

## Healthwatch Kent Report : Care Home Series

### Brambling Lodge Care Home, Shephersdswell, Dover

May 2018

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#### Foreword

Across the country, Independent Age has been working with Healthwatch to explore what people are looking for when choosing a care home.

They have identified 10 key indicators that they feel make a good Care Home, for example, they highlight important areas of dignity and choice such as residents being able to continue their hobbies and have an input into the running of the home.

Many Healthwatches already use the Independent Age indicators when visiting Care Homes and we have decided to adopt this approach here in Kent.

We have visited 24 Care Homes in total in recent months, two per District. It was important to us that we visited a range of homes from every area in Kent. Although we selected them at random we did check with the Care Quality Commission, Kent County Council and the seven Kent Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure we didn't clash with any visits they already had planned.

This report details the findings from Brambling Lodge Care Home in Dover. We have also published a report which summarises the findings from all our visits. We have of course shared our findings with the Care Home but also the Care Quality Commission, Kent County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Groups as each of them have a role to play in inspecting and commissioning care homes in Kent.

We will be following up with each home to check their progress against our recommendations and will publish an Impact report within six months' time.

If you have an experience of a Care Home in Kent that you wish to share with us (good or bad) do get in touch. Call our freephone Helpline on 0808 801 0102 or complete a feedback form on our website [www.healthwatchkent.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchkent.co.uk)

Steve Inett

Chief Executive, Healthwatch Kent

## What were we trying to achieve?

Using the 10 key indicators, as set out by Independent Age, we wanted to talk to Care Home residents, family and staff about their experiences of living and working in the home.

## How did we go about it?

We visited Brambling Lodge Care Home on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018. **Our authorised visitors were Jo Pannell and Theresa Oliver.** We spoke to: the manager, seven residents, a family member, and three members of staff on the day and left some surveys to be returned to us anomalously by post for family and friends. Only one of these was received.

We were seeking to answer the following indicators.

A good care home should.....

1. Have a registered manager in post.
  2. Have a stable workforce
  3. Have staff who have the right skills to do their jobs.
  4. Have enough staff on duty during the day and night
  5. Be clear about how they will be able to meet residents' needs both now and, in the future,
  6. Offer meaningful activity and enjoyment to suit all tastes
  7. Enable residents to see a GP or other health professionals like a dentist, optician or chiropodist, whenever they need to
  8. Accommodate your cultural and lifestyle needs
  9. Show that they're always looking to improve
  10. Provide nutritious food, plenty of fluids and a pleasant environment for meals
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## Overview: What did we find?

### The home

- is set in the village of Shepherdswell, between Canterbury and Dover and is a large house in a residential village
- has 23 single rooms, 12 with en-suite and 2 shared rooms
- has a conservatory, a dining room and quiet lounge area
- has local amenities close by with shops and bus services
- is privately owned by Adobe Care Ltd
- accommodates for the 50+ age group
- has a small garden at the rear which required some general maintenance

The home had their last CQC inspection on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017. The overall rating was in 'requires improvement' in all areas of safety, effective, caring, responsive and for being well-led. Please click on the link to view the latest report.

[http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/new\\_reports/INS2-2473838543.pdf](http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/new_reports/INS2-2473838543.pdf)

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## This is what we found

### A good care home should...

1. **Have a registered manager in post.** The registered manager is the most important staff member in a care home - and the one responsible for ensuring quality standards and residents' needs are met. They should be visible within the care home, provide good leadership to staff, have relevant experience of the health and care system and qualifications to help them do their job.

The **Acting Manager** had been at the home for six months and had been acting up as manager for the last four months. A new manager was due to arrive shortly after our visit. The current manager told us he enjoyed helping to deliver person centred care to the residents.

The **staff** told us that they thought the manager was very supportive and easy to talk to. One person noted that they would feel comfortable in raising any issues. The staff all told us how much they enjoyed their job, especially working with the residents.

Both **family** members knew the acting manager and found him very helpful and friendly. One family acknowledged that there would be a new manager next week.

Four **residents** told us that they didn't know who the manager was, two knew what he looked like and the other knew the manager and told us that another manager was due to come in soon. One resident said that the manager was a *"nice fella, we get on well"*. Due to the other residents saying they didn't know the manager, they were unable to answer this question.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with some minor reservations.

2. **Have a stable workforce.** Care homes with knowledgeable, experienced staff who get to know residents can make the difference between an institution and a home. Where turnover of staff is very high, these qualities can be lost. It may also be a sign that staff are not happy working in the home.

The **residents** told us that they knew all the staff in the home or appeared to know them. One comment was made about *"the recent high turnover of staff"*, which they found un-settling.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with some minor reservations.

