



**REPORT OF ENTER AND VIEW VISITS TO
BEECH HOUSE CARE HOME
Prowse Close, Thornbury BS35 1EG**

**Two visits undertaken during September 2014
(10th and 25th September 2014)**

Authorised representatives undertaking the visits:

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October 2014

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch South Gloucestershire Enter and View authorised representatives wish to express their gratitude to the residents of Beech House Care Home, Thornbury and their families, friends and carers who generously participated in conversations with Healthwatch.

Healthwatch South Gloucestershire would also like to thank Beech House Care Home Manager and all the Care Home staff who were willing and able to engage and answer numerous queries. The members of staff were always welcoming and helpful.

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1. Executive Summary

The consensus view of Beech House Care home residents can be summed up as:

“You couldn’t wish to find a better care home”

“The nurses and carers are very good to me. I am looked after pretty well in here. My care is excellent.”

Quotes from residents

Healthwatch South Gloucestershire Enter and View authorised representatives observed :

- *A well led team of motivated staff*
- *Person centred approach to caring for residents*
- *That residents do have ‘choice’*
- *A large number of activities available and a willingness to do more and different things*
- *Good menus ... good nutrition and hydration*
- *Homely, happy atmosphere*

2 Introduction and Background

2.1 Local Healthwatch organisations are corporate bodies and within the contractual arrangements made with their local authority must carry out particular activities. (The activities were confirmed by Section 221(2) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, amended in Part 5, section 182(1) to (4) of the 2012 Act). Some of these activities include:

- enabling local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved,
- obtaining the views of local people regarding their needs for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known,
- making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved, and
- local Healthwatch has an additional power to Enter and View providers so that matters relating to health and social care services can be observed.

2.2 In order to enable Healthwatch South Gloucestershire to gather the information it needs about services, there are times when it is appropriate for Healthwatch staff and volunteers to see and hear how those services are provided. Organisations must allow authorised representatives to Enter and View the nature and quality of the services as long as this does not affect the provision of care, or the privacy and dignity of people using the service.

2.3 Healthwatch Enter and View visits are not part of a formal inspection process, neither are they any form of audit. Rather, they are a way for Healthwatch South Gloucestershire to gain a better understanding of local health and social care services by seeing them in operation and talking to the service users, their families/carers and the care staff.

2.4 Enter and View representatives are not required to have any prior in-depth knowledge about a service before they Enter and View it. Their role is simply to observe the service, talk to service users, and staff if appropriate, and make comments and recommendations based on their subjective observations and impressions in the form of a report.

2.5 The Enter and View Report is aimed at outlining what the authorised representatives saw and heard making any suitable suggestions for improvement to the service concerned. The report may also make recommendations for commissioners, regulators or for Healthwatch to explore particular issues in more detail.

Unless stated otherwise, the visits are not designed to pursue the rectification of issues previously identified by other regulatory agencies. Any serious issues that are identified during a Healthwatch Enter and View visit are referred to the service provider and appropriate regulatory agencies for their rectification.

3. Enter and View Purpose, Aim and Objectives

3.1 The Purpose of the Enter and View visits

The Enter and View (E&V) visits are part of an ongoing programme of work being implemented by Healthwatch South Gloucestershire to understand the quality of residents' care experience within local care homes; particularly where residents have, or could be expected to have, dementia.

Full details of the work-plan for Healthwatch South Gloucestershire (HwSG) are available on the website: **www.healthwatchsouthglos.co.uk**

3.2 Beech House Care Home in Thornbury is registered to care for 55 (fifty five) residents of 50 years of age or older, and provides respite, residential, nursing and day-care services. It also has a separate area with 13 rooms called 'The Poplars' specifically for people with Dementia; this area, which has its own dining and activity rooms, opened in May 2013.

Their website states:

"Our whole care team is totally dedicated to our residents, ensuring holistic care to enable a fulfilled and happy lifestyle.

Our nurses and carers undertake extensive ongoing training. Many of our team members have been with us since the home's opening day."

3.3 A report from an inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 21 November 2013 found that Beech House Care Home met all the required standards for:

- Care and welfare of people who used the services
- Meeting nutritional needs
- Safety, availability and suitability of equipment
- Requirements relating to workers
- Complaints
- Records

3.4 The Aim and Objectives of the Enter and View visits:

Aim

“To find out about residents’ lived experience of Beech House Care Home.”

