Enter and View Report
Birch Heath Lodge

Care Home Contact Details: Ann Nolan, Birch Heath Lodge, Birch Heath Lane, Christleton CH3 7AP

Date of Visit: 28/08/2019
Time of Visit: 9.30

Healthwatch Cheshire Authorised Representatives:
Pat Clare
Shani Bernie

Staff Present:
Ann Nolan – Care Home 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, Denton Drive, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 7LU Tel: 0300 323 0006

1. Description & Nature of Service

1. Description & Nature of Service

Group: Maria Mallaband Care Group Ltd

Person in charge: Ann Nolan (Care Manager)

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

Type of Service: Care Home with nursing – Privately Owned, Registered for a maximum of 38 Service Users

Registered Care Categories*: Old Age

Specialist Care Categories: Cancer Care • Hearing Impairment • Parkinson's Disease • Stroke

Admission Information: Ages 55+.

Single Rooms: 34

Shared Rooms: 2

Rooms with ensuite WC: 24

Facilities & Services: Palliative Care • Day Care • Respite Care • Own GP if required • Own Furniture if required • Smoking not permitted • Close to Local shops • Near Public Transport • Lift • Stairlift • Wheelchair access • Gardens for residents • Television point in own room

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

Birch Heath Lodge is an older property with a purpose-built annexe, Greenwood. It is situated within the village of Christleton with access to its amenities. It is part of the Maria Mallaband Group that has 80 such facilities nationally. It has 38 beds but currently has 26 residents and an additional resident who is currently in hospital. Some of the rooms have an en-suite sink and toilet whist others share facilities. The age range of residents is 75-104. The home is a fairly even mixture of social services and privately funded residents, the cost of residential care is about £990 a week and nursing care £1200. The home also offers respite, day care and end of life care.

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 latest CQC report had been good in all areas (Jan 17) and HW visited 2 months later and gave a satisfied report. Since then, the service has undergone managerial and staff changes. The service had temporary managers until the present manager was appointed in April this year. A recent CQC visit has raised serious concerns (not yet published.) The owners have introduced a voluntary admissions restriction and actions plans are in place. The new manager has a programme of priorities to address the concerns.

8. Detailed Findings

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

Birch Heath Lodge is located in the heart of the attractive village of Christleton, opposite the local Church and Church Hall and a short walk from a small shop, pub and duck pond. There are some buses to nearby Chester although the service is not frequent. Birch Heath is an attractive looking old house with small pleasant gardens set back from the main road with seating areas to the front. Its main access is at the front, via a conservatory porch with number keypad and bell. To the rear of the property is a purpose-built annexe, Greenwood, accessed across a courtyard with a small parking area. Additional parking is found on street in the church car park. Signage has been limited by previous complaints from nearby residents.

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

Having parked in the homes car park, we walked around the side of the building to find the front door (noting an advert for staff pinned to the gate). The initial impression on walking to the front of the house was positive; the conservatory porch had plants and a seating area for a resident who was completing a jigsaw. A bell and key pad entry led to a large reception area where old favourites music was playing. There were several sofas around a hearth an attractive tiled floor and a chandelier We were asked to sign the visitors' book on the hall table. There was a notice board above this advertising the date of relatives and residents meeting and a letter from HW and CQC report. We were promptly welcomed by a member of staff who took us upstairs to meet the manager and offered refreshments.

Reception Entrance

8.3 Facilities for and involvement with family/friends

There is an open visiting policy and families are invited to attend meetings. A cheese and wine evening was held recently but was poorly attended. On the ground floor of the main house there was a large lounge with six residents sitting in arm chairs around the large TV which was switched on (one resident was asleep by 10am). We spoke briefly to one gentleman resident who was reading a newspaper and a lady 'Daisy' who was willing to engage and seemed happy. Upstairs in the main house there is a separate lounge with sofa bed and facilities to make drinks which is used by family members who wish to stay if their relative is very ill. One short term resident used this lounge as her own to escape 'cabin fever'.

In Greenwood there was a separate kitchen area relatives could use. Family members can pre book meals, lunch is £5 and tea £2.50. The visit took place in the morning so no relatives were visiting at that time.

No residents currently have mobile phones but have access to a hands-free landline.

