



Enter & View Visit Report

Details of Visit

Service Name and Address	The New Barn Residential Care Home
Service Provider	Careport (previously Claremont Care Ltd)
Day, Date and Time	Monday 14 March 2016, 2 to 4pm
Visit Team	Two Enter & View Authorised Representatives from Healthwatch Shropshire

Purpose of the Visit

- To explore how the changing ownership of the home has been communicated to the residents, their families and staff.
- To explore how the staff monitor and respond to the care needs of the residents in the context of current uncertainties

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experience of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

Context of Visit

In late January 2016 Claremont Care Ltd went into administration. The Official Receiver appointed Careport to manage all care homes previously owned by Claremont Care Ltd. The company plans to sell all the homes as either a single going concern or as individual care home businesses. Healthwatch Shropshire was asked to visit homes in the County to speak to residents and find out about their experience of care at the moment.

New Barn is a home for 11 adults with learning and other disabilities.

This visit was announced. Healthwatch Shropshire asked staff at the home to tell residents' families about the visit and its purpose and invite them to speak to us.

What we were looking at

The focus of the visit was to:

- check the quality of communication about the changes to everyone affected by them, including the residents, their visitors and staff
- find out if the home is maintaining the quality of life for the 11 long-term residents of the home

What we did

We spoke to the manager, two members of care staff, one resident, and two relatives of different residents (one by telephone). We also spoke to the Manager appointed by Careport to oversee operational matters at all the Claremont Care homes by telephone.

What we found out

Communicating the Change in Ownership

On 3rd February 2016 two representatives of Careport came to the home and explained to the Manager what was happening. They then spoke to the staff on duty in small groups of two or three. We were told by both the manager and staff that Careport gave positive messages about the ability of the home to continue to operate and its attractiveness to people thinking about buying it.

Colleagues from other care homes in the group contacted the Manager and told her there was press interest in the story, so the Manager telephoned the families of every resident that same day.

Communication with the Residents

A member of staff who is a key worker for some residents told us that the staff had agreed that only three residents would be able to understand the change in ownership. The three were simply told that there was a new head office and a new boss had been appointed. They were also told the home is up for sale. Two appear to have simply accepted it and have not raised the matter again.

We talked for a long time with the third resident. He told us that 'it is nice to be with a new company'. He said in the home 'nothing has changed', with the same staff and food at mealtimes, but also that 'it feels better'. He said there have been more outside visits and 'trips in the van' since the new management took over.

The resident asks staff for his own money when he wants to buy clothes or other items. He has chosen wallpaper for re-decorating his bedroom.

The resident described a wide range of interests that he has developed over the last few years, as well as plans for new activities in the future, which he is encouraged to continue.

One resident has regular visits from the OSCA advocacy service and the advocate always offers to talk to any other resident who has any worries.

Communication with the Families of Residents

After the first telephone call from the Manager on 3rd February, family members told us that Careport had also contacted them by phone before writing to them. We were told that the person from Careport who phoned 'went to great pains to reassure me that no one wants anything to change'.

Another relative told us their biggest concern is that the home would close. It would take their relative a very long time to settle into any new home, but in the New Barn 'everyone is so happy and relaxed'.

A family member told us the Manager had offered to set up an evening 'Question and Answer' session for relatives. This was declined, partly because many families live quite a long way away, but also because they felt that the home was keeping them well-informed.

Both relatives told us the manager has continued to contact them by phone several times 'to keep them in the loop'.

Communication with staff

Staff told us they understood the company is in administration. One said 'I understand my job is possibly at risk'. Staff did not seem to know very much about employment law on Transfer of Undertakings if the home is bought as a going concern.

There had previously been problems such as not being paid on time but staff seemed confident in the management by Careport. We were told that training opportunities had been poor for some time, but now Careport has started some in-house training.

Staff said they were glad that the Manager talked openly to them during shift handovers, and there was a staff meeting two weeks ago. Now that the first shock has worn off, staff said they generally feel optimistic about the outcome.

Staff told us they were all determined to try to make sure everything feels normal for the residents.

Ensuring Continuity of Care and meeting individual needs

The home has continued to run as 'business as usual'. Careport has completed audits and has started several important risk assessments (e.g. health and safety, fire protection). As a result of these they are planning some improvements before the business goes on the market. The Manager told us about a major piece of repair work she had asked Claremont Care to do several times over recent months and that has now been started. Other developments to improve the environment (e.g. a new gardening contract) have been started.

A resident told us how he is allowed to pursue his wide range of interests and develop plans for the coming year.

One relative told us that the home is a very caring place and their relative has a really good quality of life. Change is very disruptive for residents with these sorts of disabilities and a relative told us they were grateful there did not appear to have been any change in the way the residents are cared for.

Another family member was impressed that the staff 'have responded very professionally and haven't changed their behaviour towards the residents at all'.

The operational manager from Careport visits the home every week, and makes sure the budget and residents' personal allowances are paid on time. We were told Careport has been really supportive and made themselves available to talk to staff or family members if needed. Staff are now able to use a comprehensive training library to support them in gaining care certificates and with their ongoing training.

Summary of Findings

- We were told by those to whom we spoke that the quality of communication between all groups of people at New Barn (residents, their relatives, care staff and Careport) who have been affected by Claremont Care stopping trading has been excellent.
- All staff have helped to make sure the residents are not affected by the change in management and have been able to develop their interests and goals.

- Audits have been carried out to identify improvements that could increase opportunities for a successful future sale. These include risk assessments, staff training opportunities, and environmental improvements.

Recommendations

- We recommend that Careport make staff aware of their rights under any TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings) arrangements when the home is sold.

Service Provider Response

Healthwatch Shropshire has received the following response to the report and its recommendations from Matthew Welham Regional Manager for Careport:

I can confirm that, after speaking to the Manager of The New Barn, we have checked the document for factual inaccuracies and feel the report gives a true representation of the current position.

We are very grateful of the feedback and Careport will ensure when the home is sold that all staff will be guided through the TUPE process.

The Manager of The New Barn has said:

How well staff have coped with the company changes. The staff team have supported each other. There has been no upset from those residents who know about and understand the situation.

New staff training is being provided by Careport using an on-line system and this is going well. It includes a wide range of subjects. Staff are doing extra training.

There have been lots of positives.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Shropshire would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors and staff for their contribution to this Enter & View.

Who are Healthwatch Shropshire?

Healthwatch Shropshire is the voice for people in Shropshire about the health and social care services delivered in their area. We are an independent body providing a way for people to share their experiences to help people get the best out of their health and social care services. As one of a network of Local Healthwatch across England we are supported by the national body Healthwatch England, and our data is fed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

What is Enter & View?

Healthwatch Shropshire gather information on people's experiences of health and social care services and there are times when it is appropriate for Healthwatch Shropshire to see and hear for ourselves how services are being delivered: these visits are called 'Enter & View', they are not inspections.

Teams of specially trained volunteers carry out visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to services users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

Get in Touch!

01743 237884

enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk
www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk

Healthwatch Shropshire
4 The Creative Quarter, Shrewsbury Business Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6LG