

Enter & View Visit Report

George Mason Lodge, 24th October 2017



Joyce Osei
Patricia Braga

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Staff were warmly interactive with residents without being intrusive.”

Observation by Authorised Rep

Visit Details

Service address	George Mason Lodge, Chelmsford Road, London, E11 1BS
Service Provider	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Service description	Residential accommodation for adults over 65 who require nursing or personal care, Dementia, Mental health conditions.
Number of residents	39 at time of visit
Reason for visit	Part of programme. This is one of a series of visits to older people living in care homes in Waltham Forest. The purpose of visits is to capture the experiences of people using the service by talking directly to residents, families and staff about their experiences; observe services in action and advise those in charge about how to improve; also highlighting any good practice.
Status of visit	Announced
Date of visit	Tuesday 24 October 2017
Authorised Reps	Joyce Osei and Patricia Braga
Declarations of interest	None

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Waltham Forest would like to thank the service provider, service users and staff for their co-operation and hospitality in hosting this visit. We welcome all contributions to this Enter and View programme.

Enter & View

Enter & View is a statutory power conferred upon Healthwatch by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. It gives Authorised Representatives of Healthwatch Waltham Forest the right to enter and observe publicly funded health and social care services in the borough. Enter & View visits are visits and not inspections. Enter & View visits are used to get a lay perspective on the service concerned and are an opportunity for service users to talk about their experiences with the service. This takes place in the communal areas of the home, as our visits preclude talking to people on their own in their private rooms. A report of each visit is produced which includes any recommendations for change or improvement arising from the visit. This is shared with the service prior to publication. All Healthwatch Waltham Forest Authorised Representatives undergo training and background checks before joining the Enter & View programme.

Disclaimer: This report relates only to the service viewed on the date of the visit, and is representative of the views of the service users, visitors and staff who contributed to the report on that date.

Background

George Mason Care Lodge is a modern purpose built care home that caters for 39 people with a variety of care needs, including dementia and mental health illness. It has 39 bedrooms built across 3 floors, the ground floor accommodating 9 residents on a short stay and rehabilitation basis. The first two floors accommodate residents on long term and permanent care placements. The care is divided into 4 Units; there are lounges on each floor, each has a TV and tropical fish aquarium. One unit has two smaller lounges. The décor is welcoming, clean, bright, and appears well-maintained. Facilities include a large kitchen, laundry room and a large landscaped garden and patio area that has undergone a redesign to become more dementia friendly.

Observations

On arrival, the Manager introduced us and showed us around the home. The reception area was colourfully decorated in a Halloween theme, this included a locally grown pumpkin. The home is divided into 5 units. The downstairs Unit is used for respite care and was used to relieve winter pressures over the last year. This meant taking people who were ready to be discharged from hospital while care packages to support them in their own homes could be organised.

Upstairs were another 4 units, two on each floor for permanent residents receiving care. The layout was similar in most units with a large bright clean lounge and dining area, a kitchen and individual rooms. The corridors were spacious and accessible for free movement from the lounge and into the lounge of another Unit. Each lounge had a well maintained tropical fish aquarium, one lounge also had a budgie. All of the Units looked light, clean and spacious. We spoke with residents in the lounge, corridor and dining areas.

Outside of each room, on the wall was a personalised 'memory box' that had been produced by staff, residents and their family. They contained things like a postcard of their place and country of birth or home town, family pictures and objects, a favourite item from their work career etc. We were told that residents found this helpful as they are able to identify with things that were familiar to them, also a visual reminder of different aspects of their life and cultural heritage.

The ground floor has a room set aside for family and visitors with historic memorabilia, including items such as original Singer sewing machines.

Staffing

During our visit we spoke with 8 residents and 4 members of staff, including the registered care home manager. The service has a total of 45 staff. The manager told us they are in the process of creating their own Bank staffing service, this aims to optimise good quality staffing levels within the home.

The Manager told us about their staff training programme; all staff receive regular external and in-house training. Management encouraged staff to increase their knowledge of care by collecting related newspaper and magazine articles and making them accessible in the staff room. We observed a clear information notice board placed in the staff room that displayed staff support information, such as the '6 Cs of Care'.

Resident Care

The care home operates an onsite hairdresser/barber salon for residents. There is a smoking room available with a vision panel that is safely managed by staff. We observed a well-stocked "occupied" games/meeting room and a quiet library. The home operates a pager system enabling staff to be alerted should a resident need immediate support while in their room. Also, there is a system in place whereby staff are alerted by an electronic beeper system if a resident who is vulnerable has a fall.

Staff are trained to support resident's needs with the change of season; light clothing and air conditioning are used when needed in the Summer months. We were shown the laundry room where resident's clothes are washed daily by using an OTEX system; a patented commercial ozone laundry system designed to work against environmental bacteria efficiently. The service uses this to reduce the risk of cross-contamination and ensure resident safety.

Provision of Care for People with Dementia

Residents diagnosed with Dementia were supported in various ways. The building - inside and out in the garden has been turned into a dementia-friendly environment. Appropriate assessments and ongoing reviews of their care plans are made. Also, support tools are used, for example, a talking clock for someone who is blind or has impaired sight and dementia; a memory box placed outside their door containing items familiar to them; themed memory bags and twiddle muffs. Residents who choose to can attend a monthly dementia cafe held at a local venue. A dementia choir is also available for those who wish to join.

Residents who require hospital care are accompanied by a member of staff and a support document 'picture of health' form; this includes a resident's profile information, a photo, and their care needs. This provides vital information and aims to ensure clear communication between the home and hospital.

