Enter and View Report
Curzon House

Care Home Contact Details:

Curzon House
Curzon Street
Saltney
Chester CH4 8BP

Date of Visit: 25 April 2019
Time of Visit: 10.30 am

Healthwatch Cheshire Authorised Representatives (ARs):
Andrew Firman, Sonja Wolf, Andrew Pleass

Curzon House Staff Present:
Kerry Fisher – Unit Manager

What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch Cheshire (HWC) is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across England established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. HWC represents the consumer voice of those using local health and social services and trades as both Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West.

The statutory requirements of all local Healthwatch include an 'Enter and View' responsibility to visit any publicly funded adult health and social care services. Enter and View visits may be conducted if providers invite this, if HWC receive information of concern about a service and/or equally when consistently positive feedback about services is presented. In this way we can learn about and share examples of the limitations and strengths of services visited from the perspective of people who experience the services first hand.

Visits conducted are followed by the publication of formal reports where findings of good practice and recommendations to improve the service are made.

Contact Details: Healthwatch Cheshire, Sension House, Denton Drive, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 7LU. Tel: 0300 323 0006.

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1. Description & Nature of Service

Details of home:

Group: Vivo Care Choices Ltd

Person in charge: Kerry Fisher (Unit Manager)

Local Authority / Social Services: Cheshire West and Chester Council (click for contact details)

Type of Service: Care Home only (Residential Care) – Privately Owned , Registered for a maximum of 35 Service Users

Registered Care Categories*: Dementia • Mental Health Condition • Old Age • Physical Disability • Sensory Impairment • Younger Adults

Specialist Care Categories: Alzheimer's

Single Rooms: 35

Latest Care Quality Commission* Report on Curzon House: click here

Latest CQC Report – The latest CQC inspection took place in June 2018 (report dated 13 August 2018) at which Curzon House was awarded an overall Good rating. The current home manager, Kerry Fisher, who started work at Curzon House in October 2017, was appointed as an experienced care home specialist, to lead improvement in a service which had been found 'inadequate' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) before her

arrival, and had been in special measures for two years. A re-inspection by CQC in February 2018 reported an improvement and changed the judgment to Requires Improvement. The follow-up inspection in June 2018 judged Curzon House to be Good in all categories with the exception of the Well Led category. The leadership was judged to have improved significantly but CQC felt it needed *'a longer term of consistent good practice'* in order to be merit a Good rating in this category.

Website information: Provider Vivo Care Choices Ltd has a website which lists all its services and care homes. Detail of services provided by Curzon House is given on pages 7 and 8 of a downloadable Services Directory. Curzon House is described as *'Our Dementia Centre of Excellence'*.
Carehome.co.uk reviews: None currently
Google reviews: 6 Google reviews at time of Healthwatch visit: all 5 star
Any jobs advertised at the home: 1 current vacancy : Activities Coordinator (closing date for applications 26/04/2019)

2. Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cheshire would like to thank the service provider, care home manager, residents, visitors and staff for their contributions to this Enter and View visit.

3. Disclaimer

This report relates to findings gathered on a specific date of visiting the service as set out above. Consequently, the report is not suggested to be a fully representative portrayal of the experiences of all the residents and/or staff and/or family members/friends but does provide an account of what was observed and presented to Healthwatch Cheshire Representatives at the time of the visit.

4. Purpose of the Visit

- To enable Healthwatch Cheshire Representatives to see for themselves how the service is being provided in terms of quality of life and quality of care principles
- To capture the views and experiences of residents, family members/friends and staff
- To consider the practical experience of family/friends when visiting the service in terms of access, parking and other visitor facilities
- To identify areas of resident satisfaction, good practice within the service and any areas felt to be in need of improvement
- To enable Healthwatch Cheshire Representatives to observe how the service delivers on the statements it advertises on its website.

5. Introduction/Orientation to Service

Curzon House is a 35 bedroom facility in Saltney, on the outskirts of Chester, operated by Vivo Care Choices Ltd which itself is fully owned 'at arm's length' by Cheshire West and Chester Council. It combines the services of a residential care home, a day centre and a short-stay facility providing respite for carers or a period of assessment and rehabilitation for users whose needs may have

changed, for example after discharge from hospital or a fall at home. The age range of current service users is 55 to 105 years many of whom exhibit dementia symptoms.

The range of services provided by Curzon House means that it is a complex operation. The high turnover of service users in respite care and in day centre attendance, presents a high level of risk to be managed. Embedding all necessary systems is still a work in progress

Curzon House supports up to 25 day service users, some of whom come every day others for short, regular periods: all are referred to Curzon House by health or social services practitioners. Current average attendance at day services was said by the manager to be '*no less than 19 per day*'.