Objectives

- To undertake two (2) separate announced E&V visits during September 2014; that is, on different days of the week,
- To visit at different times of the day; over lunchtime and early evening/supertime, for a minimum of two and a half (2.5) hours for each visit,
- To have a minimum of three pairs of authorised representatives visiting, to ensure that as many residents who wished to speak to Healthwatch had the opportunity to do so,
- To observe the overall service provided for residents, including any structured activities and meals, using a template as an ‘aide-memoire’,
- To engage residents in conversation about their daily lives in Beech House Care Home, using the template and prompt questions,
- To engage residents families and friends in conversation to elicit their views about the service their relative receives,
- To produce a report of the findings from the observations and conversations
- To make comments on the findings and recommendations for change,
- To share the final report with Beech House Care Home staff and residents; and appropriate organisations and agencies such as South Gloucestershire Local Authority and the Care Quality Commission, and
- To provide an opportunity for the E&V authorised representatives to learn from the process, and test out and refine their methodology for future Care Home E&V visits.

4. Methodology

4.1 HwSG Enter and View Planning Group, comprising all HwSG E&V authorised representatives, had agreed a template as an aide-memoire for relevant observations. This template had been successfully tested and adopted for use following previous E&V visits to a Care Home. A list of prompt questions had also been adopted for use. The headings for the observations and questions covered the following categories (in no particular order, nor are they exclusive or exhaustive):

- First impressions of the Care Home
- Residents' Environment
- Staffing Issues
- Activities for residents
- Person Centred Care
- Conversations with residents
- Conversations with residents' relatives
- Conversations with members of care staff
- Nutrition and hydration
- Resident's choice
- Any other comments or observations

4.3 Some of the prompt questions, which were found to be helpful if there was a hiatus in the flow of a conversation with a resident, included open questions such as;

- Please tell me about your daily routine; for example, food, activities, company and visitors,
- What do you think about the care that you receive,
- How frequently are you able to have a shower/bath
- How are you helped to have a meal or a drink,
- What sort of activities are you able to enjoy, and
- Can you give some examples of choices you are able to make; for example, about television (or radio) being switched on (or off), which channels you can watch/hear; what food you like to eat; how are you able to choose which clothes to wear; getting up/bedtime, going outside into the garden, other 'routines'.

4.4 The Care Home had been informed in advance by telephone and letter of the E&V visits, and dates and times agreed. Posters and leaflets about HwSG had also been sent to the Care Home in advance so that these could be displayed on notice boards and used to inform residents, their relatives and members of staff about the

role of HwSG, the E&V visits; and to encourage relatives to be present during the visits.

4.5 Each visit took the form of a series of semi-structured conversations with residents and/or their relatives. Enter and View representatives also spent time observing the service provided and the environment and considering what impact these would have on residents. The views of some of the members of Care Home staff, including qualified Nurses, Care Assistants and ancillary staff, were also sought.

4.6 All the E&V authorised representatives had received the initial Healthwatch England approved E&V training and some subsequent training sessions in areas such Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding Adults, and Dual Sensory Loss; so, working in pairs, they were able to structure their questioning to ensure depth and converse with the specific abilities and needs of those to whom they were speaking. Each pair of E&V representatives introduced themselves to residents and explained the purpose of their visit.

4.7 The data collected took the form of the E&V representatives' subjective observations and notes from conversations with residents and/or their relatives, and members of staff. Observations were gathered by all the E&V representatives, being recorded contemporaneously and then collated afterwards and used to inform this report. Pairs of E&V representatives conducted in-depth conversations with residents and staff. These conversations were semi-structured and often wide-ranging, using the template and prompt questions.

5. Findings

5.1 The findings are presented as bullet points from the E&V representatives notes, using the template observation headings. Quotes (in italics) from conversations with residents and/or their relatives, and members of staff, are used to illustrate the experience of living in Beech House Care Home.

5.2 First impressions:

- The entrance hall was bright, clean and welcoming, with comfortable reception chairs and photo albums of events and residents' activities on display on a coffee table.
- Hand sanitizer available and posters and leaflets on display, including the HwSG poster about E&V visits.

