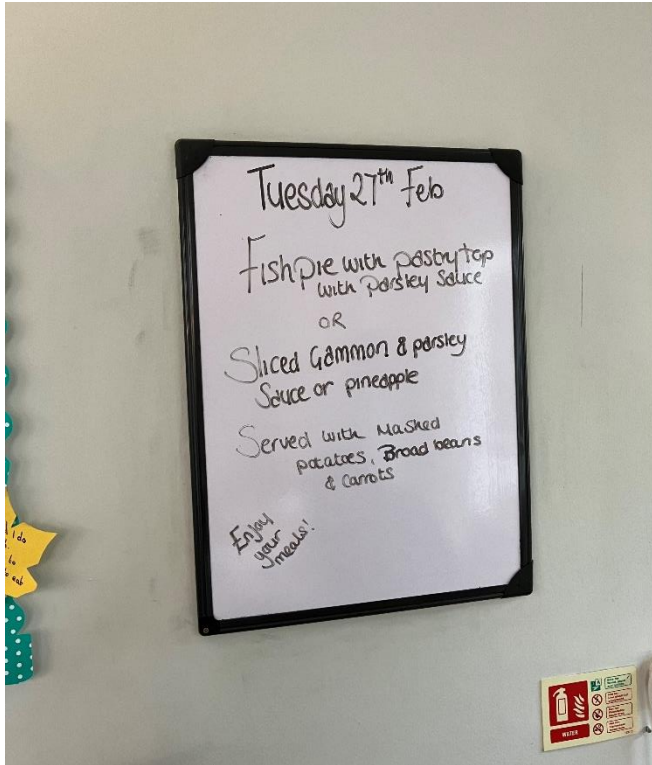
- Several residents had contributed their stories to a book of wartime memories of residents of A&S Care Homes. This book was available to see and read
- One resident likes to watch the activities in the lounge but not take part, so she is able to sit in the hallway and observe from a distance
- We were told a resident sometimes has a cup of tea and chocolate biscuit during the night if they cannot sleep

Residents said:

“I like to keep myself to myself and that’s ok – no one tells me off.”

“I like singing along to Alexa and I take part in the weekly singalong.”

Observations: food and drink



- Residents help to devise the menus with the manager. There is an 8-week rotation of meals
- Personal food choices are catered for
- Residents can have a glass of wine with their meal, or Guinness, as we observed during our visit
- Breakfast time is variable and depends on when people get up. Lunch and dinner times are set but can be flexible for individuals
- Food looked appealing and well presented

Observations: food and drink



- Staff take residents into the dining room and seat them. Residents can choose their seat e.g. the men often sit at one table
- We observed staff subtly checking what residents were eating and asking if they were enjoying it
- Staff access meals on site; they sit and eat alongside residents
- Drinks were always available in addition to tea/coffee rounds at set times
- Relatives are also offered drinks and snacks and can stay for a meal with their relative. One relative told us they had Christmas dinner at the home

What people told us: food and drink

Residents said:



"I can ask for other food, like an omelette or jacket potato."

"I have loved everything they make for me."

"Food is wonderful."



Relatives said:



"food is lovely"

"the choice of food is super"

"he has his breakfast in his room as he sometimes gets up late"



Observations: activities

HIGHFIELD HOUSE ACTIVITIES CALENDAR March 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				 Kings Bruton School	 Two Hoop Game	 Film Afternoon
 Conversation Ball	 Walks In The Town	 Sit & Strengthen	 Highfield Arms	 BINGO	 Bingo	 Film Afternoon
 Target Practice	 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS	 Sit & Strengthen	 Sensory Time	 Kings Bruton School	 Bean Bag Toss	 Film Afternoon
 Cookery Club	 Memory Games	 Sit & Strengthen	 Kevin & Sandra Singing	 Nick the Potter	 Parachute Games	 Film Afternoon
 Coffee Shop	 Easter Arts & Crafts	 Sit & Strengthen	 Lin Phelps	 Sow Seeds	 Les Chaffe Singing	 Bingo

