healthwatch
North Lincolnshire

enter and view

Althorpe Care Home

September 2015

Contents

Introduction	3
What is Healthwatch North Lincolnshire?	3
What is Enter & View?	3
Acknowledgments	3
Visit Details	4
Purpose of the Visit	4
Methodology	5
Summary of Findings	5
Results of Visit	6
Layout and Appearance	6
Individuality and Control	7
Safety and Support	8
Food and Drink	9
Outings	9
Privacy	10
Worries or Concerns	10
Activities	10
Loneliness and Visiting	11
Conclusion	12
Recommendations	13
Response	14

Introduction

What is Healthwatch North Lincolnshire?

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is an independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public on health and social care. Healthwatch North Lincolnshire plays a role at both a national and local level, making sure the views of the public and service users are taken into account when reviewing service provision.

What is Enter & View?

Part of the Healthwatch North Lincolnshire strategic work plan is to carry out Enter & View visits. Healthwatch North Lincolnshire authorised representatives carry out visits to health and social care services to meet residents, staff and visitors and hear their views and make recommendations where there are areas which may require improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows representatives of local Healthwatch organisations to enter and view premises and carry out observations for the purpose of local Healthwatch activity. Visits can include hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter & View visits can take place where people tell us there is a problem with a service, but they can also happen when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well.

Healthwatch Enter & View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about, they will inform the lead officer who will inform the service manager, ending the visit. Similarly, where issues arise during a visit, any concerns are raised with the manager on site so that urgent matters can be addressed. In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

Disclaimer: This report relates only to the service viewed on the date of the visit and is representative of the views of the residents, visitors and staff who contributed to the report on that date.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire would like to thank the care home, the staff, residents and visitors for their contribution to the Enter & View programme.

Visit Details

Service Details:

Name and Address	Althorpe Care Home, 3 Main Street, Althorpe, Scunthorpe, DN17 3HJ.
Service Provider	Care Plus & Complete Care (UK) Ltd
Type of Service	Residential home.
Specialism	Old age.
Registered Manager	Sandra Kirk.
Description of Building	16 single rooms, 2 shared rooms and 2 rooms with ensuite WC.
Latest CQC Report	25th February 2015: Requires improvement. The service met 3/5 CQC national standards.

Dates Undertaken:

1pm-3pm, 24th September 2015.

Authorised Representatives:

- Kirsten Spark
- Martin Hopley
- Helen Kirk

Theme of Enter & View:

The experience and quality of life of residents.

Purpose of the visit:

The purpose of this visit was to:

- Observe the environment and routine of the care home with a particular focus on activities provided for residents.
- Speak to as many residents as possible about their experience of living in the home, looking at personal interactions with care staff and others providing their care.
- Speak to family members visiting residents about their perspective on the care provided.
- Give care home staff an opportunity to share their opinions on the provision of activities and general care provided.

Methodology

This report summarises themes and highlights good practice identified from the Enter and View visit to Althorpe Care Home and makes comparisons against previous visits to various care homes across the area.

Healthwatch undertakes engagement on an on-going basis using a local 'Experiences Survey' which identifies any areas of concern with health and social care services as well as identifying good practice. In December 2014, Healthwatch North Lincolnshire produced a report called 'Nursing and Residential Care Homes in North Lincolnshire' which detailed the findings of Enter & View visits to 20 care homes across the area at the request of the People Scrutiny Panel of North Lincolnshire Council. Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is now beginning to produce separate reports for individual care homes that have had Enter & View visits.

This particular Enter & View visit was unannounced but the care home welcomed the visit and invited Healthwatch authorised representatives in. The aim was to speak to residents, family members and other visitors and staff. This visit ran from 1pm to 3pm on the 24th of September and although visiting schedules do vary per home visited, the questions asked remain the same. Residents' responses were gained through a combination of face to face interviews and questionnaires for staff to complete which were returned anonymously.

Authorised representatives used semi-structured interviews with residents, visitors and staff, allowing the questions to be adapted to suit those residents less able to communicate. To supplement the interviews, the Enter & View team carried out observations. Sufficient time was spent on each interview in order to build trust and rapport and to listen to responses to the open ended questions. Questions focused on activities and general care provided.

