

## Findings of a dementia audit: Pembroke Lodge Care Home, Reading

**Where:** Pembroke Lodge, 32 Alexandra Rd, Reading, RG1 5PG

**When:** 21 September 2018

**Why:** Healthwatch Reading is visiting all care homes in Reading and gathering residents' views. In addition, we are using a national audit tool during a separate 'walk-around' of six care homes to see how the environment has been adapted to specifically support people with dementia.

**How:** Healthwatch Reading visited at a pre-agreed time with the care home and then made observations for each of the seven themes used in the audit tool. Pembroke Lodge's manager, Daniel D'cruz, joined Healthwatch Reading for the audit 'walkaround', of the dementia section of the home, and answered any questions as they came up.

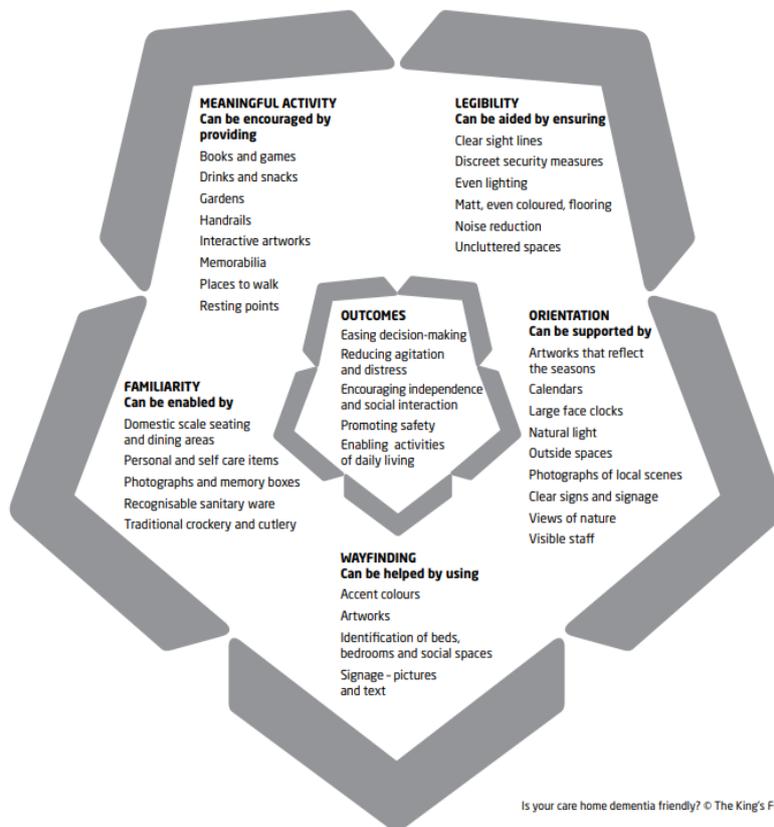
**Main findings\*:** Overall, we concluded that Pembroke Lodge is a dementia-friendly environment which displays many positive adaptations. We believe the care home could be even better if it introduced more colour contrast in some areas of the home to help residents orientate themselves.

*\*Our findings relate only to the date of the visit and changes may have happened since then. Prospective clients (and/or relatives) are advised to carry out their own visit to a care home before making final decisions on whether they feel the care home is suitable for their needs.*



## About the audit tool

Healthwatch Reading used an assessment tool called [\*Is Your Care Home Dementia Friendly?\*](#) It was developed by the national charity and research body, The King's Fund, as part of its Enhancing the Healing Environment programme, in 2014.



The tool is designed to be used during a walkaround of a care home. It is split into seven sections that ask up to 10 questions each, which should be scored from 1 (barely met) to 5 (totally met). A person can carry out the audit alone, but the King's Fund recommends it is done jointly with others involved in the person's care and/or life to ensure various views are considered and discussed.

Scores can be added up at the end of the exercise and used by

care homes to identify areas for improvement and/or make a case for extra investment, or by commissioners to compare different care homes in an area, according to the King's Fund.

## How we used the audit tool

The audit visits are the second stage of a Healthwatch Reading project on the experience of care home residents across Reading. This firstly involved visiting all residential and nursing homes across the borough to collect residents' views about their daily life. Individual visit reports with care home managers' responses have been published on our website.

This second part of our project aims to look in more detail at the environment of dementia-specialist care homes. This would help us to understand if Reading is 'a place where people can live well with dementia' - one of the priorities of the *Reading Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2020*.

