

Engagement (Enter and View)

Visit Report - Fern House

Service Address: 14-16 Margaret Road, St Johns, Worcester WR2 4LR

CQC Registered Provider: Bransford Limited

CQC Registered Manager: Mrs Sandra Ghalamkari

Date and Time of Visit: 22nd January 2015 10.00 a.m. - 12 noon

Healthwatch Worcestershire (HWW) Contact: John Taylor

HWW Authorised Representatives: John Taylor and Janet Stephen

Report Approved by HWW: 8th May 2015



Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Worcestershire would like to thank the residents and staff at Fern House who gave us a warm welcome and spent time talking to us about their experiences of living or working at the home.

Thank you also to the Manager of the home for helping us to arrange the visit, showing us round and providing relevant information about the home that had been requested by Healthwatch Worcestershire.

Our report relates to findings that were observed or were contributed in response to our visit. It might not therefore be a fully representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users, carers and staff.

Our findings need to be viewed in the context that some of the residents may have illnesses or disabilities, including a dementia related illness, which may have an impact on what they have said to us. We took account of this during our visit.

1. What is Enter and View?

One of the legal powers of Healthwatch Worcestershire (HWW) is to carry out Enter and View visits.

HWW authorised representatives carry out these visits to publicly funded health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

It is important to emphasise that Enter and View is NOT an inspection, it is an engagement activity. We do not have access to individual care plans, or other confidential information. Enter and View is a way that Healthwatch Worcestershire can find out people's views and see for ourselves how services are provided.

2. What was this Enter and View visit about?

Healthwatch Worcestershire has a business priority of “Improving the Quality of Adult Social Care.”

One of the ways that we are doing this is by undertaking a series of visits to adult residential and nursing home settings. We understand that all of these settings provide some level of publicly funded care.

The purpose of the visits are to:

- Understand how residents in these settings are being provided with meaningful activities that support their health and well-being.
- Identify examples of good practice

Meaningful Activity is “that in which one is engaged that which holds meaning and value for us engages our time, attention and environment”¹

Meaningful activity includes physical, social and leisure activities that are tailored to the person's needs and preferences. Meaningful activity may involve structured activities (e.g. arts and crafts, quizzes, discussion groups, music etc.), but as important can be people being involved to the level of their ability in activities of daily living (e.g. helping in the day to day running of the home) and

¹ Perrin, T. May, H. and Anderson, E. Wellbeing in Dementia

brief moments (butterfly moments) of connection, engagement and activity that are meaningful to the person concerned².

Statistics from the Alzheimer's Society show that 80 per cent of people living in care homes have a form of dementia or severe memory problems. The Worcestershire Residential Dementia Service Standard³ is used by Worcestershire County Council and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups. The aim is to promote care that is person-centred. Person-centred care considers the whole person; taking into account each individual's unique qualities, abilities, interests, preferences and needs, rather than focusing on their illness or on abilities they may have lost. Person-centred care also means treating residents with dignity and respect⁴. The Standard covers a range of areas, including meaningful occupation and a dementia specific environment. It is not a requirement for providers in Worcestershire to meet the Standard.

HWW Authorised representatives received, prior to the visits taking place, introductory training in meaningful activity (some of the content was based on the Worcestershire Residential Dementia Service Standard) and also on understanding people living with dementia. This included content on meaningful activity for people living with dementia.

3. How did we carry out this Enter and View visit?

Fern House provides accommodation and personal care for a maximum of 7 people, some of whom may have a dementia related illness. Along with other homes it was selected for the visit simply on the basis of various criteria such as achieving a mixture of large and small homes, those that provide nursing care and those that do not, achieving a geographical spread across the County and a mixture of large and smaller providers. It was not selected on the basis of past or present performance. Fern House does not currently have the Worcestershire Residential Dementia Service Standard.

This was an announced Enter and View visit. We met with the manager prior to the visit to explain about Enter and View, and what we intended to do, this was confirmed in a letter. We asked Fern House to let people know we were coming and provided posters and a short questionnaire for residents or visitors to return if they were unable to meet with us on the day.

Prior to the visit we developed structured questions relating to meaningful activity and observation sheets to record what we saw. We developed prompts, based on the Residential Dementia Care Standard and our training, to help us to interpret our observations about meaningful activities.

Fern House provided us in advance with the names of people who had mental capacity and had given their informed consent to talking with us. We also asked for and were given information about activities provided at Fern House.

² Adapted from SCIE guide 15, *Choice and Control, Living well through activity in care homes: the toolkit* (College of Occupational Therapists) and expert consensus]

³ This is based on the 50 Point Checklist authored by David Sheard in 'Inspiring, leadership matters in dementia care' (2008), published by Alzheimers Society.

⁴ Alzheimers Society

Our visit was mostly based in the main communal lounge area of the home, where all 7 residents were present. The visit was informal. We spoke with the Care Manager, 2 members of staff and spoke informally with 6 residents, all of whom were able to contribute to some extent. We also spoke with other staff members who were present for brief periods in the building. The majority of the information we gathered came from discussion with staff, observing what was going on and general discussion with the resident group.

We explained to everyone who we were and what we were doing where appropriate.

Fern House were given an opportunity to comment on the final draft of this report and provide a response before it was published - see Section 6 for Fern House response to our recommendations.

