Healthwatch Cheshire West

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Enter and View Visit to	**Whetstone Hey** **Old Chester Road** **Great Sutton** **Ellesmere Port, CH66 3JX**
Date	**12th February 2015**
Authorised Representatives	**Betty Shepherd, Sue Masterman**
Staff Present	**Wendy Hope**
Background	Whetstone Hey is a purpose-built home providing residential, non-nursing care. There are 41 beds of which only one with en suite facilities. There is 41 staff, most of them part-time. It provides respite care if vacancies are available. It is owned by *CLS Care Services Group*, a charitable organisation that won Care Employer of the Year 2014 in the Great North West Care Awards. The two-storey home is located in Whetstone Hey, a residential suburb of Ellesmere Port and quite close to local shops. The House Manager (and on-call Manager) is Wendy Hope, who has over 20 years of service with the company, mostly with this home.
Overall Impression and ideas or suggestions for improving service?	Whetstone Hey has a good atmosphere but seemed a little subdued. Possibly having mainly part-time staff means that continuity sometimes suffers, such as in the activities organisation. Detail, such as filling the bird-feeders and giving residents a chance of winter bird-watching, or relocating the “wet floor” signs, seemed lacking in some aspects. It was not for lack of good will, which abounded. We were told that there was also only two staff on night duty, which seems less than could be needed in even a minor emergency. An extra person could be put on duty if a resident was known to be unwell, we were told – but most events with elderly cognitively impaired residents come unannounced. • CLS to consider flooring improvements discussed below.

Environment

A spacious entry hall welcomes visitors. Outside doors have key-code locks inside and out so that residents who are capable of mastering this are free to come and go. A hand-written notice warns against helping residents who cannot do this. The hall has seating and plenty of information on display, including a picture of Prince George. The Royal Family theme recurred throughout the home, where the separate lounges had names, and is apparently a favourite with residents. For activities purposes, February was wedding themed, and there was a table in the corner of the main lounge with a display. Bird feeders were visible in a well-tended garden, though there was no bird-feed in them. There were two resident budgerigars, one on each floor.

We were shown round by Wendy Hope who was very welcoming, experienced, knowledgeable, and open to answer any questions we posed. This home, like other CLS run units, has 'quiet lounges' as well as general lounges with televisions. One lounge in particular has a mixture of traditional arm-chairs. Others are mainly provided with new armchairs which, however, were not tried out on residents before being introduced. Some residents were not entirely happy with them, though this might have been unfamiliarity and resistance to change.

The dining area and lounge and the upstairs dining area had new chairs which looked very comfortable and had 'ski' feet which made it easier to push residents closer to the table or give them space to push back and leave. Menu choice was available. Refreshments are available ongoing between meals, and we saw some residents enjoying a cup of tea.

The laundry was spacious enough for the size of the home and Wendy told us that personal laundry was generally returned to the residents by the next day. There was also a room equipped for a visiting hairdresser.

The 70s-built Whetstone Hey building is showing its age. Many windows are still single-glazed. Wendy told us that she has put in for redecoration of the rather bland walls and for the renewal of some of the corridor flooring. Carpets in some sections bear the scars of spillage and, though they have been cleaned, still give off a slight odour. One small section has been re-floored with laminate and looks both cleaner and fresher. Despite all discussions about safety, it should be possible to have a non-slip laminate-type solution that can also be kept clean. The same applies to flooring in toilets and bathrooms, some of which was badly stained though relatively new. With all understanding for the budgetary problems confronting a home like this which partly depends on social service funding, we hope CLS will find the means to tackle this.

Representatives saw some folded wheelchairs in corridors, leaning on the wall, which might pose a hazard. There were also "wet floor" warning signs left in corridors outside bathrooms and toilets, again a hazard risk. We saw one resident with a walking frame having great difficulty avoiding one of these while also reaching for the toilet door handle.

Health and Wellbeing

Representatives observed staff helping residents who were confused. Many of the residents we saw or spoke to appeared to have cognitive problems while being physically relatively fit. None of those we spoke to could tell us how long they had been in the home. One lady who we saw in her room complained that, "*They won't let me lie on my bed!*" and was impervious to the argument that it might be better for her to

be out of bed during the day. "*I do it anyway!*" she said. This was regarded with good humour by staff who still urged her not to spend the whole day on her bed. Wendy said that they tried to keep residents at the home as long as possible until they require nursing care, even in cases of dementia – '*After all, it is their home!*' Residents are seen by their own GP if they are in the area.

Activities and Community Links

Planned activities of 25 hours a week are organised by two part-time staff, neither of whom was present during our visit. The activities plan displayed was not completely filled in. Wendy told us that local churches were also involved in arranging activities and visits and making sure residents could attend service, or providing such services at the home itself.

Feedback

Representatives spoke to two visiting relatives. One was visiting his mother-in-law who had been in the home for a short time who said that the family was, "*Very pleased,*" with her care. A daughter, who had just admitted her mother to the home temporarily, awaiting a place in another local CLS home closer to where she lives, said that this home had provided her with comprehensive information well beyond the services of the home itself to help her with the process of admitting someone to care. "*They went far beyond other homes I asked,*" she said. "*They have made it easier and they have helped me feel less guilty about doing this.*"

Additional Comments

None

Feedback from Provider of Service

We were happy with the arrangements/request prior to the visit. We were made aware by letter that a visit would take place during February 2015.

Whetstone Hey has a full complement of staff who mostly work part time; this will consist of three or four shifts a week. For the last three years we have not had the need to cover any shifts with outside agency staff. Because staff ***do*** *work part time, it gives them scope to cover shifts when required.*
I disagree with the statement, "Possibly having part-time staff means that continuity sometimes suffers." At Whetstone Hey we also ensure we have staff who work flexible hours to cover for any sickness and annual leave this means staff in the home are always regular staff employed by the home and are known to the residents who live at the home.
"Replenishing of the bird feeder," I will discuss this with the team and the residents to see if someone would like to take ownership to ensure the bird feeder is topped up so residents, if they wish can watch the birds.
Relocating of the, "wet floor" signs - I have discussed this with the home service manager and domestic supervisor who will discuss this with their team to ensure they are removed to a safe position.
There are two staff on waking duty at night which does meet the minimum standard this has been sufficient and when required an extra member of staff will also work the shift.

Regarding the redecoration of the corridors this has been agreed and is now in process "Carpets in some sections bear the scars of spillages and give off a slight odour," as discussed we have requested new flooring for some areas this has been agreed by our property department which will improve the outlook for our residents.
Whetstone Hey has two activity co-ordinators, however, on the day of your visit one was on annual leave. Both staff ***do*** *spread their time throughout the week we also have some staff who cover activity hours when needed. I will discuss with them both the need to ensure all pre-planned activities are advertised on the planner.*

I feel the visit worked well, it was relaxed and the visitors were approachable and friendly.

- *Wendy Hope (Manager)*