

Abbeyfield House Care Home, Reading: a Healthwatch Reading visit report

Where: Abbeyfield House, 11 Maitland Road, Reading RG1 6NL

When: 17th July 2018, for 2 hours in the morning and 31st July 2018, for 2 hours in the morning.

Who: 13 people spoke with trained Healthwatch Reading staff members. We spoke to 11 women and 2 men. Of these, 4 residents were aged 75-84 and 4 were 85 or older. All 13 residents described themselves as white British.

Why: Healthwatch Reading is visiting local care homes to:

- Give older, frail, or unwell people, and those with disabilities requiring nursing care, a chance to have their say about their care
- Make observations about the general 'feel' of homes, how they meet individual needs and how their staff interact with residents
- Understand residents' access to health professionals
- Collect any experiences about residents being admitted to hospital from the care home, and/or discharged from hospital to the care homes.

How: Healthwatch Reading has statutory 'Enter and View' powers to visit care homes but arranged all visits with care homes in advance on a pre-agreed date, to allow staff to plan and understand the visits.

How residents describe living at Abbeyfield House:

- Most residents said were very happy with the food.
- The majority also enjoyed activities especially music and exercises, although some people said it would be good to have activities in the evening and at weekends.
- More than half of those we talked to mentioned positively the care they received, such as one resident who described how a staff member had sat with her all night after she had been discharged from hospital to the care home.
- A number of residents felt that they were usually included in discussions about their care, but none appeared familiar with the concept of a written care plan.
- All residents said they were able see a GP when they needed to, and that staff would organise this.
- Three residents explained that they had been in hospital in the last six months and all had gone well. Two residents stated they would rather be treated in the home than hospital if possible.

Residents' comments: what they like

'Nothing to grumble about. Food very good, get choice, breakfast in bed. Enjoy activities. [Has] quite a few visitors.'

'Nothing I dislike. Food good. Don't want to join in activities, but I like to sit and watch'

'I like it here. Plenty to eat, drink and friends. Always something going on but sometimes I am a bit lonely.' Enjoys 'Holy Communion, exercises and the river trip was great. Jackie is lovely. A shopping trolley comes around every fortnight with sweets, toiletries etc which is very useful.'

'I like everything about living here. People and care is beautiful. Food good. Like music, gardening club.'

'Staff very good, sort problems. Carer stayed with me all night after I came back from hospital Food very good, get choice.' Likes the activities, including 'singing, bingo and 'songs of praise' and the garden'.

'Staff can't do enough, very patient. Like seated exercise and 'songs of praise' activity. Visitors take me out.' Likes 'the garden' and 'hairdresser comes in'.

'We get three [food] choices every day - we choose daily, the day before and on the day you can change your mind.'

'I have help getting up, though I can wash myself.'

'Visitors can come any time.'

'The chef is superb.'

'[When I first came here] a carer came and introduced herself and I had flowers in my room and I've been happy ever since.'

'There is lots of craft work to do - tapestry, quilting.'

'The staff are very good.'

'Sometimes I am tired, and I just go to bed.'

'Visitors can come any time.'

'I love being waited on.'

'I like the gardening club.'

'Very happy here.'

'The food is excellent - we always want it.' Menu for next day is shown to residents each day to make choices. 'Can have sandwiches instead of hot food. Definitely enough water.'

'[Responding to the] bell? Depends how busy they are - very good.'

'Trees and garden are beautiful and 'staff good'.

'It is very clean. It is very expensive.'

'All the girls are very nice. They look after you very well.'

'Food every day - there is a choice and Sunday there is always a proper roast and the meat is very good.'

'The fete was nice.'

Food choices are available 'within reason - what we do get is very good. Relatives can join us for a meal. We can choose to eat in our room, [I] usually eat in dining room. £5 [for relative] to have a meal'. Carers provide 'help - [they] are great fun'. 'Visitors can come any time.'

'The staff are nice.' Friendly attentive staff. Kept very clean. Enjoys the food.

Residents' comments: What is care like? Is it discussed with residents? Are they listened to about their care?

'I wash and dress myself. Carers give me tablets, usually talk to me about care and tablets.'

'Carers help me wash and dress. Carers give me tablets. Don't remember carers talking to me, but I am forgetful.'

'I get help with washing and dressing. Carer gives me tablets and does talk to me about changes.'

'Wash and dress myself, carers will help if I necessary.'

'Carers give me tablets and do talk to me if anything changes.'

'Carers help me to wash and dress, have showers. Carers give me tablets talk to me about changes.'

'Get help with washing and dressing, have showers, staff very patient. Carers give me tablets. Issue with Dr.'

'Have help with washing and dressing.'

[I self-care] 'but can get help [when needed].'

'Tablets - would explain why changed. [I don't have a written] care plan - not needed - [staff] are very good.'

'[They] bring tablets every morning'

Resident has some tablets here - to a certain extent [staff] will discuss - basic [conversation].'

'All medications are done [for me]. Probably is a care plan [but] my family not involved.'

'[If I were ill I] would prefer to be treated in the home if possible.'

Residents' comments: what they say could be improved

'Dread evenings as nothing to do after tea.'

'No everyone all good, like a big family.'

'Would like more activities especially in the evening and at weekends. Would like flower arranging and trips out.'

Response to [alarm] pendant 'sometimes slow'.