There are currently 8 permanent residents, which have increased from 7 at the time of the manager's appointment and which she would like to grow still further.

6. Methodology

Representatives were equipped with various tools to aid the gathering of information. The following techniques were used by the Representatives:

- Direct observation of interactions between staff and residents
- Participant observation within therapeutic/social activities where appropriate
- Assessing the suitability of the environment in which the service operates in supporting the needs of the residents
- Observing the delivery and quality of care provided
- Talking to residents, visitors and staff (where appropriate and available) about their thoughts and feelings regarding the service provided
- Observing the quality and adequacy of access, parking and other facilities for visitors.

7. Summary of Key Findings

- The overall impression is of a friendly, well-led and caring establishment
- The care home manager brings 35 years' experience of leading the care of elderly people
- Clear evidence of the impact she has made at Curzon House to improve services and operation including the use of technology
- Many ideas for further development of service provided at Curzon House.

8. Detailed Findings

8.1 Location, external appearance, ease of access, signage, parking

Curzon House is located in a quiet cul-de-sac off Saltney High Street which is on bus routes to and from Chester and provides shops, a post office, a pharmacy and other medical facilities. The main two storey building has bungalow-style annexes and appears clean and well maintained. It is clearly signed from a large car park in front of the entrance which also displays notices of CCTV camera surveillance. Directly adjacent is a separately owned and managed social housing

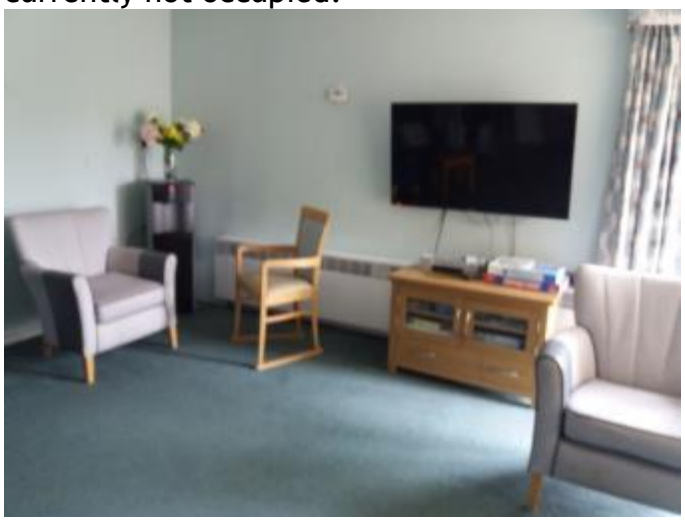
facility, Curzon Court.

8.2 Initial impressions (from a visitor's perspective on entering the home)

Beyond the small entrance lobby is a small hallway which appears rather dark due to the colour of internal brickwork. A reception office is immediately to the right of the entrance. CQC registration certificates and other official notices are displayed on a board on the left. Healthwatch ARs were greeted warmly by the receptionist who asked us to sign the visitors book, then took us to a central communal room with table and chairs. We were offered refreshments whilst the receptionist announced our arrival to the manager. The manager in turn was very welcoming and took us upstairs to a quiet room (a kitchen/dining area) with table and chairs where we began our discussions.

8.3 Facilities for and involvement with family/friends

Although the very purpose of respite services and the day care centre is to provide an opportunity for a break for service users and their carers or family, several visitors were seen on the day of our visit, and visiting hours at Curzon House are flexible. There are several lounges and communal rooms in the ground floor day centre where family and residents can meet. The first floor has 16 bedrooms, a kitchen diner and small lounge and despite being well-maintained is currently not occupied.



First floor lounge. Not currently in use (see later comments)

Healthwatch ARs engaged with several visitors: a husband who was taking his wife out for lunch; another gentleman, accompanied by a friend, whose wife had since January become a permanent resident, having previously been a day centre user. The gentleman explained that increasingly he was unable to cope with her deteriorating mental condition at home. The lady in question did not recognise that she was now a permanent resident at the home. The gentleman was very complimentary of the home and of the manager's support for residents. He made a suggestion that visitor badges or lanyards could be provided to distinguish visitors from service users so as to minimise any embarrassment to visitors in communal rooms when there is such a high turnover of attendance.

