

## Healthwatch Kent Report : Care Home Series

### Port Regis Care Home, Broadstairs

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 summarises the findings from our visit to Port Regis care home. 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 in around 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

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## **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 Port Regis Care Home in Broadstairs on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018. During our visit we talked to the manager and one of the owners, three members of staff, six residents and received two questionnaires from families.

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

## Overview: What did we find?

### The home

- has 70 rooms, mostly en suite, with some shared rooms available
  - is set in 17 acres of grounds and is an old building with an adjacent nursery. The children visit the home on a regular basis, doing various activities with the residents
  - has a large dining room and lounge with 2 separate wings to accommodate those with dementia (which is a safe unit) and older people in need of personal care services. (For this visit we only visited the general communal areas and not the two safe units)
  - accommodates for the 65+ age group
  - looked clean and tidy and was free from clutter
  - had a family feel to the home which was also noted by the residents
  - encouraged residents to go into the garden during the warmer months to sit or do light gardening, one resident was particularly keen on photographing wildlife
- The home had their last CQC inspection in March 2017 and was found to be good overall, on all 5 aspects of the visit including: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well led. Please click on the link to access the latest report. <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-138889495?referer=widget3>
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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 **manager** at Port Regis started as a Registered General Nurse (RGN) doing day and night shifts and had been with the home for over 20 years. She told us that she enjoys meeting and working with the older people and finding out about them and their life history.

We spoke to three members of **staff** during our visit and all noted the support offered by the manager and the owners. They all said that the manager was very easy to talk to and that she was always available for them. They all felt that they had enough time to care for the residents, although one noted that this could be difficult due to staff sickness on occasions.

We spoke to six **residents** during our visit and all knew the manager, and all but one knew one of the owners. We asked the residents what they thought of the manager, all gave praise for the job she does, noting that '*she is wonderful*', '*helpful*' and '*listens to us*'.

Two **family members** returned the questionnaires via post and both knew who the manager was and noted that she was always helpful, kind and considerate.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with no 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 **manager** told us that she encourages her staff to have regular training and is open with the staff about further areas of training required. Prior to employment, all staff are invited in to the home and encouraged to develop their role. Most staff have been at the home for many years.

The **staff** told us that a variety of training was offered, as well supervision sessions. All three enjoyed their jobs, with no dislikes. Some comments were: '*It feels like being part of a family*', '*it is very calm*' and '*I enjoy chatting to the residents and families*'.

The **residents** we spoke to knew all the staff in the home or appeared to know them.

The two **family members** told us that they knew the staff and they all had worked at the home for some time.



Based on what we heard, the home meets the indicator with no 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 she encourages her staff to have regular training and is open to the staff about further areas of training required. Prior to employment, staff are invited in to the home and encouraged to develop their role.

The **staff** get to know the history, personality and health and social care needs of the residents by using the ‘my life’ tool which identifies and records important events in a resident’s past. The care plan is informative, but often more is found out by sitting and chatting with the resident and any changes are updated in the care plan.

The **family** members thought that staff had the time and skills to attend to their family member, stating that they were ‘*always very attentive*’ and ‘*we are confident in all of them*’.



Based on what you have heard, the home meets the indicator with no 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.

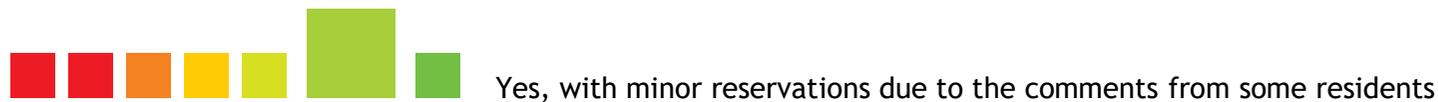
The **manager** told us that she has five care staff every morning plus three cleaners, two kitchen workers, one laundry worker and one administrator. In the afternoons there are four carers, one kitchen worker, one laundry worker and an administrator. During the night there are five walking night staff, one based on each floor of the home.