8.4 Internal physical environment

The main house had rooms over two floors, the third attic floor being only used for storage. There are ramps, stairs and a lift although access to the manager's office is only via steep stairs. Next to the manager's office is the administration office and a training room. On the ground floor to one side of the hall is a lounge with comfortable chairs and a large television. To the other side of the hall facing the front was a large double bedroom, which had been recently refurbished and an en suite toilet and sink. This room had a laminate floor but most bedrooms were carpeted. Other rooms vary in size, most had a toilet and sink and on each floor there was a large bathroom with equipment to aid less mobile residents. As the main house is an older property it had a more homely feel although the layout could cause initial confusion. Rooms at the rear of the property tended to be

smaller and darker. The dining room is adjacent to the kitchen and as was pleasantly laid out for lunch.

View from lounge

Dining room

Some rooms were being refurbished, generally the house was in a reasonable state of repair and there was evidence of some new curtains.

Large bedroom/double

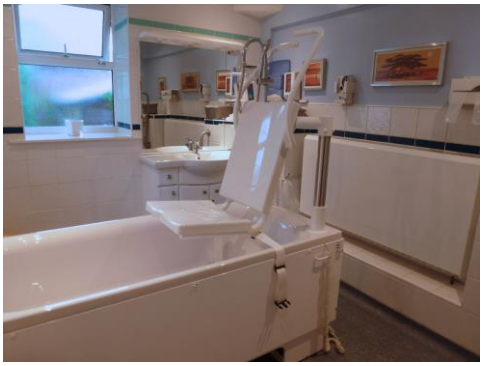
Single bedroom

In contrast Greenwood had a more functional feel with long corridors and plain walls and generally smaller rooms. The entrance was untidy and not particularly welcoming Greenwood has a small dining area, lounge area and access to a small outside courtyard with uneven surfaces. All bedrooms had a bedside table with lockable drawer, wardrobe, chest of drawers and an en-suite sink and toilet. In contrast to the more homely feel of the main house the annexe had a more functional feel.

8.4.1 Décor, Lighting, heating, furnishing & floor coverings

See previous comments.

8.4.2 Freshness, cleanliness/hygiene & cross infection measures



Most rooms had sinks with sanitisers and soap dispensers. The bathrooms appeared clean and fresh. Some odours were noted but as the visit took place in the morning when residents maybe washing and changing, it was not unexpected.

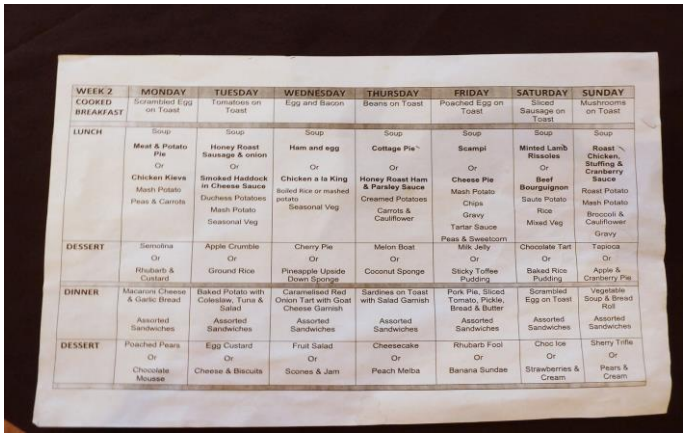
8.4.3 Suitability of design to meet needs of residents

There are lifts in the main building and the stairs are quite steep. There is a chair lift in Greenwood and handrails are evident in the corridors. There was no colour coding or signage of different areas to aid location.

Each 'house' provides a similar mix of nursing and residential care e.g. Greenwood had 5 residential and 6 nursing care residents. Staff are allocated to each area for continuity.

There are dining rooms in each house which had tables set for lunch, residents in Greenwood may eat lunch in the main house if they prefer. The place settings indicated that more than half the residents must eat in their rooms.

The menus for the day were not displayed (there was a notice board). We asked to see the menus which are on a 4 week rotation.