8.4 Internal physical environment

8.4.1 Décor, Lighting, heating, furnishing & floor coverings

Decoration appeared in good condition throughout, apart from one or two doorframes with chipped paintwork in the main entrance corridor which is no

doubt subject to the most frequent traffic. The manager bemoaned the lack of permanent maintenance staff and the budget to allow touch-up of these areas Plain pastel colours are used on walls: lounges and upstairs bedroom corridors are carpeted: other communal areas have hard surface laminate or vinyl flooring; The unoccupied bedrooms we visited had laminate flooring, with vinyl used in en-suite facilities. Walls displayed paintings, photos of old film stars and other celebrities. A wall in the day centre dining area was decorated with a collage of trees displaying photographs of day centre users and activities.

Comfortable, well-decorated first floor lounge.

A pleasant temperature was maintained throughout the home. Rooms have good daylight and, where used, artificial lighting was appropriate.

8.4.2 Freshness, cleanliness/hygiene & cross infection measures

There were no unpleasant smells in the home. Communal rooms and furniture appeared clean: housekeeping staff were in evidence during our visit. Hand sanitisers were noticed in the entrance area and the medication room, this is not to say there were not more in other areas. An infection control inspection was taking place on the morning of our visit. Good risk assessments and embedding of systems to prevent cross-infection were said by the manager to be critical in an environment with such a high turnover of service users as Curzon House. As an example, all mattresses are numbered and dated as part of infection control procedures for residential and respite users.

8.4.3 Suitability of design to meet needs of residents

Corridors, communal areas and bedrooms are spacious enough to accommodate users with wheelchairs, indeed a number of wheelchair users arrived in a community minibus at the same time as Healthwatch ARs. Shower rooms and toilets are located on both floors and are clearly marked. An assisted bathroom is available on the ground floor.

Toilet and shower facility on first floor

Shower and bathrooms are also available to day-centre users

Whilst there is also sufficient room provision for ‘quiet space’, the day centre on the ground floor is operated as a communal ‘clubhouse’ for larger group activities and has free movement by residents and respite users alike. Ground floor corridors are named Eastgate Street and Bridge Street respectively. Handrails and doors are painted in different colours. Direction signs for toilets and bathrooms are blue, those for bedrooms are buff-coloured.

Lowerable beds with PIR motion detectors and pressure mattresses, as used in first floor bedrooms, to reduce the risk of falls. Airflow mattresses set to users' weights are also available.

The first floor consisting of 16 bedrooms, a kitchen diner and small lounge is not currently occupied. Bedrooms have been refurbished completely since the new manager's arrival, with PIR sensors and falls prevention technology installed. The manager has secured authorisation to recruit additional staff to allow full-time residential intake to be raised from 8 to 16, in which case all residential users would be accommodated on the first floor. The manager believes that the more intimate, domestic environment which could be provided on the first floor would be beneficial for dementia patients. Funding to support this in practice however is not yet available.

Accordingly, the aim would be to free up the ground floor to allow discrete areas to be used for the day centre alongside the respite unit, and allow 19 downstairs bedrooms to be used for permanent nursing care if required, which Curzon House's CQC registration permits. It is a Finance decision not to pursue this option at present however. The manager believes that having a higher proportion of permanent residents would reduce risks to service users and would be of positive benefit to those with dementia as there would be greater stability in the number of 'new faces' they come into contact with.

8.5 Staff support skills & interaction

8.5.1 Staff appearance/presentation

Other than housekeeping staff, care staff do not wear uniforms (but wear lanyards) to create a more 'homely' environment for service users. All were neat, tidy and well-presented. They were friendly, often introducing themselves by name to Healthwatch ARs, and engaging well with service users. Those we talked to enjoyed their work:

'I've been here 14 years. I work 3 days per week. I enjoy it. Every day is different. You have to keep your eyes open'.

8.5.2 Affording dignity and respect/Approach to care giving motivation

Staff were attentive to and respectful of users, not rushing them and comforting them when appropriate. There was cheerful dialogue with individual users.

The Activities Coordinator struck up an impromptu song *'It's a long way to Tipperary'* with one resident and others joined in.

Staff to user ratio is currently 1:5 with an aim of increasing this to 1:4.

The manager commented that staff were devastated when Curzon House received its Inadequate rating from CQC after previous Good ratings.

There is a commitment to staff training and support. The manager is in the process of commissioning additional specialist training in dementia care. The manager herself would value the additional support which membership of the National Care Forum could bring. However we were told that membership is only provided to carers working in a non-profit making organisation, which does not apply to Vivo as any budget surpluses are returned to the local authority.

8.5.3 Effective communications – alternative systems and accessible information

There are clear signs with pictograms in corridors and on doors. A weekly activities plan is displayed in poster form and in individual stand-up displays on tables.

