

River View Nursing Home, Reading: a Healthwatch Reading visit report

Where: River View Nursing Home, Rodway Road, off Oxford Road, Reading RG30 6TP

When: 13 February 2018, for 1.5 hours in the morning and 15 February 2018, for 1.5 hours in the afternoon.

Who: 15 people spoke with trained Healthwatch Reading staff members. We spoke to 9 women and 6 men. Of these, 2 residents were aged 55-65, 5 were aged 75-84 and 7 were 85 or older. The 14 residents who wanted to tell us about their characteristic were all white British.

Why: Healthwatch Reading is visiting local care homes to:

- Give older, frail, or unwell people 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 River View:

- Some liked the food choices available to them.
- More than half of those we talked to mentioned positively how staff respond to residents.
- Most felt that they were usually included in planning their care and positive comments included help with hygiene, being able to wash and dress oneself, feeling included.
- All residents said they could see a GP when they needed do, and most also said they had access to an optician or a dentist when needed.
- One resident explained to us that a GP visits the home once a week, and that the nurses make a note of anyone needing to see the GP, and what the health problem is.
- Two people were not sure how to access a dentist.
- Another said they 'waited ages' to see a dentist, while another mentioned going out to visit a dental surgery.
- Four people mentioned being inpatients in hospital in the last 6 months, and one had been to outpatient clinics.
- One person who had been treated as a hospital inpatient, told us that her care was good, and that leaving hospital to come back to the home went smoothly.

Residents' comments: what they like

'Workers are good. Jolly. Happy. Good and chat to us.'

'Nice staff.'

'I like it, look after myself.'

'Staff lovely and humility.'

'The staff are nice. Food is ok, no complaints.'

'Food is ok, staff are good and look after me.'

Daily care is 'fantastic - very kind and caring'.

'Not bad, the way the staff look after me. I also like the food. Don't have many activities'

Family member told us: 'Happy to accommodate the relatives.' Resident said, 'I'm fine, lovely and warm food. The staff are lovely and attentive. They take it all in their stride.'

Family member speaking to us as resident has no speech: 'They do a good job, I come and help and visit during feeding time.' Adapted food, made softer - 'Staff are really good as I visit often.'

'The food is good, I don't need support with care.'

'When I see staff they are good, bring me water'

'Food is good, I can't say anything against it, I'm quite happy. My family take me out. the staff are kind. Nothing bad to say about them, that's the truth. I have made friends. It's lovely. I was happily married, made lots of friends. My nieces take me out.'

'[My partner] and children are able to visit.'

'Meals well balanced. All fine. Can't comment on activities.'

'I'm happy to be here, lovely room, lovely bed, got my TV.'

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

'[They] help me get out of bed', and with 'overall hygiene'.

'Sometimes staff are ok. [I] didn't know about bell. It was out of reach.'

'[We] wash and dress ourselves.'

'Don't know.'

'[They] always include me - all the time.'

'There is not much change in my care, I have no complaints.'

'They don't tell me; the GP gets in touch with me when he alters my prescription.'

Family member reports attending a meeting, and being asked 'what [resident] liked, did not like. What was [their] routine like.'

'I'm not on any medication, they always tell me' - at the moment [they have an infection] and staff 'always tell me what is going on'.

'I can't say anything against them, they are good. They are just lovely.'

One resident said 'No', another 'Probably' and another 'Don't know'.

Residents' comments: what they say could be improved

'Very lonely, nothing goes on, just look out of the window. In bed and sit in chair all day long.'

Does not like 'the food, the staff'.

'Not been on activities, would like to go shopping/visit cafe and outing.'

'More activities.'

'Don't like soft food.'

'They leave people yelling and banging and do not respond. Delays in responding to bell, especially out of hours.'

'Other residents walking into my room, when the door is open.' Carers get moved around, but residents [like to] get used to faces, especially nurses.

'Soft diet.'

'That's hard - food would be the one to change, more variety on the menu.'

'Not so good, nothing ever goes on, would like to go outside when weather allows. Food all microwaved. Asked what I'd like but never got it. Cold vegetables.'