WEEK 2	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
COOKED BREAKFAST	Scrambled Egg on Toast	Tomatoes on Toast	Egg and Bacon	Beans on Toast	Poached Egg on Toast	Sliced Sausage on Toast	Mushrooms on Toast
LUNCH	Soup **Meat & Potato Pie** Or **Chicken Kievs** Mash Potato Peas & Carrots	Soup **Honey Roast Sausage & onion** Or **Smoked Haddock in Cheese Sauce** Duchess Potatoes Mash Potato Seasonal Veg	Soup **Ham and egg** Or **Chicken a la King** Boiled Rice or mashed potato Seasonal Veg	Soup **Cottage Pie** Or **Honey Roast Ham & Parsley Sauce** Creamed Potatoes Carrots & Cauliflower	Soup **Scampi** Or **Cheese Pie** Mash Potato Chips Gravy Tartar Sauce Peas & Sweetcorn	Soup **Minted Lamb Rissoles** Or **Beef Bourguignon** Saute Potato Rice Mixed Veg	Soup **Roast Chicken, Stuffing & Cranberry Sauce** Roast Potato Mash Potato Broccoli & Cauliflower Gravy
DESSERT	Semolina Or Rhubarb & Custard	Apple Crumble Or Ground Rice	Cherry Pie Or Pineapple Upside Down Sponge	Melon Boat Or Coconut Sponge	Milk Jelly Or Sticky Toffee Pudding	Chocolate Tart Or Baked Rice Pudding	Tapioca Or Apple & Cranberry Pie
DINNER	Macaroni Cheese & Garlic Bread Assorted Sandwiches	Baked Potato with Coleslaw, Tuna & Salad Assorted Sandwiches	Caramelised Red Onion Tart with Goat Cheese Garnish Assorted Sandwiches	Sardines on Toast with Salad Garnish Assorted Sandwiches	Pork Pie, Sliced Tomato, Pickle, Bread & Butter Assorted Sandwiches	Scrambled Egg on Toast Assorted Sandwiches	Vegetable Soup & Bread Roll Assorted Sandwiches
DESSERT	Poached Pears Or Chocolate Mousse	Egg Custard Or Cheese & Biscuits	Fruit Salad Or Scones & Jam	Cheesecake Or Peach Melba	Rhubarb Fool Or Banana Sundae	Choc Ice Or Strawberries & Cream	Sherry Trifle Or Pears & Cream

Menu

8.5 Staff support skills & interaction

There are currently vacancies for staff, some domestic and care staff hours and a qualified nurse for night duty. The manager has only been in post for 3 months and is addressing these issues, for the previous 18 months there has been a peripatetic manager. Staff are supported by the parent company Maria Mallaband by their HR, Quality Inspector and Clinical Director. One care staff member has been supported to become a clinical practitioner.

There is a programme of staff training in place and this is to be continued as a priority.

8.5.1 Staff appearance/presentation

Staff were approachable and friendly. We met the maintenance man and housekeeper. She had worked at Birch Heath for 30 years and both she and the newly qualified clinical practitioner who had 20 years' service were very positive about their work and the home. The manager and admin wore their own clothes but did wear name badges. Clinical and cleaning staff wore uniforms and badges.

8.5.2 Affording dignity and respect/Approach to care giving

We saw minimal staff interaction, possibly because of the time of day but we observed the manager speak caringly to residents.

8.5.3 Effective communications – alternative systems and accessible information

Each bedroom has a number and name sign but this was not personalised. One room had a lot of the resident's soft toys and some had pictures of war-time photographs. A personal profile is kept on the back of each bedroom door.

8.6 Physical Welfare

8.6.1 Appearance, dress & hygiene

Some residents were bed bound but all others were dressed and sitting in lounges when we visited. Ladies were observed to be smartly dressed and wearing some items of jewellery. All residents can have baths or showers on request

8.6.2 Nutrition/ mealtimes and hydration

We met the chef who although from an agency knows the home well and seemed to take a pride in his work; he stressed that the food is freshly made. We asked for sight of the menu which offers a choice of nutritious meals. Alcohol is also offered at meal times. Several residents have a pureed diet and attempts are made to present this attractively. Food is transported to Greenwood on a heated trolley Afternoon tea and morning coffee are provided and there was a water cooler machine in the main house.

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

The home has a good relationship with the local GP surgery and their Advanced Practitioner visits the home twice a week. GP's review all patients every 3 months and visit end of life patients weekly. Referrals are made to the COCH for additional support.

Some residents have private chiropody appointments but there are also 6 weekly visits from chiropody.