'They are wonderful - nothing I could add to it.'

'Activities include knitting. There are not a lot of activities. On Thursday afternoon there is a religious thing. There's a film occasionally - not every week. Gardening was on for a few weeks. I wish it could be a bit more busy...some days there is not much to do - not much on at all, a lot of people choose to go to their room after dinner and watch television [rather than talk to other residents].'

Healthwatch Reading observations

- The home is a large purpose-built house with parking to the front and access to the home is secure (touchpad entry).
- A noticeboard in the entrance hall shows staff names and pictures, a booklet of information for volunteers who support the home (one runs the gardening club, for example, and students from the national citizenship programme have also visited). There is also an activities list, and details of 'songs of praise' and communion visits by a local church.
- The lounge is large and airy with conservatory-style windows at the garden end where the dining tables are located, and access into a well-kept garden with trees. We observed residents going into the garden for a walk.
- At one corner of the lounge there is a comfortable 'activities area' with armchairs and shelves of jigsaws, puzzles and books. Homely touches include ornaments on the shelves, pictures on the walls. A magnifier machine sits on a side table for residents to use to read letters and cards if they wish.
- The garden is secure and has seating areas, as well as a wooden gazebo for residents to sit in the shade.
- Food is cooked on site and there are two choices for lunch and dinner.
- Residents' rooms are light and bright and residents can bring their own furniture.
- We observed positive interactions between staff and residents, including conversation and laughter, as well as appropriate assistance to residents as required.

Residents' suggestions for improvement - summary:

- Six residents stated that they had no suggestions and were happy, one stating it was 'like a big family'
- Some residents felt there could be more activities, especially in the evening and at weekends.

Other information

Abbeyfield House Care Home

Abbeyfield House is run by [Abbeyfield Reading Society](#) and can accommodate up to 28 people (28 rooms have an ensuite WC).

Abbeyfield house was last inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 30 July 2016 and had an overall rating of 'good'. The report can be read online [here](#).

The CQC checks if care homes are: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led. It has legal powers to order improvements at any NHS or care service, when needed. The CQC usually asks the local Healthwatch for any public feedback it has collected on care homes it is due to visit.

A CQC national survey carried out in early 2018 showed that the top three most important factors for the public when deciding on a care home, are:

- the care home's ability to meet the needs of the person
- the feel of the home
- staff being caring.

A care home's quality rating is also important and 65% of people read the CQC's report on the home before they choose.

Hearing from care home residents about quality of care

Healthwatch Reading launched its care homes project to ensure that the voices of older Reading people who live in care homes are heard. This group includes people who are vulnerable because of the effect of aging or illness on health.

Residents in care homes have views that they wish to make known, as our interviews illustrate. They wish to be kept involved in and informed about matters that affect their wellbeing and health, including how their home is run.

The following organisations highlight the need to listen to care home residents:

- Healthwatch England - 'what it's like to live in a care home'
- NHS England People and Communities Board (working with National Voices)
- Social Care Institute for Excellence, in their practical 'how to guide' introduction to co-production with service users and a link to 12 short films
 - National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), see box, below:

'....service providers should consider using a range of approaches to gather views and experiences (for example, focus groups, interviews or observation in addition to surveys), and use evidence from a range of sources. This could include:

*the lived experiences of people who use services
information from voluntary organisations that represent people
who use social care services - for example, Healthwatch
existing sources of information, such as complaints.'*

'Service providers should seek the views of people who use services about the extent to which the things that are important to them are being addressed. This should be done in such a way that the person feels safe to express their views, even if these are critical (for example, a care home resident may not want to give feedback directly to the manager).'

NICE, Guideline NG86, February 2018 (1.6.4 and 1.6.7)

Healthwatch Reading visit conclusion:

Residents told us they are happy with the way staff care for them. We observed an environment that was homely, stimulating and made a range of activities available, although some people want more to do at weekends.

We noted that most residents were not familiar with the idea of a care plan, though several told us that staff do talk to them about medicines and their health.

It is a right under the NHS Constitution for people to be involved in planning their NHS healthcare, and good practice in residential care to involve people in their care plan. Helping residents to be aware of and understand a care plan could be one way in which Abbeyfield could develop its care practice.

We also suggest that the care home continues to make residents and families aware of ways to share feedback about the experience of care - by speaking to staff at the home, or by speaking directly to us or by contacting the Care Quality Commission helpline, if appropriate.

Healthwatch Reading will produce a separate report in the future, drawing together themes about the care home sector in Reading, when we have completed our series of visits across the borough.

Response from Abbeyfield Care Home:

All care plans are set up in the presence of the resident and their representative. Any follow ups necessary are made with the full knowledge of both the resident and representative and updated accordingly.

Acknowledgements and other information

Healthwatch Reading thanks residents for giving their time to share their views. We also thank the home's staff for their assistance. Enter and View findings are only a 'snapshot' of services on a day/s, so they are not a comprehensive judgement on the overall quality of the service. Healthwatch Reading is an independent charity with some statutory powers. We can take your feedback in confidence, help you make complaints, and refer serious concerns to other agencies.

Phone us 0118 937 2295, email info@healthwatchreading.co.uk, visit our website www.healthwatchreading.co.uk or visit us on the 3rd floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ.

Contact Healthwatch Reading on 0118 937 2295 if you do not have internet access and would like help accessing any online information referenced in this report.