- A strict access protocol was enforced ensuring that all the Enter and View representatives were accredited and their DBS certificates were properly scrutinised.
- Well decorated/ furnished public rooms and residents rooms. No unpleasant smells.
- Staff were friendly and welcoming
- Portable Appliance Testing certificates displayed which provided evidence and awareness of recent alerts.
- All the areas viewed open with sufficient space for privacy and for staff to manoeuvre equipment.
- Overall a very pleasant environment, free from noise.
- A tranquil atmosphere and it appeared as though the residents are happy and staff work in harmony.
- It felt a safe, pleasant and harmonious place to reside.

5.3 Environment

The observations noted about the Care Home environment are as follows:

- The outside of the building looks very attractive and in keeping with the surrounding houses.
- The whole place has a warm, welcoming, friendly, homely atmosphere.
- The garden at the rear was large, secluded and beautifully maintained with water features, sheltered areas for seating and well kept lawns and flower beds.
- The garden was easily accessible by a wheelchair.
- Many ground floor residents rooms had french windows leading directly on the gardens and the residents had their own flowers pots and tubs which they could maintain.
- The rooms are mainly single occupancy with a few double rooms for couples available.

- All rooms had en-suite facilities.
- Furniture is provided by the Care Home but residents can have some personal items of furniture and memorabilia. This was evident with many pictures and photos on the walls.
- Every room had a picture frame on the door with the residents name printed clearly in it. The corridors were bright, clean, attractively decorated with pictures and ornaments.
- The ground floor was large, well furnished and had a large lounge with a television which, when not use, shows an image of a fireplace and fire to make the room look homely and welcoming. Furnishing looked new and in good condition.
- Fans were on in some corridors to aid the flow of air.
- There were several bathrooms well equipped with hoists and lifting equipment.
- Their was a mini kitchen on each of the two floors where visitors and residents could make a cup of tea whenever they wished.
- There were small cork notice boards in each room for displaying information for residents, and personal to each resident, these were a new initiative and only just being used. It was noted that one resident, who stated they had short term memory loss, referred to this board to check what they were doing that day.
- Hand rails along walls in corridors.
- Dining room arranged with food delivered from a serving counter, cafe style.
- Use of technology for registering and recording call bells from residents rooms.
- One resident expressed an opinion that his bedside table needed repair but that was his only cause for complaint.
- It was observed that in a ground floor shower room the drain cover had been removed and was lying on the floor and potentially posed a trip hazard.

5.4 Staffing

- There is a stable team of staff many of whom have been at Beech House since it opened 14 years ago.
- Turnover of staff is low and there is a good team spirit.
- There are at least 3 qualified nurses plus care assistants on site.

- Catering and housekeeping staff wore smart uniforms.
- All members of care staff have had dementia awareness training.
- In 'The Poplars', where people with dementia are cared for, the members of staff appeared to be busy but they seemed happy in their work and addressed residents courteously and compassionately, using their name and smiling, taking time to speak to them. They did not rush anything they were doing with each resident and ensured that each residents needs were understood and met.
- Members of staff were very clear about the management and distraction techniques they used with residents with dementia who continually asked to go home.
- Nursing Students from UWE are placed at the Care Home in the early stages of their training for up to 3 months with regular contact from the tutors. Some work experience students taken from local schools.
- Most of the staff training is held at one of the other care homes in the group but some is distance (on line) based. Asked about appraisals, it was stated that they were held twice a year and included an opportunity to discuss training requirements or discuss any concerns. A member of staff also said that the manager was very approachable and she could discuss any problems with her. There were staff meetings for sharing information and the opportunity to make suggestions, e.g. for new activities.
- One member of staff said that the only thing she would like to change was the fact that their lunch break had been reduced from one hour to half hour in a 12 hour shift
- The Care Home Manager is full of enthusiasm to make the Home the best it can be for all the residents. She had ideas for different approaches, e.g. the Home was recently involved with a project with the University of West of England about the use of technology (a robot development) to support care of older people. The manager demonstrates very good leadership skills.
- There is support from an Assertive In-Reach Mental Health team. Also available to residents are: physiotherapist, podiatrist, occupational therapist and optician.
- Staff said they would recommend Beech House as a good place to work and live and

"There are plenty of opportunities for training, such as manual handling, infection control, fire safety and immunisation. Trainers are brought in or we go off-site for this"

"There is a lovely team here. The managers are very supportive. Residents form a bond with us, they all know us by our first names. I'm very happy working here and would love to become a Senior Carer. I am currently doing a Level 3 NVQ."

