

healthwatch

Cumbria

Stonecross
Care Home

20th
April 2017

your
voice
counts

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Introduction

About Healthwatch Cumbria

Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC) is an independent community based organisation for the people of Cumbria. It was set up to champion the views of patients and people who use health and social care services in Cumbria. The goal of HWC is to make services better and improve health and wellbeing. HWC achieves this by talking and listening to people in all parts of Cumbria and telling providers of these services local people's views and challenging organisations that need to do better and highlighting examples of good practice.

HWC is part of Healthwatch England who act as the national consumer champion for all local Healthwatch.

Details of visit

Service Provider	Cumbria County Council
Service Address	107 Milnthorpe Road, Kendal LA9 5HH
Date and Time of visit	20/04/17
Authorised Representatives	Sue Hannah Robin Powell
Healthwatch Cumbria contact details	Healthwatch Cumbria, The Best Life Building, 4-8 Oxford Street, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 2AH Tel: 01900 607208

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the home manager Susan Masson, members of staff and residents who spoke to Sue and Robin from HWC.

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 experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch Cumbria has a statutory right (Health and Social Care Act 2012) to carry out Enter & View visits to health and social care services to gather the views and experiences of customers, patients, families and staff for the purpose of service improvement. Service providers have a duty to respond to our reports and recommendations.

Healthwatch Cumbria will share its findings with Healthwatch England, the Care Quality Commission, services and the public.

The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation. This is so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Purpose of the visit

To engage with residents in care homes in Cumbria to collect and record their experiences of accessing health and social care services, primarily the out of hours GP service Cumbria Health on Call (CHoC).

To identify and champion examples of best practice with regard to resident experience including: surroundings, activities and meals.

Methodology

HWC had visited the home on 17/02/17 but we were unsuccessful in carrying out the visit despite HWC emailing the home to inform them of the visit. Susan, the home manager was reluctant to allow us access as she was not aware of the email and informed us that they had been having problems with their email system. We were asked to arrange a second visit which would allow her more time to ask residents and family members for permission for us to speak with them. We arranged to revisit the home on 27/02/17.

We emailed and spoke to Susan to confirm the newly arranged visit and agreed a time for the visit. However at the re-visit we were not able to speak to any residents as Susan had informed us that she had been unsuccessful in gaining their permission or that of their family members to speak to HWC. This meant that we only managed to speak to both Susan and Allison who is the home's activities coordinator.

It was unfortunate that the team could not speak to residents and so HWC decided to undertake an unannounced re-visit to the home on the 20/04/17 to evidence the conversations that had taken place earlier with staff members.

On our third visit to the home Susan the manager was reluctant to allow us to visit at this time and felt it would be better to come back again at a later pre-arranged date as we did not give her notice of the visit and so she had not had time to gain permission from residents or family members to speak to us. Sue Hannah from the HWC team explained that the purpose of the re-visit was to validate the good practice that was described to officers from HWC by staff in previous visits and that on this occasion it was not necessary to speak with residents. However, on hearing this the manager approached the residents to get permission from them to speak with HWC officers which they gave.

Findings

First Impressions

On arrival at the home we observed there was a signing in book available at the front door in the outer porch for people to sign in before entering the home and beside the book was a bottle of hand sanitiser for people to use.

Whilst we were waiting for the manager to return from speaking with the residents we observed that all the furnishings, carpets and hand rails in the main hall were in a good state of repair and there were no unpleasant odours.

We were taken in to the lounge where there were 8 residents, some were reading newspapers and others talking about the upcoming general election. There was a TV on in the background covering the election. The tables and chairs were set up in a style to give residents the flexibility of being alone or joining in with others in conversation.

There was a tea trolley in the lounge with hot and cold drinks and biscuits available to residents. The hot water was in sealed flasks to keep warm and safe from spillage.

There was a cage with 2 Russian Dwarf Hamsters for the residents to enjoy interacting with. Alison the activities coordinator told us "we encourage family members to bring residents pets with them during their visits".

In the activities room there was a schedule of activities displayed on the door and evidence of "Easter" craft work that had taken place, a word game was on the table, evidence of an art appreciation class where residents are encouraged to give comments about what they saw in paintings, which were then displayed under each painting.

There was a variety of activities displayed e.g. a book case with many CD's and books on. The schedule displays the relevant activities information and is hand written in a variety of felt pen colours.

We were introduced to 2 residents who were in the activities room. One lady told us, "I like gardening and am looking forward to the better weather when I will be able to get out into the garden more."

We noted that the garden was easily accessed through double glazed french doors. The garden was multi level and easily accessed with wide paths and no steps. There were several high raised flower beds, a potting shed and a rabbit in a hutch on the lawn.

We were shown the residents' satisfaction questionnaire that the staff encourage residents and family members to complete 3 times a year along with one for the catering. We saw a visitor to the home who had completed a "suggestions" form and drew Alison's attention to this.

Access to Health Services

We asked Susan and Alison about access to health care services such as Cumbria Health on Call Service (CHoC) and were told, should a resident require any health or care services e.g. GP or Optician these are accessed through the home and or through family members. All residents have maintained registration with their own GP but if a resident was unable to access their own GP they can access the Station House Surgery in Kendal which is the registered surgery for the home. There are annual Optician visits to the home but should anyone need an appointment more frequently this is arranged by the home. Residents with more independence would be accompanied by a member of staff to take them to external health care appointments. Alison told us, "On one occasion a resident who had an optician's appointment in Kendal wanted afterwards to buy their spouse chocolates and a newspaper, and so the member of staff supported them to do this."

Activities

One resident told us, "The hair dresser is coming here today, I like to have my hair done because I can't do it myself anymore."

Alison told us about the homes men's group who meet in the local pub, she said, "Across the road from the home there is a hotel with a small pub where there are lots of nostalgic photographs on display. We use these as part of the men's group visits to stimulate conversations and reminisce. We encourage family members and visitors to join us."

During this visit residents were preparing for a parish church visit after lunch.

Strong community links are regarded as important by the home. We were told how the more able residents attend church and the social gathering afterwards and church members visit the home. One resident told us, "I regularly have conversations with neighbours over the fence." This is facilitated by a small community of over 55's assisted living bungalows around the perimeter of the home from when it was originally a nursing home. Alison explained that the residents from the bungalows are invited in to the home for a tea and this is reciprocated by some home owners generating neighbourly relationships as well as local older school students often visiting the home.

On the walls around the home we saw photographs displaying residents enjoying events including the Queens 90th Birthday and National Care Home Day 2016.

Meals

We observed the day's breakfast menu which had a number of hot and cold choices and were told that the residents had a choice of meals on a daily basis. However the menu print was small and placed in a high cabinet on the wall outside the dining room.

One resident told us, "Gammon is on the menu tonight but I don't like it, its tough so chef is making me bacon instead." Another resident told us, "I have throat problems so chef makes me soft foods that were easier for me to swallow."

Areas of Good Practice

HWC would like to commend the staff at Stonecross for their pro-activeness and creativity in ensuring that residents are given the opportunity to integrate with the community outside of the home, be involved in the choices of activities, foods and running of the home as much as they want to in order to feel that they live “at home” and not in a institution.

Recommendations

HWC would recommend that the activities schedule should be printed in clear large font in one colour and the use of pictures be considered to make it easier for residents and visitors to better understand the information. On a similar theme the menu could be typed in a larger font size and consider the use of pictures and display the menu at a lower height.

Provider Feedback

HWC received no comments on the report from the provider having being given the opportunity to do so within the statutory response period of 20 working days.