- There are lots of things going on as reflected by the activities calendar and residents can choose whether to be involved
- Relatives are also welcome to join the activities
- Sensory needs are considered when devising activities e.g. a sensory bag, picture cards and use of the computer
- An exercise session takes place weekly – provided by an external company 'Sit and Strengthen'
- Day trips include Longleat and Monkey World

Observations: activities



- Residents go out to garden centres, for fish and chip lunches and to the local coffee shop
- During our visit several residents had been out to the coffee shop
- The home is on the High Street and so just a short walk to the shops
- A themed garden party takes place in June. The home has its own marquee. Good links with the local community mean the home can borrow tables and chairs from the church

Observations: access to healthcare



- The home has good relations with the local GP, the doctor will visit the home if needed
- A visiting dental technician delivers oral care assessments
- Families told us they were involved with the writing of the care plan for their relative
- Relatives can accompany their family member to appointments
- Relatives told us they are always consulted about healthcare matters and appointments
- We observed a resident being asked if they needed anything for the pain they had told the staff member about earlier



What residents told us

“It’s absolutely lovely here”

“The staff are like family” “They are all so kind”

“I feel so safe here”

“Staff are very well trained, they’ve been here a long time and know what they’re doing”





What relatives told us

“I feel very welcome here, it’s like being part of a family.”

“The staff are truly wonderful”

“It might not be the most modern or have the largest rooms but that doesn’t matter. What matters is my relative is happy and safe.”

“I am kept updated around (my relative’s) medication and healthcare.”

“We are involved in the care plan and what’s important to my relative.”

“When my relative was very ill (staff member) stayed by the bedside and sat with me.”





What staff told us

“There’s enough time to give care.”

“Staff are like family, teamwork is exceptional.”

“The manager knows us well. I feel well supported.”

“We all pull together.”

**“The hardest part of our job is if someone passes away.
Residents are like family to us”**





Provider response

Rachel Mundy, Registered Manager

“We invited Healthwatch into our home in order to have an impartial view of the service and care that we provide for people, and any improvements that we could make.

As a team, it is our honour to provide support and care to the people who live here, and to strive to ensure that each day is filled with stimulation and laughter. The people from Healthwatch were thorough in their observations and this report accurately reflects Highfield House. People who use our service have a right to be advocated for and clearly Healthwatch have the resident's best interests at heart when carrying out their assessment.

We will certainly take on board their feedback and suggestions. We are very grateful to have received this report and look forward to the publication of the findings. It is also reassuring for our residents and relatives to receive these positive comments.

Thank you so much.”



About Healthwatch Somerset

Healthwatch Somerset is the county's health and social care champion. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure that NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and use it to improve standards of care.

We're here to listen to your experiences of using local health and care services and to hear about the issues that really matter to you. We are entirely independent and impartial, and anything you share with us is confidential. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice to help you to get the care and support you need.

Healthwatch Somerset is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across the country.

What is Enter and View?

One of the ways we can meet our statutory responsibilities is by using our legal powers to Enter and View health and social care services to see them in action. During these visits we collect evidence of what works well and what could be improved to make people's experiences better. We do this by observing the quality of service, and by talking to people using the service, including patients, residents, carers and relatives.

Enter and View visits are carried out by our authorised representatives who have received training and been DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked. These visits are not part of a formal inspection process or audit.

Our Authorised Representatives were:

- Sheila Burridge
- Helen Hancox
- Carole Parker-Wilkinson
- Mandy Starks

About this report

This report is an example of how we share people's views, and how we evaluate the evidence we gather and make recommendations to inform positive change, for individual services as well as across the health and care system. We share our reports with those providing the service, regulators, the local authority, NHS commissioners, the public, Healthwatch England and any other relevant partners based on what we find during the visit.

This report relates to this specific visit to the service, at a particular point in time, and is not representative of all service users, only those who contributed. This report is written by the Lead Enter and View 'Authorised Representative' who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Somerset.

Acknowledgements

The Healthwatch Somerset Enter and View team would like to thank the manager and all staff for a friendly welcome and unlimited access to the premises and activities.

We appreciate the time they gave to speak to us during their busy day.

Thanks also to the residents and their families who spoke so openly with us.

For more information

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