Some residents in the care home had varying levels of dementia and although Enter & View representatives spent time with them, the responses provided were at times limited due to the capacity of the residents to hold a conversation. In cases where residents were less able to communicate, Enter & View representatives used observation and interviews with staff to gather more detailed information.

At the end of the visit, verbal feedback to the care home manager was provided. Whilst we would not expect all recommendations to be implemented by the care home, we would anticipate that areas of good practice will be adopted where feasible and appropriate. A formal response from the care home is included at the end of the report.

Summary of Findings

Overall, residents were very happy with the care provided at their care home and enjoyed living there. Most residents believed that it was in their best interest to live in the care

home as they were no longer able to look after themselves and residents were appreciative of the help they received.

Residents regarded staff at Althorpe extremely well, as they provided the support that residents needed whilst enabling them to have their independence. Staff assisted residents to move around the home safely and helped them to get ready for the day. Staff members were also observed by Enter and View representatives to sit and have chats with residents, indicating that the social aspect of wellbeing was being met at Althorpe.

Residents' feedback on the food at Althorpe was very positive, both regarding quality and quantity. There was ample choice in meal options offered and residents were able to choose where they wanted to eat.

Most residents told Healthwatch representatives that they were satisfied with the opportunities offered to go out of the home, though some residents did not wish to leave and were content with the activities provided in the home.

Residents at Althorpe Care Home found it easy to make friends in the home and were also content with the visiting hours for friends and family.

Results of Visit

Layout and Appearance

Healthwatch Enter & View representatives found Althorpe Care Home to be well decorated and welcoming throughout. The communal area was well laid out and encouraged interaction as chairs were arranged in small groups, each with their own television. This room also had a CD player/radio and carers ensured that they asked residents if they wanted a specific CD/channel played. There was an office adjoining the communal room so that the room could be regularly monitored. Healthwatch representatives did not observe any safety hazards and the care home was clean and warm. There was an outside area for residents to enjoy and one couple were seen to use this to relax in the grounds after lunch.

Personalised Areas

Residents' own rooms were well decorated and though most were single rooms, there were a couple of shared rooms, one of which was occupied by a married couple. Residents had their own possessions to make their rooms feel more like home and were able to have their own televisions in their rooms too. One resident said that they would like a chair in their room and it was observed separately by a Healthwatch representative that chairs in rooms would make a useful addition.

Individuality and Control

Residents at Althorpe Care Home were asked a series of questions to determine the extent to which the care provided was tailored to them as individuals and how much control they had over what they did each day.

Do you like living here?

All of the residents spoken to by authorised representatives said that they were very happy at Althorpe Care Home and praised the staff members who worked there. The staff members were very passionate about their work and told Healthwatch that they enjoyed caring for those who were no longer able to help themselves. One staff member said:

'We are like one big happy family'.

Tell me about an ordinary day – Is every day the same?

Residents were asked if they liked having a routine or if they valued days with more variation. Healthwatch representatives wanted to know if residents felt they had sufficient control over their everyday lives.

Residents told Healthwatch that some things had to be the same each day to form part of a routine, but there were other things that happened to provide variety to their days. Residents particularly valued the variety of activities on offer and also the people who came to visit them to ensure that every day was not the same. One resident commented:

'I can stay up late if I want to as they don't pressurise me to go to bed'.

If you need support getting ready for the day, do staff help you?

All residents spoken to at Althorpe Care Home said that staff members were very supportive when needed but allowed them to maintain their independence. One resident told Healthwatch that they liked to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible and chose to get themselves ready each morning. This resident told Healthwatch that if needed, staff would be happy to help them when they were having an 'off day'. Other residents that required more support told Healthwatch that they were very happy with the help the staff gave them.

Do you choose what clothes to wear?

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire wanted to find out if residents at Althorpe Care Home that had the capacity to choose their own clothing were able to do so. All residents interviewed said that they did have the choice of what to wear.

Safety and Support

Healthwatch representatives wanted to find out if staff supported the residents at Althorpe Care Home to make healthcare appointments and move around the home safely. Residents were also asked how they felt about staff helping them to do things and to what extent the staff engaged in social time with the residents.

If you need an appointment with your doctor, do staff arrange this for you? Do staff arrange your transport to the surgery?

