

Beacher Hall Nursing Centre, Reading: a Healthwatch Reading visit report

Where: Beacher Hall Nursing Centre, 42 Bath Road, Reading RG1 6PG

Beacher Hall provides very specialist care for the young physically disabled and those suffering from brain injuries as a result of an accident or disease. They also care for residents with Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis - as well as having the ability to offer care for younger residents with life-limiting diseases.

When: 20 March 2018, for one hour in the morning and 20 April 2018, for one hour in the afternoon.

Who: 12 people spoke with trained Healthwatch Reading staff members. We spoke with 6 women and 6 men. Of these, 6 residents were aged 55-64, 3 were aged 65-74, 1 was aged 75-84 and 1 was 85 or older. Replying to us about their ethnicity, 9 described themselves as white British, and 3 were from ethnic minorities. Their period of residence varied from a few weeks to more than 7 years.

Why: Healthwatch Reading is visiting local care homes to

- give older, frail, unwell people, and people with a disability 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 Beacher Hall:

- Most comments were positive, praising staff communication, care and activities
- Some people commented on how busy staff are, and it being important for all communication around residents to be in English, and that carers can speak English to a level that matches the needs of their role.
- All residents we interviewed said they see a GP when they needed to; several told us that a carer accompanies them to a dentist when necessary, and we also heard about visits from an optician, and care from an in-house physio
- Three people had been recent patients at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, one who said the hospital had difficulty meeting their needs, while 2 mentioned that staff at the home positively for their part in organising arrangements

Residents' comments: what they like

Positive comments about food and availability of activities - most about food. Food - choice every day - 'If there is something you want they will supply it- you can choose what you prefer to eat - good choice' and 'always nice and hot'.

Food 'excellent' - with choices.

'You get a choice of things daily - you pick one or the other'- a new chef is trying things out. Food is cut up for this resident as they can only use a fork - resident feels staff would listen if something different was needed e.g. when choices offered that did not like, was offered sandwiches instead.

Food OK - 'sometimes too much chicken although do get a choice.'

Food - 'not as good since chef returned, new person - not good quality'

Meal at lunchtime 'in dining room, evening meal is served in room' also likes the garden, where have BBQ in summer

Activities - yes - this resident has not tried them yet. Visitors can come in at any time 'visitors are made very welcome'

Activities - 'a list of activities is sent round every week' though this resident chooses not to do any of them.

Daily care is 'good' - for moving a person using equipment there must always be two carers and there are.

Likes activities - scrabble.

'Visitors can come anytime'. Goes to cinema, shopping, and with carer on Readibus.

Likes activities 'very much' - quiz, singing and bingo. Food 'very good and get a choice'.

'Visitors can come whenever they like.'

Activities - 'loves' especially bingo. Gym and exercise bike 'good'.

Likes activities-scrabble.

Has visitors, 'can come anytime'. Goes into town on Readibus

[About the physiotherapy team] 'They are very nice people and they do listen. You sometimes need a bit of encouragement and they do give it - they explain that if you don't do it [exercises] it hurts you not them'

Resident tends to be washed in bed and prefers this. Some new carers want to use the bathroom - 'that's not so good - a bed bath is more comfortable' - but carers are not upset about the resident preferring a bed bath when resident explains.

'Staff look after me well.'

Like: interaction with staff/residents.

'Staff are beautiful. Visitors can come anytime.'

Likes the staff - 'all very personable.' Goes to the gym everyday - uses bike. Doesn't join in activities. Has visitors 'who can come anytime'.

'Staff? They are all very good.'

Staff good - 'know my needs, help me wash and dress.'

'I am happy here - they just let you get on with it - and if you ring they come - you can't say fairer than that'

'Happy' here, 'loves' the gym

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

'Not aware of having a care plan'

Has never seen a written plan, 'but they would ask me if they want to change something and I do tell them everything'

'Carers involve me most of time, but occasionally don't tell me which way they are going to move me. New staff get to know me fairly quickly, often shadow [other staff] first.'

'Staff help me and involve me in care.'

'Staff help me wash and dress. Use hoist... all staff aware of [my] needs'

'Staff involve me and talk to me about care. [I have the] blanket bath and that is fine.'

'Carers involve me in my care and what I want to do for the day.'

'Staff help me wash and dress. very good - know how to move and help me with washing etc.'

'All my care is discussed with me and changes are not a problem.'

'Staff generally good', but occasionally feels rushed or staying up too long (uncomfortable and needs to go to bed). 'Physio explains well.'

'Do everything myself but carer would help if needed' [walks on own]

'Manage most things myself but need help occasionally.'

Residents' comments: what they say could be improved

*Would like to see improvement in language issues with carers ' as none seem to speak English' - not aware of having a care plan - needs things positioned in the room to help them and getting carers to understand this can be difficult
'The carers don't seem to have enough time - they have time wasted because rushing makes it more difficult - more carers would be helpful, by and large the good outweighs the bad''*

'Today was got up later than usual - at 9.30am not 7am but this is unusual'

'Frustrating if carers speak in own language and I don't know what they are saying'

'More English-speaking staff, some staff don't understand me.'

