

Quality of Care in Care Homes: A Pilot Study of Residents, Families and Carers Perceptions

October 2016

your
**voice
counts**

Introduction

The NHS Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was keen to better understand what constitutes 'good' care in a care home setting from the perspective of residents, their families and carers.

Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC) was commissioned by the Quality in Care Homes Group (QinCH) to carry out site visits to a number of care homes to conduct conversations with residents to find out their experiences of the care that they were receiving.

This project aims to define the differences, if there are any, between what is assessed through the formal inspection process by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and what is valued by people in care homes. This enhanced understanding would help the CCG to support people who live in care homes subject to a poor inspection result to drive improvements in line with the key criteria that matter most to residents.

Part of the role of HWC is to work with providers to help ensure that the experiences of residents are at the forefront and their views are used to help inform decision making and improvements.

Methodology

A survey was created focusing on asking questions to residents about their experiences of care that they were receiving. The objectives of the research were:

- To identify the key criteria of "good" care from the perspective of residents, families and carers.
- To identify which aspects of good care are most highly valued by residents, families and carers.
- To identify which aspects of good care are least valued by residents, families and carers.
- To capture key evidence of what matters most to residents.

The survey consisted of 29 questions which were a mix of quantitative and qualitative. These questions were divided into five sections:

- My environment
- My home's culture
- My independence
- My self esteem
- My relationships and about me

This survey was then piloted with 8 residents with the support of the relevant care home managers in July 2016. The care homes were informed prior to HWC visiting through a letter sent to all care homes selected for the pilot study informing them about the project and the upcoming visit.

The findings from the pilot survey were then reviewed and a report written. The findings were presented at the CCG hosted commissioner and provider event 'Developing a real partnership approach' on the 7th September 2016. The aim of the presentation was for the

findings to be discussed with senior individuals from care homes and the survey reviewed before it would be considered again by QinCH and decisions taken about further dissemination.

Pilot findings

There were four main themes that emerged from the pilot survey:

- Preparation
- Resident involvement
- Personalisation
- Social interaction

Preparation

It was found that preparation was really important for residents and that it cannot begin too early. Some of the quotes on preparation were:

“Visiting a few times before moving in would have made it easier.”

“I was able to have visits and time to decide”

“I had plenty of time to decide... chose what to bring...things that matter to me.”

Resident involvement

The survey found that residents valued being involved in the decisions and choices that were made about their care. For example:

“I knew I would have choices in all aspects.”

“The food is good but if you prefer something else it is not a problem.”

“It feels like home because if I don't like something...it is altered to something I like.’

Personalisation matters

It was clear that it was important for residents to have person centred care that was tailored to their wishes and choices. For instance residents said:

“I used to have an allotment and greenhouse and I do my planting here as well”

“... it has made a real difference having my things around, it feels like home”

“You can order food from the canteen or from outside”

Social Interaction

Residents valued being involved with the activities within the home and feeling included:

“When I moved here it was very frightening and chatting with residents made me feel better. I like doing the same for new residents to help them.”

“I was very lonely before I came here, now I have company and can join in with things”

It was found from the pilot survey that going forward there needs to be more opportunities for respondents to give narrative comments.

Summary

The conversations with residents were very interesting and insightful. These conversations have provided a richer understanding of what 'good' care looks like and of what is valued from the residents perspective. These findings will be reviewed and used to prepare the main survey and methodology.

Sue Stevenson

Chief Operating Officer

Healthwatch Cumbria

27 October 2016