

Healthwatch Cheshire West Enter and View Report

Enter and View Visit to	Aaron Court Care Home 190 Princes Road, Ellesmere Port CH65 8EU
Date	24 th February 2016
Authorised Representatives	Neil Garbett, Andrew Firman
Staff Present	Gloria Gleeson, Manager
Background	<p>Aaron Court is located in an established residential area quite close to local services and bus routes. Shops and a pub are within walking distance in an area that has a mix of private and housing association properties. Owned by New Century Care the home is one of four care homes that the company runs in the North West (others all being prefixed with the word Aaron). The home provides nursing, residential and dementia care including provisions for respite.</p> <p>The building itself is purpose built on two storeys and at the time of our visit had 67 residents, each with their own room; 19 of which have en-suite facilities. 45 residents are living with dementia and 9 have been assessed as needing Continuing Health Care provision. The home does have four double rooms available but these were currently being used as single occupancy. Aaron Court has a pleasant exterior, excellent car parking facilities and well maintained gardens.</p>
Overall Impression	<p>Representatives feel that Aaron Court provides a caring and safe environment for its residents. All areas visited were clean, warm and well decorated. Residents seemed content. Relatives commented that they were happy with the care of their loved ones.</p> <p>Staff were welcoming and open when talking to representatives.</p>
Any ideas or suggestions for improving service?	<p>Storage - Staff commented that they would welcome improved storage facilities. Representatives understand that the management have this in hand.</p> <p>Development of garden areas to include sensory area.</p>

Environment

Externally Aaron Court has good parking facilities in front of the home with entrances clearly signed. Car park area is bordered by neat gardens that were undergoing maintenance at the time of our visit. A large rear garden to the property was well maintained.

The main entrance is protected with an electronic lock system.

The entrance hall itself is well decorated, welcoming and had information and activity displays as well as statutory notices all extremely neatly displayed. Information included a visitors' book, electronic staff sign in unit, clear fire evacuation procedures and background music.

Corridors - These had been greatly improved since our last visit. Improvements included new LED lights that give a bright airy feel to the areas - almost like natural light filtering in - and new laminate flooring. Walls were clean, well vacuumed, well decorated and clear of obstruction. Representatives noted that some internal doors were fitted with a key fob exit system to aid resident safety. Rooms along the corridors were clearly labelled and most residents' rooms were indicated with both a name and a photograph of the resident. Fire evacuation and direction notices to various areas of the home were clear. Decoration throughout the building is enhanced. A number of interesting framed paintings and prints by well known artists were displayed in corridor areas along with photographs of vintage local scenes and vintage posters of various types. Representatives felt that as well as adding to a homely feel these may often jog memories and experiences of residents.

Lounge areas - Well laid out with comfortable chairs and tables. New carpets and replacement chairs for these areas are planned.

One representative was invited by a relative of a resident into one of the larger bedrooms that was well laid out and well decorated.

Every area of the home visited by Representatives appeared clean and no odours were present.

Health and Wellbeing

On arrival we were informed by the manager that a number of residents were out at an event - a tea dance in Blacon organized by Bright Life. During the visit Representatives observed a number of activities including a beach ball, catch kick or head activity - music. Staff were observed as being very engaging to residents. In a quieter area of the home a representative spoke to two residents who commented that they liked to have 'quiet' time. One commented, "*I like to have time to read the paper on my own.*" Representatives noticed a care worker quietly making observations on residents whilst completing/updating a particular care plan. Representatives felt that this was a positive sign demonstrating that formal observations could be tied in with general care duties.

During the time of our visit Representatives witnessed residents being served regularly with drinks - water and tea.

During our visit one of the residents was visited by representatives from CWP's Community Mental Health Team who had called to complete a psychiatric assessment. We were told by staff that close working relationships exist with both these teams and other health professionals including GP and district nurse teams. It was also commented by staff that discharge liaison arrangements worked well with the Countess of Chester Hospital. It was apparent talking to staff that visitors to the home were commonplace.

In total the home employs over 70 staff ably led and co-ordinated by the Registered Manager who has been in post for over 10 years. It was acknowledged that trained staff are hard to find and the home offers incentive pay to assist recruitment. There is a clear commitment to support staff training and health care assistants are encouraged to achieve the New Care Certificate. Communication between care staff is facilitated by a 10 minute handover period.

The home assesses clients' needs before admission. Many are from the local area and Representatives were told that the home accepts local authority rates. Officially there is a small weekly top-up requested from families.

The in-house catering service is enthusiastically managed by the chef who is proud of their local sourcing and use of fresh ingredients. The highest 5 star hygiene rating is displayed. Feedback from residents and relatives indicates that the quality and range of meals provided is appreciated.

Activities and Community Links

The home employs an activities co-ordinator for 36 hours a week. Group and individual activities are arranged and relatives and residents can give feedback and make suggestions for additional activities, as evidenced in the minutes of the occasional consultative meeting.

The Easter raffle was very well displayed in the home's entrance area.

The home's newsletter provides a good additional channel of communication with relatives. The most recent newsletter mentions a guide dog visit, St Patrick's Day celebrations and Easter events.

Some residents get involved in planting in the garden.

Funding limits the range of activities and the imminent withdrawal of the taxi voucher scheme previously supported by the local authority was regretted. The home is keen to recruit volunteers to help with activities including from the local university.

Residents and relatives appreciate the open visiting policy.

Feedback

Representatives spoke to a relative visiting her mother - a resident with severe dementia. *"The staff are wonderful - I could not have picked a better place for mum. They have visitors at any time."* Representatives also spoke to a husband visiting his wife he commented, *"The staff know what they have to do and just get on with things ... everyone seems to do alright here."*

Additional Comments

Authorised Representatives would like to thank Gloria and her team for the helpful and courteous way we were received. All the staff we met were positive and appeared to be well motivated.

Feedback from Provider of Service

None received at time of publication.