8.7 Social, emotional and cultural welfare
8.7. 1 Personalisation & personal possessions
Residents are not encouraged to manage their own money. Some residents have a safe in their room. Most residents have brought a few personal belongings in to their rooms. A hairdresser visits weekly.
8.7.2 Choice, control & identity
Residents are given a choice of food and drink. Those that are mobile can access the local facilities such as the shop and pub. Papers are delivered on request. Residents do not have money but items can be purchased and billed. No residents smoke. There is free WIFI and there is one lap top for general use.
8.7.3 Feeling safe and able to raise concerns/complaints
Complaints can be made in person, via phone or email directly to the manager. There is a company policy, which is followed; 10 days in which to respond and to resolve as soon as possible. Complaints are kept and filed in the manager's office.
8.7.4 Structured and unstructured activities/stimulation
There is an activity coordinator 3 days a week who works with bed bound as well as mobile residents. He is focusing on establishing a men's group as there are currently 8 gentlemen at Birch Heath and we observed him playing indoor bowls with the residents in the front lounge. We also met the 'pat dog' who is a regular visitor. Residents can attend the local luncheon club, which is held weekly. One resident who likes animals was taken to Chester Zoo for her birthday.
8.7.5 Cultural, religious/spiritual needs
Residents are able to attend the local Church of England church and also receive visits from some of their parishioners.
8.7.6 Gardens – maintenance & design/suitability for use/enjoyment
There is an attractive well-maintained garden to front of the property with one raised bed and seating areas for residents. The small courtyard off Greenwood's dining area appears unused.
9. Observations
9.1 Elements of observed / reported good practice
Training programmes to support staff have been implemented.
9.2 Other observations / findings of note applicable
The Home is going through a difficult period. Two years of staff problems had meant temporary staff and Agency cover. The loss of patient centred care had demoralised the existing staff

The staff we spoke to who had worked there for a long time were really proud of "their home".

The appointment of a new experienced health care worker as Manager gives the opportunity to regain their good reputation. She was appointed from New Zealand although had previously worked locally as a nurse. Her experience in providing excellent nursing home care abroad gives her the skill set needed to regain the previous reputation.

The manager has a list of immediate objectives:

- More training for staff
- Reviewing all care plans
- "person centred care" to be essential
- appointment of "champions" to hold responsibility for certain roles.

Ann knows that she will need time to "put her stamp" on the service. (6-12 months in her words) but she will need support from the owners if she is to achieve success. She will also need well motivated staff but she is willing to lead from the front (covering a night shift was appreciated by her team.) She has made other facilities where she has worked "outstanding" and she wants to do the same for Birch Heath Lodge. We wish her every success.

10. Comparisons

10.1 Comparisons of observations against providers website

The website is clear and detailed about the services offered but does not highlight that referrals are not currently being accepted.

10.2 Comparisons with previous Healthwatch visit (s) where applicable

Previous Healthwatch visit two years ago highlighted some areas of improvement in décor, which have not been implemented.
At this time, concerns had not been raised about care and staffing so the overall feedback was positive.

11. Recommendations

Recommendations were discussed with Ann as she asked for our suggestions:

- The initial impression of the home could be enhanced by some décor improvements such as fresher flowers, which can sometimes be donated by local supermarkets.
- The reception area particularly in Greenwood needs to feel more welcoming and the blank corridor walls could have pictures, possibly of the local area to stimulate memory and conversations. This could be achieved by trying to involve local art groups or colleges.
- Some more raised beds in the garden could be created to encourage residents to go out doors and enjoy gardening.
- Door plates on bedrooms could be made more personal if a resident wishes with some illustration or item that reflected their interest or life.
- To encourage engagement with relatives a notice board could be kept in the main are with 'YOU SAID – WE DID' comments to illustrate the

home's responsiveness to residents' needs.

Feedback from Provider of Service
The feedback from residents and the staff was good, the representatives were very amenable and approachable; people felt able to talk to them. 8.4.3 Suitability of design to meet the needs of the residents- Birch Heath Lodge is not E.M.I. and it is therefore not necessary to have signage or colour coding. We now have a large chalk board in the main dining room and every day the menu is scribed for all the residents to see. 8.5 We held a Recruitment day on the 19th September with a good response, we have a full-time nurse commencing on the 1st October for night duty and we are in the process of obtaining DBS and references for several candidates for care staff. 8.7.4 We have two activity co-ordinators, they job share across five days Monday to Friday 9.2 The additional training schedule has commenced and will be running through until the end of November 2019 11. Your recommendations are being considered in due course, the marketing manager has purchased some old black and white photographs of Chester for the corridor walls in Greenwood and the décor of the home is under review. Your visit was valuable and Birch Heath Lodge was viewed in a different manner, I would say more from a relative's and future customer's perspective which is a very necessary exercise. Thank you for your report.