'Not really'

'Residents meeting where I can voice concerns - but generally no issues'

'Happy with home'

Glasses reading - needs to change. Clocks needs changing/calendar in bedroom. Issues with wheelchair (it is slow)

'No - all good and organised'

'The length of time it takes if you buzz - expect them to be able to come but they don't come soon enough - if you want a change of pad they say 'busy' or that they need a colleague to come'. This is not the case every day, but 'one day took half an hour - generally seems not to be within 10 minutes' This resident would like more information about why there can be long waits - this would be helpful as there is 'never a valid answer' [discussed whether resident knew how to raise any concerns direct, and help Healthwatch Reading can give if needed]

'Food - vegetables overcooked, can't think of anything [else]' Would be interested in watching DVD [on her set] but does not know how to operate. {HWR member asked staff to assist resident with DVD}. Likes when new books come and would like hot chocolate every day.

'No everything is fine.'

'Food occasionally not enough flavour'

Healthwatch Reading observations

- The home is a large, converted listed building and unusual in Reading in that it accommodates many residents with a disability, as well as older people - it is large, with long corridors; the décor is bright and modern.
- Inside the secure entrance the entrance hall is bright and welcoming with a receptionist at the desk - and a pet guinea pig
- There is lots of information on notice boards throughout the home and there are displays of some paintings by residents. Menus displayed includes 'Night Bites' which appeared to be food available if hungry in the evening/at night. There is a gym on the top floor, staffed by physiotherapists
- We observed that one resident has a budgie in their room
- We were advised that the home uses mainly Tilehurst Village Surgery for GP services
- There are 4 activities coordinators, covering weekends as well as week-days, and we saw an activity programme displayed all around home
- The activities coordinators we spoke with (who assisted us during our visit) seemed very knowledgeable about residents. (They advised that they often take residents to shops, appointments, clubs etc)
- Also have a motivational speaker from Motivation & Co Motivational Specialists for care sector
- We found staff very friendly, and observed them speaking politely to residents, and knocking on residents' doors before entering rooms, whether accompanying us to introduce us to residents, or just observed as we moved about the home

Residents' suggestions for improvement - summary:

- Three residents mentioned language issues, and one particularly mentioned staff being rushed - in the context of many positive comments about how staff communicate and provide care. As some residents will have no or few visitors, and we heard that daily conversation with carers is very important to residents, how to address such language issues (time, understanding, making sure conversation is in English where that is the language of the cared-for person) is something to work on.
- No other themes are apparent in the 'suggestions for improvement' - the comment about it being helpful to know what causes wait times when ringing for carer assistance and why such assistance is delayed when requested is important, because care including having incontinence pads changed matters for personal dignity as well as health.

Other information

Beacher Hall Nursing Centre

Beacher Hall is run by [BUPA](#) and can accommodate up to 70 people (69 rooms have an ensuite WC).

Beacher Hall was rated 'good' by the Care Quality Commission when last inspected - the [report](#) is dated 2 December 2016.

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 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.

Reading organisations responsible for planning, funding or running NHS or social services, have launched a variety of care home initiatives in recent years. These will be summarised in the further report drawing together themes about the care home sector across Reading that we mention below.

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 mostly told us that they like how staff care for and communicate with them and find them responsive. We observed an environment that seems well-suited to the needs of most residents and heard from residents about an activity programme in the home, and about carer-accompanied outings into the community (e.g. to the shops) for residents who can make such trips.

The main improvement suggested was around ensuring that communication between English-speaking residents and carers is well-supported by the home.

We noted that most residents were not familiar with the idea of a care plan, though we heard that staff do talk to them about their care. 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.

Communicating this in a way that residents can understand and relate to, and involving them more, could be one area for developing practice at Beacher Hall.

Our overall impression was that residents - including those suggesting improvements - had a positive view of the home and felt able to voice their opinions to us.

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 Beacher Hall:

Thank you for this comprehensive report. It is good to see that most of our residents think we get it right most of the time, however, we welcome reports such as this to allow us to improve further and to make sure we offer person centred care at all times to all people.

In relation to your comments - I can confirm that we do have a Night Bite menu for people to access should they feel hungry if they awaken. Staff have also been known to help residents order take away food for delivery to the home during the evening.

One recurring theme is that residents notice that staff sometimes converse in languages other than English. We understand that this could make some people feel uncomfortable as it could be perceived that staff are talking about issues to do with residents without involving residents, and residents may feel excluded and isolated because of this. Please be assured that it is Bupa policy that all staff use English within the care home, unless they are conversing with a resident in a language the resident uses. This will be reiterated at the next staff meeting, and individual staff spoken to with the conversation recorded on our supervision documentation should any further instances be observed. Notices to reinforce this will be displayed in staff areas.

We take on board about how frustrating it can be to wait for what a resident may perceive as a long time when requesting assistance. We fully understand that perception of time can vary depending on comfort levels - time really can fly when you are enjoying yourself but can really drag if you are uncomfortable or in pain..... We do try to keep waiting times as short as possible, but we do need to explain delays to our residents (without breaching confidences of course - it is acceptable to apologise for a delay due to 'an emergency'). We do analyse call bell response times each day, and monitor for any excessive waits, or trends of waits, and do what we can to address. We are hoping that when the home is refurbished, that a more modern call bell system may be fitted which will allow response times to be improved further.

We also take on board the comments about residents being involved in their care planning and will make this a focus of each monthly care plan evaluation which will take place as part of the Resident of the Day scheme which we operate. We will do what we can to get input and viewpoints about care plans from residents and if appropriate their families.

Thank you again for the overall positive report.

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.