

Healthwatch Waltham Forest Enter & View Report

Almadene Care Home

Care Home Series 2014

Monday 21st July 2014

Susan Henry and Cheryl Whittle
August 2014

Visit details

<i>Service address</i>	Almadene Care Home, 19-21 The Avenue, London E4 9LB
<i>Service Provider</i>	Goodcare Limited
<i>Service description</i>	Accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care, Dementia, Learning disabilities, Mental health conditions, Caring for adults over 65 yrs
<i>Number of residents</i>	14, with a 16 unit capacity
<i>Reason for visit</i>	Part of programme. This is one of a series of visits to older people living in care homes in Waltham Forest. This programme is to introduce our Enter & View reps and develop their role. We wanted to talk with older people about their experience of living in care homes. We looked at 4 areas - meals, activities, staff responses and complaints
<i>Status of visit</i>	Announced
<i>Date of visit</i>	Monday 21 st July 2014
<i>Authorised Reps</i>	Susan Henry and Cheryl Whittle
<i>Declarations of interest</i>	Cheryl recognised one of the residents as a former WFHA tenant.

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 publically 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.

Summary of the visit

We visited Almadene on a Monday afternoon during lunch and stayed from noon until 1.30pm. This small home currently has 14 older people living there with varying degrees of dementia. We arrived at noon and saw the preparation and serving of lunch. We spoke to 6 residents and 4 members of staff. There were no relatives visiting during our visit. We were made to feel welcome by staff and residents and enjoyed meeting and talking to residents who had been told of our visit beforehand. We looked at the following 4 areas

- Catering
- Activities
- Staff responsiveness
- Complaints

Our recommendations are based solely upon what we observed at the care home during our visit.

Description of facility and overview of findings

The home, a converted set of Victorian houses, can accommodate 16 residents and 14 were living there at the time of our visit. There was parking at the front of the house for 4 cars. We observed that the outside of the home was well maintained and there was a small garden at the rear, mostly laid to lawn. Preparations were underway for a garden party the following Sunday.

In our opinion, the internal décor was tired but the lounge, dining room and conservatory were odour free and the environment was homely. There were 14 armchairs in the lounge for the 14 residents but no additional seating for visitors or staff if all residents are seated. There was also seating in the conservatory, overlooking the garden, which appeared to be a pleasant space for residents to sit and enjoy the garden area. Not all residents were present when we arrived so there was spare seating in the lounge during our visit, allowing us to sit and chat with residents.

The weather was warm during our visit and a heatwave was predicted for later in the week. Despite being attached to a conservatory, the lounge and dining room were well ventilated and did not feel overly warm. A fan was running in the lounge. Residents were dressed appropriately for the weather and most were having a drink when we arrived.

We were introduced to those residents in the lounge when we arrived and chatted to them there, as well as with one in the dining room before lunch. Members of staff were preparing for lunch, two in the kitchen, open to the dining room, and two in the lounge with the residents. We observed a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere as residents assembled in the dining room for lunch, although there was little interaction between residents while they ate.

We left soon after lunch had finished as residents moved back into the lounge.

Observations

Catering

We observed the preparation and serving of lunch at Almadene. Residents appeared familiar with the routine and enjoyed being asked, by the chef, what option of three they would like. The meal was served in the dining room and residents went to their assigned table in their own time. We did not observe any encouragement by staff for residents to wash their hands prior to the meal even though we had been told facilities to do so were located off the lounge.

The seating was arranged across 4 tables, each seating three people, creating a potentially social atmosphere. Place settings were already on the table and included glasses. The chef brought out the plated up food to individuals and portions were sized according to the known preferences of the recipient. We observed that three choices were on offer, haddock, salmon or pasta. The food looked appetising and well presented and residents appeared to enjoy eating it. All were offered a choice of soft drink with their meal and given ice when they asked for it. The drink options were fizzy drinks or orange squash and staff seemed to know the preferences of the residents, offering them appropriate choices. Most residents at the tables were feeding themselves and were left by staff to eat; those who were not eating were encouraged by staff to do so. Two people were fed in the lounge from trays; these residents were assisted by staff to eat their meal and were served after those in the dining room.

After they finished their meal residents wandered back to the lounge or to their rooms. One was waiting for their next cigarette, limited by staff to one per hour. This was smoked at the end of the garden, away from non-smokers in a dedicated smoking shed created specifically for this resident.

The kitchen has a score of 5 under the Scores On The Doors scheme, indicating a good standard of food handling and hygiene.

We spoke to the chef who confirmed that the menu changes regularly and depends upon the season. She appeared very familiar with all the residents and their dietary preferences; she told us none have allergies but two have diabetes which she caters for accordingly. A menu of the day's meals was on each table and showed the variety and choice of food on offer throughout the day.

Talking to the residents it is clear that some enjoy the food at Almadene and consider they have a choice. One spoke of enjoying cornflakes and toast for breakfast rather than the cooked breakfast also available. However another said there was not always a choice available; although what was served was good. The chef baked a cake for a resident's birthday recently.

Meal times are fixed and we were told by residents that snacks were sometimes available outside of meal times, but not regularly. Drinks appeared to be readily available at all times. The evening meal is served at 5.30pm. The chef said that some people eat this meal in their room if they prefer. One resident we spoke to goes to bed soon after the evening meal, preferring to listen to the radio in their room by 7pm.