Activities plan displayed in pictorial format on table.

Notable dates and events calendar.

8.6 Physical Welfare

8.6.1 Appearance, dress & hygiene

Service users were all fully dressed and appeared clean and healthy. On the day of our visit there were 9 men and 4 women using the day centre communal lounge. One or two were dozing in chairs, but the majority were attentive and participating in a quiz led by a staff member. All other service users we met appeared alert and comfortable in each other's company.

8.6.2 Nutrition/mealtimes and hydration

Catering is carried out on site using fresh ingredients. Breakfast times are flexible to allow for individual preferences. A published menu was not seen, but when asked by a day centre user what was on the menu for lunch that day, the manager checked with staff and informed her that there was a choice of corned beef salad, or haddock, potatoes and vegetables. The meal itself when offered towards the end of our visit looked appetising to Healthwatch ARs. One user commented that she was very happy with the choice and quality of meals provided. Hot drinks are provided throughout the day and two water dispensers were noted in the day centre.

Dining area in day centre.

8.6.3 Support with general & specialist health needs/Maximising mobility & sensory capacities

Medical support is primarily provided by district nurses and the local NHS Hospital At Home team which the manager described as '*superb'*.

All bedrooms have a secure, passcode-operated medication cabinet.

A particular problem, which is difficult to overcome, arises from the high turnover of respite residents who may need short-term supplies of medication from their own GP. There is apparently reluctance, on cost grounds, for GPs to prescribe what they see as additional medication, despite the home making it clear that any surpluses would be sent home to the main carer. A related issue is the need for these prescriptions to be sent to the care home's contracted pharmacy, which is unlikely to be the same as the patient's regular provider.
Within the next few weeks, a physio- and occupational therapist will be engaged for regular visits to the home to aid people with mobility needs and also to conduct staff training.
Curzon House has a hearing loop system in place.

8.7 Social, emotional and cultural welfare
8.7. 1 Personalisation & personal possessions
Personalisation of resident bedrooms is encouraged. Relatives of respite care residents are encouraged to help fill memory boxes to help staff build relationships quickly with this changing clientele. We were shown a memory box outside the room of a permanent 105 year old resident who was formerly a midwife. Users are encouraged to continue to practise or to take up personal hobbies: for example, a doll's house was purchased for a gentleman who used to build them in the past.
8.7.2 Choice, control & identity
One resident has an active Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DoLS) in place, DoLS applications have been posted for the other seven residents and staff, by necessity, act as if the DoLS has already been granted. Pressure mats are not widely used in bedrooms as they cause alarm to some users or may be simply stepped over. As reported in paragraph 8.4.3 however alternative motion sensing technology is used in bedrooms. Doors to all bedrooms are also alarmed.
8.7.3 Feeling safe and able to raise concerns/complaints
Residents appeared to speak freely with staff. Family members engaged with appeared content with the home: '*I have no complaints'*.
8.7.4 Structured and unstructured activities/stimulation
Provision of a rich variety of activities to the varied range of service users is overseen by an experienced and engaging activities coordinator, who will unfortunately shortly be leaving Curzon House after 11 years to take up a similar position in the NHS. We observed her as she was making a cardboard cinema style mock up around a TV screen for a 'Saturday Night at the Movies' themed session in a day centre lounge whilst engaging with three residents and telling us about the activities they undertake. We joined her in a spontaneous singalong with the three residents. A vacancy is currently advertised for a full-time replacement activities coordinator but the manager feels this may need to be re-graded as it is not attracting the desired quality of candidate.

Weekly activities plan.

A weekly activities plan is published as an outline, but staff respond to users' unplanned requests as best they can. A variety of activities was described: on the evening prior to our visit a race night had been organised; a knit and natter session had taken place that morning; a quiz was in progress in a lounge. Themed bistro nights with an entertainer to which carers and relatives are also invited were said to be very popular.

The Activities Office contains boxes of themed activities and equipment, for staff to use to entertain service users.

Curzon House subscribes to Weekly Sparkle newsletter and CD which contains songs, activities and other items of general interest which support reminiscence activity. Wi-Fi is available but is not widely used. Curzon House has use of a people carrier: short trips are arranged to local supermarkets; monthly visits to a Memory Café; longer trips requiring additional staff, e.g. on narrow boats, have also been made. A further visit is planned for September.

The home is encouraging the recruitment of volunteers from Chester Voluntary Service and local churches. The idea is to develop role profiles for volunteers so that they can link shared interests with individual residents.