The **staff** we spoke to all felt that they had enough time to care for the residents, although one noted that this could be difficult due to staff sickness on occasions.

**Family** members thought there were enough staff at the home

We asked the **residents** about the staff and they told us: *'they are definitely first rate, I could go to any of them and they would help', 'they are helpful and would do anything for you', 'ok', 'very friendly', 'they do their utmost, some work double shifts', 'very good, hard working, dedicated and over worked'.*

We asked the residents if they knew the staff, and did the staff know what they needed and of their likes and dislikes? There was a mixed response: *'They tend to know now, but they can snap at people', 'They are busy, but have time to chat', 'Yes, I know all the staff', 'No, not really', 'Yes, I have been here long enough to know that if you want to keep your independence, they will help'.*



- 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 any prospective residents are offered a pre-assessment when their life history, personality, health and social care needs are discussed. If the home does not feel that they can meet these needs, a place will not be offered. Family and friends are also spoken to as part of the pre-assessment, to gain further insight into the prospective resident's life. All residents have a care

plan where any changes to their health or social care needs are updated accordingly. Each care plan is reviewed monthly, regardless of any changes.

**Staff** told us about the pre-assessment and they also noted that they spent time with residents getting to know about their past. The staff all knew how any changes to a resident's wellbeing should be recorded. They also spoke about changes during shift change overs.

Both **family members** told us that the staff knew about their resident's life histories, personalities and health and care needs 'very well', and if the residents needs changed that the home responded '*immediately*'.



Based on what you have heard, the home meets the indicator with no 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 there were a host of activities within the home including: Table top such as games, quizzes, bingo and dominos, a reminiscence box, local Beavers and Scouts groups come in to the home, visits from the adjacent nursery and outside entertainment. The home used to provide external visits in the summer by hiring a coach, but many of the residents did not want to leave the coach, so this idea was abandoned. An ice cream van visits on a Wednesday and an afternoon café is being planned that serves cream teas. There is also an on-site hair salon, which was in use during our visit. Staff encourage the residents to join in with the activities, but it is their choice if they do not want to.

**Staff** told us about the Activity Co-ordinator who is on site five days a week. Although she is relatively new, she is keen to develop new activities for residents. Accompanied outside walks are encouraged, where residents can visit the on-site farm. Although not all residents take part in the various activities, the staff that we spoke to offered encouragement to take part.

When asked about the activities, two **residents** told us that they didn't want to take part. Others told us about the board games, crochet, outside entertainment once a month, drawing, arts and crafts, sowing seeds in grow bags in the garden, quizzes, children

coming in, and photography. Those residents that took part in the activities said that it was easy to join in and that staff helped them to do so if they were interested. We asked the residents if they could continue to do the things that they enjoyed before coming into the home: one mentioned their love of bingo but said that they would like to do it at the home, another continued to do crochet. The remaining residents either did not respond to this question or felt that due to their health they could no longer walk long distances or play things such as golf. When we asked about trips outside of the home, three residents answered 'no', two told us that they went into the garden for a walk, and one said that they would go if a trip was organised.



Based on what you have 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 there is a visiting optician who attends the home annually and either a family member will take residents to their own dentist or the home will organise a visiting dentist as needed.

All the **staff** said that an optician visits the home annually and a dentist is called in as and when required.

The **residents** we spoke to told us that they had recently seen the optician at the home and they knew that they could request the dentist if needed. Only one resident said that she would organise a dentist independently.

Only one **family member** responded to this question and said that their loved one had regular dentist and eye tests at the home.



Based on what you have heard, the home meets the indicator with no 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** has contacts of various religious people that could be invited in, if required, but there are few different religions within the home.

All three **staff** knew that Holy Communion is offered at the home, but as few of the residents were religious, they were unsure of what to do for other cultural needs.

**Residents** told us that they were not religious and that they did not have any other cultural needs that were not being met.