Activities

We did not observe any activities during our visit. There was an A4 sheet on the dining room wall, along with other notices, indicating daily activities for the current week. Activities on offer included film shows, hair and nail sessions, physical activity, talking newspapers and quizzes; our visit was also listed as an activity.

When we spoke to residents some did not appear to know much about the activities offered or about what they enjoyed doing. One resident said they like to visit the library across the road. Another said they did not know about the advertised outing to Victoria Park in Hackney at the end of July, a poster was displayed in the dining room.

Everyone we spoke to was aware of and seemed to be looking forward to the upcoming summer party, which was advertised throughout the rooms we visited. This is an afternoon party, with food and music for residents, relatives, staff and visitors. We were told there is also a similar event in the winter. Residents were looking forward to the music and to the party food.

We spoke to the manager about activities and she described the range and their organisation. One popular activity is Pet Therapy where trained dogs visit the residents. Activities are discussed at residents meetings and they often help to set up the activities, where appropriate.

In the lounge the TV was on, with subtitles and closed captions, although no one seemed to be watching it. The manager did ask the residents if they wished for the TV to be on or off and they chose for it to remain on for the duration of our visit. One resident said that they liked to read a newspaper every day. There was one copy of the Metro on someone's side table and some books and DVDs were stored under the television. There was otherwise nothing to occupy people in the lounge. In the conservatory there were magazines and some play equipment and activities. Colouring in is also available and examples were hung around the lounge. Several residents proudly pointed out their particular efforts. As we left we saw one resident looking through the pictures and getting ready to do some colouring in.

We would have liked to see more options for general activity in the lounge for all residents; it seemed dedicated to television watching and had poor lighting for reading or other activities. Residents we spoke to said they use their rooms for TV watching and reading so it may be that they prefer to not to do so in the main lounge. The conservatory had good lighting and was suitable for reading or similar activities and we saw it being used for colouring in.

In the dining room there was a whiteboard with the day/date and weather on it. All public rooms had pictures and the name/function of the room so residents are aware of where they are when moving about the home.

Staff responsiveness

During our visit we observed staff being responsive to all residents that asked for assistance and to those requiring help. They displayed a comfortable rapport with residents and those we spoke to generally spoke highly of the staff.

One resident described the bell by their bed which allowed them to call staff in the night if need be. There were no complaints about unresponsiveness. We did not observe any bells in the lounge, dining room or conservatory but staff were always present and appeared aware of residents and could be called directly if need be. Sightlines are such that residents can be seen easily in any of the public rooms.

Staff appeared very familiar with the different needs and abilities of residents when interacting with them, talking closely in a good ear, asking if they have their hearing aid in, or speaking directly in front of their face. When assisting residents to eat we observed staff sitting beside or in front of them, at their level talking to them while they ate. We observed only one staff member wearing a name badge.

One resident said they did not receive good care from one member of staff; they do not help them to get up and out of bed in the morning but sit on the bed leaving them to it. When the resident needed a towel, which had not been provided, and had to ask twice, they described being asked sharply “what do you want?”

All the residents looked very clean and smart during our visit. The laundry is done on site and residents said they value this, though one remarked that at times they have to chase up their items.

Comments & Complaints

We spoke to the residents about complaints in the home. No one we spoke to had made a complaint. One resident said they did not know how to make a complaint but said they would talk to the manager if they had any complaints. Others we spoke to said they too would take their complaint directly to Carol the manager. One resident said they felt it would be taken seriously if they did complain.

It was observed that the complaint procedure was displayed at the front door entrance, but we are not aware if this is set out in writing in the welcome pack for residents and their relatives/visitors to ensure transparency. It would also be useful for residents to know how to make a complaint about the manager if the need arises. This information should be prominently displayed and discussed when welcoming new residents.

Residents spoke about the regular residents meetings, one was held at the end of June. They told us they find these meetings useful, they discuss meals and activities and have the opportunity to raise any issues they might have.

We asked the residents we spoke to what they liked about living in Almadene and they said it was a “home from home”, it was “a comfortable living” environment, where they “had made friends” and were free to come and go around the home as they wished. They had no suggestions for improvement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

We enjoyed meeting the residents and staff of Almadene. The atmosphere in the home was relaxed and friendly and residents we spoke to said they were happy living there. The physical environment could be improved by refreshing the décor and residents could make greater use of the lounge area with better lighting.

The recommendations we make are based upon what we observed during our visit.

1. The public rooms could be redecorated and the décor brought up to date to improve the physical environment.
2. More chairs could be made available for residents' visitors in the lounge area
3. A proper residents' notice board could be added to the dining room wall for activity and other notices, rather than hanging sheets of paper directly on the wall. This would also be a resource for relatives and visitors.
4. The lighting in the lounge could be improved to ensure residents can read or engage in other activities there, it is currently centred upon watching the television.
5. A document clearly setting out the complaints process, including the process of making a complaint about the Manager if need be, should be given to and discussed with all residents and relatives so that they all know how to make a complaint if the need arises and have the information to hand for future reference.
6. All staff should wear name badges at all times.

Service provider response

Dear Health watch team
Thank you for visiting our home.

By way of comment we would like to mention the following

We welcome the visit by the Health watch team as we take pride in the personal touch that we are known for being a small home for elderly. However the following should be taken into consideration when reading the above report. All of our residents albeit one has a diagnosis of dementia and/or mental health issues. Not always can they recall or absorb activities and things they have done. Many suffer from short term memory loss. The visit by Healthwatch was after lunch in the afternoon when most residents do not want an activity.

Yours Sincerely

Carol Bryan

Manager

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.

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