All residents interviewed by Healthwatch representatives confirmed that if healthcare was needed, a doctor or district nurse would visit the home. The healthcare professional was able to use an office in the home to speak to residents, otherwise treatment was delivered in residents' own rooms.

Do staff help you move around the home safely?

Most residents told Healthwatch that they were able to move around the home themselves using walking frames and the lift, but those who needed help in getting around said that the staff were very good at assisting them. Residents said that staff members encouraged them to walk where appropriate but were very patient with frail residents.

How do you feel about staff helping you to do things?

Residents at Althorpe Care Home told Healthwatch representatives that they felt happy with staff supporting them. Healthwatch representatives observed staff members using hoists to move residents and the process was explained to them before they were moved in a reassuring manner.

Do staff have time to talk and listen to you?

All residents spoken to by Healthwatch said that staff members often sat and chatted to them as they went about their jobs. This was also observed by Healthwatch representatives during the visit and residents seemed to know staff well, asking about their home lives and what they had planned for after they finished work. A Healthwatch representative described this as a natural and friendly relationship between the staff and residents at Althorpe Care Home.

The staff members at Althorpe Care Home were easily identifiable as they all wore uniform which was colour coordinated to match their roles. The staff members also wore badges but advised Healthwatch representatives did not wear theirs as the residents were weary of visitors with badges. Healthwatch representatives ensured that formal introductions were still made to residents on the visit.

Food and Drink

Do you like the food here?

Residents were asked for their views on the quality of the food provided at Althorpe Care Home. Healthwatch wanted to find out if there were a variety of meal choices available and if alternatives were provided in case residents disliked the options that day.

All of the residents interviewed praised the food at Althorpe Care Home.

'The food here is lovely and plentiful'.

One resident described themselves to Healthwatch as a 'fussy eater' and said that the staff were very accommodating. The staff members knew what foods this resident liked and disliked and offered food to suit them accordingly. Relatives also often brought in the resident's favourite foods such as fish, prawns and smoked haddock and staff were very happy to store and cook this for them. Another resident did not like fish, but told Healthwatch that an alternative was always offered when they did not like something. One resident said that although the food was mostly good, they felt that the quality could be affected on a morning as sometimes things were rushed, but overall, the feedback from residents on food quality was positive.

Do you get the option of where you can eat your meal?

Healthwatch representatives met with one of the residents was more mobile than their friend, and because the residents' friend chose to stay in the communal area to eat, both friends often ate together in there and staff were happy for them to do this. Another resident told Healthwatch that they also preferred to eat in the dining room but residents were given the option to eat in their own rooms if they wanted to. It was clear to Healthwatch representatives that residents had the freedom to choose where they preferred to enjoy their meals, as they would have in their own homes. Healthwatch representatives also observed a vulnerable resident being assisted by care home staff to eat and drink.

Outings

Do you get the opportunity to go out of the home?

Some residents interviewed by Healthwatch at Althorpe Care Home did not wish to go out of the home and staff respected their decisions.

'The staff are ever so good as I like to just be on my own and that's okay'.

Other residents enjoyed going out of the home on trips with family and also to places with carers. Some residents also enjoyed sitting out in the garden area of the home.

'I regularly go to the church hall with a carer. I really enjoy and look forward to this'.

'It is lovely to get out on a nice day'.

Is there anywhere you would like to go that isn't already offered?

Most residents that were interviewed by Healthwatch were satisfied with the range of outings offered by the home but one resident felt that a trip to the cinema would make a nice change and that a mini bus would be beneficial for the home to have.

Privacy

All the residents interviewed by Healthwatch representatives said they felt their privacy was respected at Althorpe Care Home. All residents interviewed told Healthwatch that when medical visits were needed, they were carried out in the privacy of residents' own rooms or offices. In all cases, staff members were said to knock on residents' doors before asking to enter and residents could have signs on their doors indicating whether or not they wanted people to come in.

Worries or Concerns

Healthwatch representatives wanted to find out what actions residents would take if they ever had worries or concerns in the care home. Residents told Healthwatch that they would see the person in charge of the care home and that all staff members were friendly and approachable.

Activities

Do you like to join in with activities in the home? What activities are provided?

Healthwatch representatives wanted to find out if there was an adequate range of entertainment and activities provided in the home. Most of the residents interviewed said that they enjoyed the activities provided and mentioned some of their favourites.