5.5 Activities for residents

- The home manager informed us of all the planned activities for residents. This was confirmed by the patients and staff we spoke to.
- The residents have a gardening club with support from a local horticultural group and raised beds where they plant their own vegetables and some fruits.
- Baking is very popular with residents and carried out regularly
- One 95 year-old lady is taken swimming weekly.
- A member of staff brings her puppy in for residents to react with and the home has a resident cat.
- An I-pad Air was bought for residents to play games, do virtual tours and trace family trees.
- A regular church service is held on Sundays and is well attended.
- The large conservatory is known as the 'keep fit and sherry' room as this is where the daily keep fit class is held followed by a glass of sherry. There is evidence of other activities too, such as jigsaws and piano playing. The room is large, bright and airy with lots of windows and sufficient chairs and recliners.
- Local artists have been commissioned to do sculptures and art pieces for a patio area.
- There is a Japanese garden with water features which creates a very relaxing atmosphere
- There is a well thought out memory room with changing scenery backdrop and props and aids to help prompt memories.
- There are trips out for residents to a variety of places of interest, for shopping and to the local town centre.
- 'Tasting menus' sessions are held and residents are enabled to have food that they recall and that brings back positive memories; e.g. one recent meal request was spam, egg and chips.

5.6 Person-Centred Care/Residents Choice

- Residents are undertaking regular trips such as visiting a local restaurant. One resident called it 'parties'.
- A hairdresser and Podiatrist visits the home at regular intervals and residents can have their hair done. Not sure whether a fee is charged for this.
- Various church services available for residents.

- One resident is accompanied to go swimming on a regular basis as this is her preference.
- Newspapers/ magazines can be delivered.
- Doctors are called when required – residents can ask for their own GP.
- Residents were wearing their own clothes. They were also being taken to the hairdressing salon in the Home.
- Residents can choose when they get up and go to bed and also when they wish to shower or bath.
- They can choose whether they join in activities with other residents or have an activity just to suit them.
- They can go on outings in the minibus to a local restaurant or the shops, be helped to enjoy a walk around the area, go in to the town centre for a coffee or just stay in the garden or lounge.
- Visitors can visit whenever they wish.

“The carers come quite quickly when I ring my call bell. I can’t stand up very well on my own. The staff are very good. I’m comfortable and happy as I can be here. I feel settled. I do go out for trips in to Thornbury with help.” (A female resident)

5.7 Nutrition and hydration

- Residents are encouraged to eat in dining room rather than their rooms.
- Water is available in the residents’ rooms and refreshed.
- Residents are offered drinks on a regular basis and we observed drinks being made for residents ‘on demand’.
- A week’s menu plan and programme of activities is given to every resident at the beginning of the week and this has two choices of meals at every meal time.
- All residents are offered a two course hot meal at midday.
- Residents can choose their own preferences for breakfast and some choose to have breakfast in bed. They can have breakfast at a time to suit themselves and are not rushed.
- One resident said the kitchen staff are very good.
- Another resident said the food was *‘first rate and well cooked’*
- We observed some residents being given ‘build up’ drinks.

- Residents are weighed monthly, if they are losing weight they are weighed weekly.
- One resident said: “ The food we have here is brilliant, my favourites are omelettes and jacket potatoes. At times I do need help with feeding, some days are better than others. I can have a cup of coffee whenever I want – don't like tea. I went out for lunch with my wife yesterday.”

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Overall, the standard of care and service provided at Beech House Care Home was considered to be exceptionally high.

6.2 The impressions that the Enter and View authorised representatives came away with were that:

- members of staff were caring and conscientious and that the many of the residents were not merely content but happy to be there, with many of them saying that the service could not be bettered, and
- there was good, thoughtful care for people with dementia resident in The Poplars.

6.3 Based on the findings there are just two suggestions for small changes that the HwSG E&V representatives would like to see in The Poplars; that:

- residents in The Poplars could have small personal memory boards; for example, personal photos, on the doors to their rooms thus enabling them to more easily recognise their own room, and
- biscuits that are offered to residents at coffee time, are offered from a plate rather than direct from the packet, as was observed during one visit to The Poplars.

Disclaimer

- This report relates only to a series of two specific visits (a series of points in time in September 2014)
- This report is not representative of all the residents or members of staff (only those who contributed, or chose to contribute, within the restricted time available).