Communication Between Residents and Staff

We observed care, compassion and staff interaction with residents in communal areas across the home during the course of the day including medicines administration, mealtimes and the provision of activities. Staff were warmly interactive with residents without being intrusive.

Residents told us that they felt they were listened to by staff and were able to express their wishes. People also told us that staff helped them to make decisions about their care and helped them to remain as independent as possible. One resident said, “The staff are lovely, they help me with what I need and encourage me to do what I can manage myself.”

Dietary Needs

Food is prepared by the chef and catering staff in the main kitchen and then put on a trolley for individual units. Residents were offered a varied menu taking into consideration; any special dietary needs, such as low sugar, allergies, and cultural needs. Individual needs are discussed at initial assessment stage, included in their individual care plans and adapted to meet their needs.

We were shown the kitchen by the Manager. We observed it to be a clean and spacious area. We spoke with the Chef and were shown a menu with a varied choice of meals. We were told about cultural theme days’ staff where staff dress in traditional costume and offer a theme day with national dishes for the residents.

We observed lunch being served approximately 12.30 to 1 pm. Seating was arranged in several small tables. There were 4-5 people in each area. We observed staff engaging with residents in a relaxed manner. Some residents commented on how much they enjoyed the food and the varied menus. One resident said she was satisfied with the food portions and loved how good the food was. Drinks and snacks are available outside meal times.

During the lunch meal, we were shown the (colour coded safe pack) medicines trolley and were told this was audited after each session

Activities

Residents have access to a wide range individual and group activities inside and outside of the service. A record of activities that residents participate in is kept by staff; these include coffee mornings, gardening, baking, cocktail parties, healthy eating sessions (Fruity Friday), Ti Chi, art & craft and picture memory sessions.

Activities (continued)

Some residents visit a local Dementia cafe every month, this gives them the opportunity to meet new people and develop friendships and support their emotional wellbeing. We observed a notice board in the reception area that displayed daily and weekly activities.

There was a flexible approach to allowing the residents to engage or not or even change events to suit their particular mood. We observed a group of residents participating in a craft mask-making activity. Music was playing and the atmosphere was friendly, relaxed and engaging. Two activities are planned each day.

Staff told us about their partnership work with local and national organisations, for example, Leyton 6th Form College - part of the National Citizen Service project, that enabled residents, staff and students to work together on projects, including carnival cutouts, a reminiscence mural and a tree of memories painting. The service also offers outings to the seaside, tea parties and an International Day, where staff wear their national costume to work and bring in food or artefacts of their culture. The staff team is diverse with a variety of skills and hobbies which are incorporated into the mix of activities for the residents.

Complaints

The care home operates an open door policy and encourages residents and their families to raise concerns and complaints, they are then dealt with by the management and escalated accordingly if necessary.

We observed a suggestions and complaints box close to the front reception area. A complaints information notice was placed on a notice board, it was quite high and may be difficult for someone in a wheelchair to read.

Monthly residents meetings take place and frequent contact is made with relatives, during which any concerns can be raised. We observed a notice board full of thank you cards from residents, families and carers to staff members.

Staff responsiveness

Several people told us that they were well looked after and felt comfortable in their home. Some said that they liked the staff and generally, we observed interactions between staff and residents in a respectful and compassionate manner. Where possible, staff are linked to individual residents who share the same interests, such as gardening or music.

Staff responsiveness (continued)

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The manager had an extensive knowledge of the residents who lived here and had known many for some years.

We observed that staff were supportive to residents needs and respectful of their wishes, for example, if a resident did not want to participate in an activity they were asked if they wished to do something else.

Residents meetings are held once a month enabling them to be involved with decisions about their care and an opportunity to voice any concerns and interact with each other. Residents told us that if they ever had any concerns or complaints they were always dealt with quickly.

Residents needs are discussed at initial assessment stage. Together with their family and staff their needs are discussed to ensure their beliefs, religion, gender, and sexual orientation is reflected in their care plan and management of care whilst staying at the home. Those who choose to practice their religious beliefs are supported to do so, for example, a weekly church service is delivered for this who want to attend. People are also supported in practicing their religious beliefs outside of the home. Staff are aware and practice delivering a service that is equal and diverse.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This was our second visit to this care home and we found it to show an excellent delivery of care to those living there. The home had a welcoming, relaxed and comfortable atmosphere - this was reflective of our interviews and observations with residents of the home. We observed staff delivering care to residents in a kind caring and compassionate manner that showed dignity and respect. The care provided was person-centered and staff listened to resident's needs and were approachable, they were also knowledgeable about the people they were caring for. Staff enabled residents who were independent to enjoy their space and continue to remain independent. The vast choice of activities on offer was very impressive and residents were able to access and enjoy these. The provider has worked well to create a safe space and deliver a service to of good quality for the people who they care for. Residents were happy with the food choices and felt that the menus met their needs and were culturally appropriate. Residents enjoyed their space, inside and outside in the garden.

Recommendations

On the basis of our observation, we would like to recommend the following:

Recommendation 1

The report has highlighted a high standard of practice regarding the delivery and quality of care to residents and we recommend that with your approval we share this good practice.

Recommendation 2

We observed that there was a complaints information notice placed on a notice board, it was quite high and may be difficult for someone in a wheelchair to read. We suggest that the provider could make the notice in a larger print or place it in a way so it is more accessible for everyone to see it.

Service Provider Response

In response to your recommendation, the complaints procedure has been moved to a lower level so it is more easily visible to anyone in a wheelchair.

Distribution and Comment

This report is available to the general public, and is shared with our statutory partners - London Borough of Waltham Forest, Waltham Forest Clinical Commissioning Group, Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission.

If you have any comments on this report or wish to share your views and experiences of this or any other care home in the borough, please contact us.

About Us

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