'We particularly like playing carpet bowls'.

'We all sit together and watch our favourite television series'.

'It is lovely to have the music on'.

Other activities mentioned included dominoes and quizzes. One resident particularly enjoyed it when visitors were invited to the home, such as people from church or relatives children as they found this entertaining and looked forward to these occasions.

Does the care home help you to take part in activities you choose if needed?

On the day of the visit, Healthwatch representatives observed staff members assisting residents in what they chose to do if needed. Staff members also provided residents with the newspaper to read if they requested it.

Is there anything that you enjoyed doing at home but don't get chance to do here?

Overall, residents were content with the activities already offered by the Activities Coordinator at Althorpe Care Home.

Loneliness and Visiting

Do you find it easy to make friends here?

All residents interviewed by Healthwatch representatives said that they found it easy to make friends at Althorpe Care Home and that there were plenty of people to talk to. This suggested to Healthwatch that Althorpe Care Home was a place that met the very important social aspect of wellbeing for its residents.

'It's a really friendly place'.

'I chat to other residents, staff and visitors'.

Are friends and relatives able to come visit you here?

All of the residents spoken to were very satisfied with the visiting hours available as the care home allowed friends and relatives to visit whenever they liked. Healthwatch therefore found Althorpe Care Home to be very flexible in this way, as many care homes operate restrictions on visiting such as protected meal times. Althorpe Care Home therefore offered residents the freedom to maintain important connections with those living outside of the home.

Conclusions

A number of themes have emerged from the experiences of residents, visitors and staff which are detailed in the findings from this Enter & View visit to Althorpe Care Home.

Personalised Areas

Although the majority of residents were happy with their own rooms and were able to personalise these with their own belongings, one resident expressed to a Healthwatch representative that they would have liked a chair in their room. Separately, another Healthwatch representative observed that a chair in residents' rooms would have made a useful addition to what was already provided by the home.

Staff

Residents regarded the staff members at Althorpe Care Home extremely well and it was clear to Healthwatch representatives on the visit that the care home had a friendly and homely atmosphere. Staff were keen to make sure residents were comfortable in their surroundings and helped them to get ready for the day and move around safely. Staff members also ensured that they took time out of their busy working schedules in order to socialise with residents and this was greatly appreciated.

Food and Drink

Food and drink at Althorpe Care Home was highly praised by residents, with sufficient meal choice, alternatives offered and the ability to choose where to eat. Staff went over and above their jobs in this aspect as they were willing to store and prepare food brought in by residents' families and visitors which allowed residents to still enjoy the things they had been partial to in their own homes.

Recommendations

Overall, it is important to share with care home staff the positive feedback from residents and visitors following this Enter and View visit, and to celebrate the areas of good practice identified in this report. However, the following recommendation for improvement is based on the findings of the visit on the day:

1) Care home to ensure that all residents are asked their views on the furniture provided in their rooms.

Response From Althorpe Care Home

Althorpe Care Home is a warm friendly home with the following accommodation set out across 2 floors, (10 single and 1double room on the ground floor) the rooms on the ground floor are currently occupied by those service users needing the use of equipment and more input than someone who is independent and safe to occupy a room on the second floor. All rooms on the second floor are single occupancy, these rooms all have an ensuite bathroom, 2 of which have their own bath included.

In September we had a visit from Healthwatch North Lincolnshire Representatives: Kirsten Spark, Helen Kirk, and Martin Hopley, we were very pleased to meet them and positively appreciate the feedback we have received today in a draft report.

The Recommendations in the feedback:

1) *Care home to ensure that all residents are asked their views on the furniture provided in their room.*

As the report stated, there was one person who stated that they didn't have a chair in the bedroom, we have looked around the building to ascertain which room this could possibly be, as it is our policy to inform all residents of their rights to choose what furniture and fittings, pictures and any other personal belongings they wish to bring in with them when they become a permanent resident.

We can only think the room in question is the one directly opposite the passenger life that is always used as a short stay respite room.

As this has been highlighted we have looked at providing a chair in that room and replacing the wardrobe for a set of drawers purely because there isn't room for both this being a small room.

We will keep reviewing this each and every time this room is occupied

Once again thank you for your visit and the feedback

Sandra Kirk
Registered Manager

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