'All the people make noise in the corridor.'

'[I would like it if] the staff make more time for me.'

'So long, funding, it took a long time to get her in.' (Comment from family member)

'[River View] recently change of hands, since then it has improved. Painted all the doors white. Dementia patients will not know which one is theirs as they are all the same.'

Healthwatch Reading observations

- The home is a large converted property and is located close to the town centre.
- The main reception area is bright and welcoming. There are reception staff.
- We observed that there was an open-door entry at the front door and that anyone could walk in if there was no one at reception.
- The accommodation is on four floors and consists of both shared and single rooms.
- As we walked around we noticed there were no personalisation on residents' doors and that all the rooms were coloured in the same colour. We heard that the uniform decoration confuses some of the residents we spoke to - sometimes they go into the wrong bedroom by mistake.
- There were no visible timetable posters or activity schedules for residents. Whilst visiting, residents in the communal areas/lounges were not engaged in any activities and a lot of residents were in bed.
- The home seemed big and lacked any kind of homely feel, with residents at times wandering around.
- There seemed to be no displays for residents to look at - the walls were plain with limited information displayed.
- There were not many items within the home to stimulate the residents, with no books or magazines for them to read in the lounge area.
- The outside space did not reflect the size of the home and number of residents
- We noted that the staff seemed very pleasant and friendly when they greeted us.

Residents' suggestions for improvement - summary:

- Based on comments about the food, residents could be consulted about the food menu.
- Doors could be different colours, rather than all white, to help people with dementia to get about more easily.
- More activities.
- Eight residents had no suggestions, one saying 'I haven't really given much thought into it'.

Other information

River View

River View is run by [Maria Mallaband Care Group](#) and can accommodate up to 137 people (all rooms have an ensuite WC).

River View has not yet received a recent formal inspection by the Care Quality Commission, since it was taken over by a new provider on 30 July 2017.

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 the staff and find them responsive. We observed an environment that could be adapted to make it more welcoming and homely, and we noted that residents' comments to us about a lack of activities seemed to fit with our observation that we saw no evidence of a regular and stimulating schedule of activities in the areas we visited.

The main improvements suggested were around having more activities and improving the food available.

We also noted that the home could easily be made more dementia-friendly e.g. with pictures on doors, visual clues and prompts including accent colours and artwork and providing clocks and calendars to help with orientation. Outside area could be improved to help with well-being

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. We concluded that communicating this in a way that residents can understand and relate to, and involving them more, could be one area for developing practice at River View.

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 River View:

The home has 3 floors Ground middle and Second Floor- which comprises of 7 units and all accessed through a key entry pad from the reception area. All 137 rooms are single and not shared.

The home's 7 units are all furnished differently depending on the clientele group - some of the wall displays in other units have to be removed from the walls for safety reasons as some residents remove them when they are agitated and this poses danger to themselves and others.

The doors were different colours before the refurbishment started in December 2017 and were recently painted white as per residents' suggestions, wishes and preferences

A resident meeting was held on the 12.03.18 to seek their views and suggestions on food and Activities which the home is currently implementing. The home also has sought support from another chef within the company to come and support River View Chef so as to improve on the food quality.

Home has got 3 activity co-ordinators who draw up an activity planner with the residents and when completed they are displayed in the residents' bedrooms.

Home call bell is monitored and recorded day and night as the home is covered 24/7 by senior personnel- there are 4 Clinical managers and 1 Home manager. On weekly basis the manager prints out the call bell activity and analyses it for trends and short falls and if there is a call bell which has gone more than 5 minutes an investigation is carried out to find out what happened and action taken based on that. The print out is also shared with residents/relatives who will raise any concern about the call bell not being answered 'as quickly as possible.'

All responses from the residents and relatives will be shared with the staff who then come up with an action plan which will be shared with residents and work together to improve the service which the staff provides.

The home thanks the 2 staff members from Healthwatch Reading for visiting our home to raise positives and things which require improvement so that all our residents can have high quality care at any given time.

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.