3. **Have staff who have the right skills to do their jobs.** Well-informed, skilled staff who are valued and developed as employees are vital to a smooth-running care home. All care homes should have a clear, comprehensive training scheme to ensure staff have the knowledge they need.

The **manager** told us that he encourages staff to undertake training. Staff had recently done a falls prevention and skin care training course. He encourages staff to do NVQ's via distance learning.

The **staff** told us that “*there is lots of different training on offer, I have completed NVQ level 2 and about to go onto level 3*”, the other members of staff were also undertaking different training courses.

We asked about the **residents** about the staff and they told us: “*they are lovely, they look after us*”, “*they are 100%*”, “*they are very good*”. Four residents said that the staff had time to stop and chat with them. one said that they were “*too busy and when I ask a question, they don’t give me an answer*” another said that they didn’t see the staff and the other said “*they have time to talk some of the time*”.

One **family** member told us that they were getting to know the staff, “*they seem to be on the ball*”, the other stated they thought that most of the staff had the right skills for the job.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with some minor reservations.

4. **Have enough staff on duty during the day and night.** Many homes have a lower proportion of staff on during the night, but if the ratio falls too low - at any time of day - response times can be too slow.

The **manager** told us that during the day there were five members of staff on duty during the mornings and afternoons, and two or three during the night.

The **staff** told us that “*on a good day, yes*”, “*it really depends on the day and the residents’ needs*”.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with no reservations.

5. **Be clear about how they will be able to meet residents’ needs both now and in the future.** Many residents will develop more care needs as they get older - particularly if they have a condition like dementia. It is vital that homes can spot changes to their health

and respond appropriately - consulting other health professionals where necessary - to provide the right level of care and prevent residents from having to move again.

The **manager** told us that all records are now recorded on an iPad, which is currently being trialled. Staff updated care plans on the spot and recorded fluid and food intake electronically. This was a relatively new process for the home and we saw staff using these during our visit. All prospective residents receive a pre-assessment. If there were queries relating to accommodating anyone, the manager would contact the Operations Manager to carry out a second assessment.

Two members of **staff** said that they preferred talking to the residents to find out their needs and found this more beneficial than the iPad. *“you can find out more by talking than reading”*. Any changes are updated as they happen on the iPad and conveyed to the team leaders.

One **family** member told us that staff asked their relative what they liked and didn't like, and they had time to stop and talk to their relative, the other said that the staff were getting to know their relative well.

**Residents** that we spoke to thought that the staff knew what they needed and what they liked and didn't like, with one adding that they didn't think the staff knew about their background.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with some minor reservations.

- 6. Offer meaningful activity and enjoyment to suit all tastes.** Care homes should not be boring places - they should offer an interesting range of activities and entertainment that match the tastes and preferences of their residents, including individual activities. Homes should take steps to stop residents from becoming isolated or lonely while respecting their privacy and choice.

The **manager** told us that they have live entertainment in the home with music and the visiting 'zoo lab' which brings in a variety of animals for the residents to pet. There is an activities co-ordinator onsite Monday to Friday afternoons and she does various arts and crafts with the residents. Staff can access the materials during the weekends. The activity co-ordinator encourages residents to attend

and we were told she usually manages to get quite a few involved. Staff also encourage the residents and they do life histories with each resident.

**Staff** we spoke to all told us about the activity co-ordinator and how she organises activities which change daily. The co-ordinator was currently organising an Easter bonnet parade. There are no trips organised to take residents out of the home, although some families take them out.

One **family** member mentioned the weekly programme of activities. The other noted: *“the lady who organises the activities is exceptionally good at finding suitable activities for all of the residents and always goes the extra mile”*.

When asked about the activities, three of the **residents** told us about some of the activities they took part in. Three residents weren't interested, preferring to read or do other things that interested them and one said that there were not any activities. We asked them if it was easy to join in the activities: none of the residents were able to give an answer. We also asked if they went on trips outside of the home: one told us that their relative takes them out, one mentioned trips to the garden centre and shopping, two residents were not sure if there were trips out of the home and the remaining three didn't provide an answer.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with no reservations.

**7. Enable residents to see a GP or other health professionals like a dentist, optician or chiropodist, whenever they need to.**

Residents should have the same expectation to be able to promptly see a health professional as they would have when living in their own home. Care homes should be able to explain the relationship they have with their local NHS services - does a GP visit regularly? Can they call a GP out in an emergency? How easy is it for residents to see a dentist, optician, chiropodist or physiotherapist, either for a check-up or in an emergency?

The **manager** told us that a visiting optician called regularly, and a mobile dentist was also available.

The **staff** told us that there were regular eye and dental checks at the home as well as a mobile hairdresser and staff paint the residents' nails.

One **family** member said that there were regular checks, the other did not answer this question.