Care homes voluntarily agreed to let us visit and carry out the audit and, in many cases, managers joined us for the exercise. We focused on observations and discussions about the seven themes rather than on scoring by numbers.

## **Pembroke Lodge audit findings:**

### **1. Does the environment promote meaningful interaction and purposeful activity between people who live in the care home, their families and staff?**

We found the care home:

- has an easy to use doorbell
- feels welcoming and gives a good first impression, looking clean and well cared for and with signing in book and information about who the staff are
- has social rooms such as the day rooms and dining room and different types of seating including armchairs, as well as dedicated spaces for residents who want quiet time on their own
- has lots of artwork on the walls
- encourages residents to engage in gardening and growing vegetables.

### **2. Does the environment promote well-being?**

We found:

- good natural light in bedrooms and social areas
- the communal room faces the garden with low, big windows and patio doors to maximise the natural light in the home
- the residents' bedrooms have blackout curtains to support normal sleep and wake patterns
- light switches are not in a contrast colour, but the manager said he was happy to look into that change.
- residents have access to outside space and get help if need to go outside; there is colourful, no-toxic planting in the garden and a circular path

### **3. Does the environment encourage eating and drinking?**

We found:

- relatives and residents have access to the kitchen and can make food and wash up as well as making hot drinks
- residents also have access to snacks and finger foods
- the home has just changed the crockery so that it has distinctive coloured edges to support the residents and there are also beakers in different colours
- residents can choose to eat in their rooms or in the dining room
- there is enough space for staff to assist residents with eating and drinking, if needed, in the dining rooms.

### **4. Does the environment promote mobility?**

We found:

- there is enough space for residents to walk inside and outside the home
- the floor is not shiny and is in a contrast colour to the walls
- there are handrails for going up the stairs

- there is no space for seating in the corridors
  - there are points of interest, such as a digital photo frame, and the manager is planning to put in large murals in the communal area
  - the garden has a day house for residents to enjoy activities and
- **5. Does the environment promote continence and personal hygiene?**

We found:

- toilet doors are painted in a neutral colour to the walls
- the seats in the toilet are coloured blue to contrast with the rest of the bathroom
- taps are clearly marked hot and cold
- there is easy access to the toilets and big enough space for a wheelchair or staff to assist
- there are no sensor lights in the bathrooms.

**6. Does the environment promote orientation?**

We found:

- some of the doors that lead into communal spaces have transparent panels to allow people to see which room they are going into
- signs for toilets are hung low to be seen easily
- there are pictures and plants for the residents to use as orientation markers around the home
- residents' rooms have a picture of themselves on the door, and they can have their own furniture and photographs to make it their own space
- strong patterns have been avoided and there is neutral coloured wallpaper with plain paint at the bottom half of the wall that carries throughout the home
- there are clocks in the rooms, and a big clock with date in the communal space for all the residents to see
- they home also writes the date and menu on a communal whiteboard.

**7. Does the environment promote calm, safety and security?**

We found:

- the spaces are clutter free
- background noise is kept to a minimum with the staff carrying pagers in the evening and call systems and other alarms go into night mode
- the residents have control over what they want to watch and listen to
- exit doors are clearly marked exit
- there are facilities provided for relatives who have a loved one in the care home who are at the end of life - dedicated spaces for relatives to stay are in a supported living site, which is next door to the care home
- all hazardous liquids and cleaning solutions are locked and kept away from residents.

### Areas for improvement

- light switches could be changed to show contrast with the surroundings
- toilet doors could be painted in a distinctive colour

*The King's Fund tool states: 'Not being able to find the toilet provokes anxiety and using the same signs and door colours to denote all toilets will help people find them more easily.' It adds that 'providing visual clues...including accent colours...will help with orientation'.*

### Response from Pembroke Lodge:

*'We found the audit very useful. It is great to see where we are doing well and also it is helpful to see where we can improve to make our service better for the residents with dementia. We will certainly be looking in to contrasting the light switches in the bedrooms, and also looking at making the toilets and bathroom doors a different colour to the bedrooms.'*

### Acknowledgements and other information

Healthwatch Reading thanks the manager for welcoming us for an additional visit to carry out this dementia audit. Our findings relate to how we observed the care home on the date of the visit and the care home may have made changes/improvements since this date. Good practice guidance suggests that prospective residents and/or families carry out their own visits to a care home before making a final decision.

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