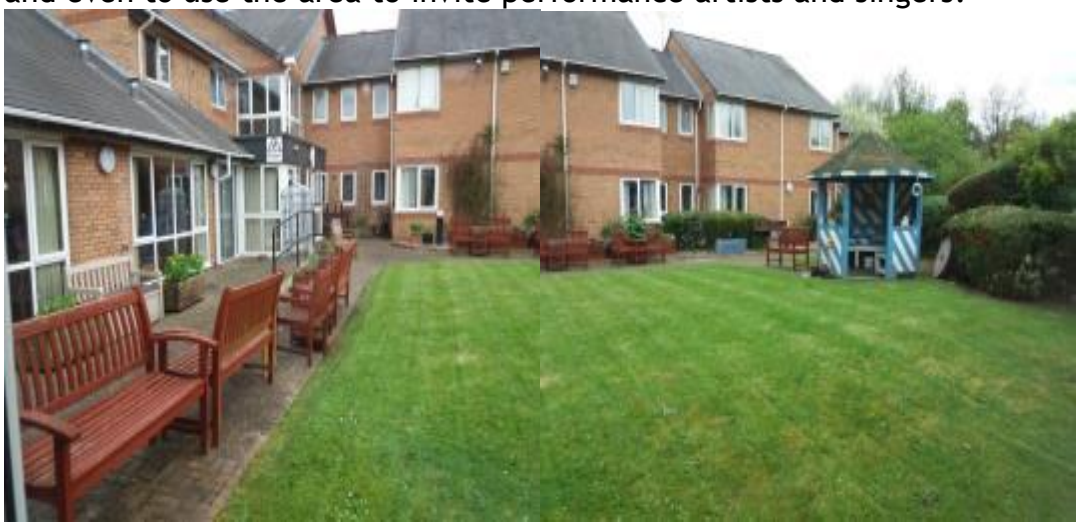
The pool room is popular with male day centre users.

8.7.5 Cultural, religious/spiritual needs

Various churches have visited Curzon House without to service users. This has included Methodist, Church of England and Jehovah's Witnesses.

8.7.6 Gardens – maintenance & design/suitability for use/enjoyment

There is a large level, enclosed rear garden, laid mainly to lawn but with plenty of seating and a summer-house with a movable bar. Access from lounges is suitable for wheelchair users. There is a potting shed and there are small raised beds for residents to develop and plant. A railway track runs to the rear of the garden: some residents are happy to sit and watch the trains pass. The manager said she would like to redesign some elements of the garden to make it more suitable for residents : for example to provide shade by means of a sun-sail, to install some handrails, perhaps to provide a small golf putting area on the lawn and even to use the area to invite performance artists and singers.



9. Observations

9.1 Elements of observed/reported good practice

- An experienced home manager with the ability to turn around a demoralising situation and help motivate existing staff to deliver comprehensive service improvements
- A lively, well-used respite and day centre
- Many creative ideas for further improvements to services, facilities and the enjoyment of users
- Attention to detail personalising care to individual service users
- Idea to develop and link volunteer and service user profiles.

9.2 Other observations/findings of note applicable

Vivo Care Services Ltd. is currently looking at potential providers of Dementia Pathway training for Curzon House staff.
Curzon Court next door, although separately owned by Sanctuary Housing, is directly connected to Curzon House. In time, if funding became available to incorporate it with Curzon House, it offers potential for further expansion of services. It could provide an opportunity for an outreach service to deliver home support packages and/or to provide additional capacity for safe NHS discharge routes from hospitals.

10. Comparisons

10.1 Comparisons of observations against providers website

The Vivo Care Services website would benefit from separate tabbed pages to allow more detail and individuality to be presented on the range of Vivo care homes and services.

10.2 Comparisons with previous Healthwatch visit(s) where applicable

No previous Healthwatch visits have taken place.

11. Recommendations

- Vivo Care Services and Sanctuary Housing should consider strategic opportunities at Curzon House and Curzon Court to develop a more integrated care service in Cheshire West and Chester
- CCG to consider communicating with GPs regarding the need to find a solution to reduce bureaucracy in provision of medication to respite centres
- Vivo Care Services to consider budgets to provide a dedicated member of staff for maintenance and odd jobs at Curzon House
- Curzon House to consider provision and use of visitor badges
- Curzon House to pursue the development of volunteer profiles and activities to promote and support shared interests of users
- Curzon House to actively pursue the recruitment of a suitable replacement activities coordinator

Feedback from Provider of Service
To be completed prior to publication from comments received from feedback form.