The **residents** we spoke to told us that they regularly get eye and dental checks apart from one resident who couldn't remember. Two of these residents said that they had a broken tooth, although one said that they had been inspected they were not sure of the treatment. One person also mentioned the chiropodist coming in.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with some minor reservations.

- 8. Accommodate your cultural and lifestyle needs.** Care homes should be set up to meet your cultural and lifestyle needs as well as your care needs and shouldn't make you feel uncomfortable if you do things differently to other residents. They should also be proactive in finding out what your needs are, so that they can accommodate them.

To cater for any cultural, religious or lifestyle needs the **manager** told us that needs could be accommodated, but at this time there were no additional needs to be catered for.

The **staff** told us that a church service was held at the home which some residents attend. There were no other cultural requests at this time.

One **family** told us that their relative didn't have any such needs, the other did not answer this question.

Two **residents** told us that they joined in with the Sunday service when it was on, they enjoyed singing. Two residents did not know if there were any religious activities on, two were not religious and one did not answer this question.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with no reservations.

9. Show that they're always looking to improve. You should be able to find out what current residents, their families and friends think about the home. The care home should be happy to help you do this - for example, by putting you in touch with a residents and relatives group or allowing you to speak to residents and visitors in private. They should also have support in place for people who wish to make a complaint any time, and there should be a healthy culture of challenge and feedback between residents, relatives and staff.

The **manager** told us that he is always around for relatives to speak to him about any concerns or issues they may have. If they receive a complaint they will organise a meeting with the family to try and resolve the issue if possible. The **manager** told us that they regularly send out questionnaires to family members and the residents to gauge overall satisfaction with services. There are also resident and family meetings.

The **staff** told us that the previous manager was not very open to hearing ideas, but the current acting manager was. There are letters to relatives and they are welcome to call into the office to discuss their relative with the manager. Residents can always pass on their ideas about any changes they think may work to staff and they will feed back. The acting manager has an open-door policy and welcomes any suggestions from staff. The staff told us that there were regular staff and resident meetings.

One **family** member felt that they were a welcome participant in the life of the home and that they give feedback to the manager or the staff when needed.

We asked the **residents** if there was anything they would like to change about the home: one said they would like more dancing and singing, one would change their 1<sup>st</sup> floor bedroom, two did not answer and the remaining three residents wouldn't change anything. When asked what they would do if they wanted to make a complaint they told us: three would go straight to the manager and the other four would talk to one of the carers.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with no reservations.

#### 10. Provide nutritious food, plenty of fluids and a pleasant environment for meals

The **manager** told us that a trolley goes around the communal areas every hour offering sweet and savoury snacks as well as tea, coffee and juices. There is a cook on site who makes all the meals from fresh ingredients. There are 2 main course options and deserts for lunch everyday.

We asked the **residents** what they thought of the food: *“it is alright, I like the sandwiches”*, *“it is better than some places”*, *“it’s magnificent, especially the roast chicken”* and the *“food is very good”*. We asked what the choice of food was like: *“I only have a small appetite, but we get what we are given, the chicken is nice”*, *“there is usually a hot and cold dish, this has changed because of staff leaving, there is not always 2 hot choices now”*. *“Yes, we can get snacks as well”*. *“yes, there is enough choice and it is very satisfying”*, *“we can have tea at all times”*. All the residents said that they enjoyed their mealtimes, with the majority sitting in the lounge or dining room and only one resident told us that they ate in their room.

The **staff** told us that there were always 2 or 3 hot choices at lunch time with a vegetarian option, and snacks are available throughout the day. They try to make the mealtimes more sociable by sitting and chatting to residents at lunch times. Most residents eat in the dining room or the conservatory.

One **family** member told us that they had seen the menu choice available and had seen the kitchen. The other did not feel that their relative was supported enough, especially with fluids, but thought this to be down to staffing levels more than the staff not trying. They thought that the food always looked good to them.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with no reservations.

## What have we recommended?

- Ensure that the manager frequently engages with the residents so that they can readily identify them
- Review staffing levels considering some of the comments we heard
- Set a date to evaluate the use of the iPad system used for recording resident information and include staff to gain their views
- Invite local school and community groups into the home for interaction with the residents
- The rear garden requires general maintenance, seating areas and seasonal flowers to encourage residents outside during warmer months

## Disclaimer

Please note this report relates to the findings on the day stated at the beginning of this report. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all staff, residents, family and friends, only an account of what was contributed and observed during our visit on that day.

## Healthwatch Kent

Healthwatch Kent is the independent voice for local people in Kent.

We gather and represent people's views about any health and social care service in Kent.

Our role is to understand what matters most to people and to use that information to influence providers and commissioners to change the way services are designed and developed.

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