**Family** members stated that neither of the residents had any specific lifestyle, religious or cultural needs.



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

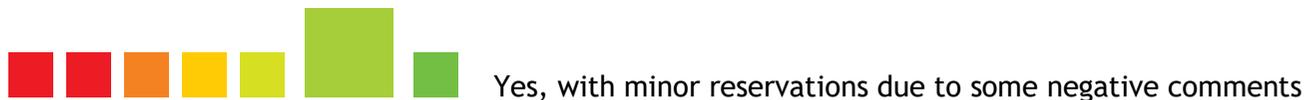
- 9. Show that they're always looking to improve.** You should be able to find out what current residents, their families and friends think about the home. The care home should be happy to help you do this - for example, by putting you in touch with a residents and relatives group or allowing you to 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 she learns from feedback and complaints, always acting on any information and updates policies accordingly. There is an office in the centre of the home with an open-door policy for staff and residents. The manager told us families and residents are offered the opportunity to have a say in how the home is run via biannual surveys. Some of the changes that have been made following the surveys is the use of ‘Skype’ as suggested by a relative and asking new residents about the colour decoration in their room.

The **staff** told us that residents and relatives are given the opportunity to suggest any changes to the home via open discussions during resident and relative meetings. During our visit we saw several complaints procedure notices should any one wish to make a complaint. The staff noted that the use of ‘Skype’ to stay in touch with relatives had come from one of the relative meetings. The staff that we spoke to all agreed that they felt they could have a say in how the home is run, as their opinions were sought, and one noted the things like the bathing list could change if needs be.

We asked the **residents** if there was anything that they would like to change about the home and if so, had they had told anyone about this? One person told us that she used to grow flowers, but couldn’t here due to health reasons, and another told us: *‘For staff to treat people with more respect’*, and the remaining residents said that they didn’t want any changes. Four residents told us that they would go straight to the manager if they had a complaint and the remaining two would go to a member of staff.

**Family members** both told us that *‘the home is always open to suggestions’* and knew how to complain if they needed to, both were confident that any complaint would be acted upon by the manager.



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

The **manager** told us they the residents are encouraged to eat in the large dining room. The kitchen opens at 8.30 am offering up to six hot and cold items for breakfast. Some residents don’t come down but have breakfast in their rooms served on a tray. There is also a cooked tea and residents can ask for snacks throughout the day and evening.

The **staff** know which residents need assistance at mealtimes. Fluid charts were monitored throughout the day, with drinks available in the lounge. Snacks of sandwiches, cakes and biscuits are always available. The staff try to make the mealtimes sociable by encouraging residents to the dining room, by helping them to get there and then sitting and chatting during lunch, but they can eat in their rooms or lounge if they prefer.

All the **residents** we spoke too thought the food was good, with them noting the choice offered of two main choices hot and cold pudding. They all enjoyed the mealtimes with two people commenting about the social aspect of eating together. We saw the lunch being served during our visit. If a resident didn't fancy what was on offer an omelette or other light lunch could be made.

Both **family members** thought that the food choices at the home were '*excellent*', and that mealtimes were made to be sociable in the main dining room and that the residents were supported to eat and drink as much as was needed.



Based on what you have heard, the home meets the indicator with no reservations

## What have we recommended?

- The relationship between the Care Home and the adjacent nursery is brilliant and should be publicised more widely. The children regularly visit the residents and play in the lounge and the residents clearly enjoyed their time with them.
- The Activities Co-ordinator is new in post and we look forward to hearing about new and additional activities for residents including those people who are in their room.
- Ensure there are sufficient staff available to cover sickness and holiday so that there is time to maintain the quality of interaction with the residents

## 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.

Our FREE Information and Engagement service can help you navigate Kent's complicated health and social care system to ensure you can find and access the services that are available for you. Call us on 0808 801 0102 or email [info@healthwatchkent.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchkent.co.uk)