4. What were the main things we found out?

- We observed positive interactions between residents and staff, with a relaxed and respectful atmosphere
- Residents told us that staff had asked them what they like to do. Staff were aware of their likes and dislikes, and helped them to participate in things if they wanted to
- We observed that during our visit most residents in the lounge area were engaged with a meaningful activity for periods of time. These were largely group activities which the residents appeared to enjoy - there appeared to be quite a buzz of conversation throughout the morning
- We were told that individual needs were catered for wherever possible - examples given included a resident going for a walk with a staff member and a resident planting bulbs in the garden
- The-Manager told us that, while she accepts overall responsibility for organising and providing activities at Fern House, care staff on duty had day-to-day responsibility; it is they who know more accurately the needs and wishes of the residents
- Staff we spoke to demonstrated a good understanding of residents' needs, and expressed positive attitudes about the individuals living in the home
- We saw that there were some resources to support meaningful activity in the communal lounge area; we did not observe residents helping themselves to these resources
- We understand that there are currently no volunteers involved at Fern House

5. Our findings and recommendations

Interaction between staff and residents

Residents we spoke to spoke well of staff.

We observed staff interacting in a positive and caring manner with residents. We observed frequent interactions between residents and staff (both care and house staff members), and staff speaking to residents in a gentle and respectful manner.

Staff used touch and humour appropriately and quite naturally with residents as they moved around the home. We observed them being sensitive to individuals and responding in different ways according to circumstances. There were numerous instances observed of genuine affection between residents and staff, with evidence of real empathy on several occasions. Relationships were noted to be positive.

Throughout our visit one resident, whom we were told was living with a dementia related illness, was positioned slightly apart from the main group. We noted that there was relatively limited contact between the resident and staff beyond meeting basic needs, and no evidence of individual attention other than acknowledgement as staff walked past. It was noted that the resident appeared to need support to take a hot drink, but did not receive this assistance throughout our visit.

HWW recommendations

Fern House could consider-

- Whether there are ways in which all residents, including those living with significant degrees of dementia related illness, might be further supported

Activities

The residents we spoke to told us that staff asked them every morning what they would like to do and offered some choice. They told us that they were satisfied with the activities that are available to them.

The only activity mentioned by some residents as being desirable, but currently unavailable to them, is knitting.

During our visit 2 staff members conducted a reminiscence session in which 6 of the 7 residents took part, with one resident being fairly passive. The focus was on holiday destinations visited by residents, and there were some prompts pinned to the wall. The majority of residents participated in the discussions and the quieter members of the group were drawn in tactfully by staff. It was evident that staff members were aware of residents' backgrounds and this enabled them to ask relevant questions. During this session the TV remained on in the background, though no-one appeared to be watching it.

We were told that pampering sessions, including hairdresser, nail manicures and foot massage took place regularly within the home. Fern House backs on to and shares a large garden area with the Firs, another care home operated by the same company and manager. There is some overlap with staffing and we were told that a number of communal activities take place at the Firs, all of which are open to residents of Fern House. These include weekly Music & Movement sessions and exercise classes. During our visit none of the Fern House residents had chosen to engage in the communal sessions at the Firs.

We were told that other activities take place from time to time, dependent on time of year, weather, etc. We were told that these include local walks, shopping, and weekly trips to towns such as Tewkesbury and coffee mornings in the garden. The home has its own transport and therefore offers residents the chance to go out to local garden centres and similar trips.

We were told that residents from both homes had the opportunity to go on holiday together and the home will fund transport costs, additional staff cover and other extras. We were told that in the last year a group had gone to Weston-Super-Mare, including two residents of Fern House.

One resident helped to wash up after the mid-morning break and appeared to enjoy the activity/personal attention. We were informed that resident involvement in other routine matters such as setting tables or preparing vegetables was 'not the norm'. However, a resident was engaged with a staff member in sorting out glasses and drinks for lunch; it was noted that wine and sherry was available, and we were told that this is much appreciated by the residents.

Staff we spoke to demonstrated a good understanding of residents' needs, and expressed positive attitudes about the individuals living in the home. There was a good level of awareness of special needs and/or particular conditions, and staff were able to identify those residents living with varying levels of a dementia related illness and to describe the ways in which they would generally respond. Staff talked about the balance between enabling residents to choose/exercise their rights, and the need to protect. They also talked of the need to have some routines, but generally tried not to have too rigid a pattern.

The Manager spoke with us at some length about the home, the residents and their opportunities to engage in meaningful activities. She described accurately a range of activities that would fall within the heading of 'meaningful activity' and expressed confidence in the staff team in delivering support to residents to meet their needs and wishes. She stated her belief that people should be encouraged to participate in activities, but ultimately they have the right to say no and not take part. She stated that several residents in the home exercised their right not to engage, though staff would with gentle persuasion try to encourage individuals to participate.

We were told that a key worker system was in operation, whereby designated staff members would take responsibility for 1 or 2 people. We were also told that residents and their relatives were encouraged to bring/build a 'life story' book and a memory box, and there was some evidence of these being used during our visit. We asked if the Individual Care Plans were used to promote meaningful activity for residents, but this did not appear to be the case.

HWW recommendations Fern House could consider-

- Whether staff could use residents' care plans and personal information more effectively to enhance the interests and activities on offer
- Whether knitting could be introduced for residents who want to do this
- Whether there are further opportunities for residents who are able and choose to do so, to be encouraged and supported to be more involved in the day to day running of the home

Resources and Environment

We noted that the relatively limited communal space at Fern House (small lounge, dining-room, conservatory) appeared to be a constraint. The small size of the home and the layout of furniture made it potentially difficult for residents to pursue individual interests or activities. In addition, it appeared that there was limited space in communal areas to enjoy any private space or to entertain visitors.

We saw that there were some resources to support meaningful activity in the communal lounge area; these included DVDs, magazines and memory cards. We did not observe residents helping themselves to these resources.

There was a wall display in the lounge with necklaces and handbags, though residents stated that they did not know what they were for. We did not notice any tactile boards or rummage boxes appropriate for people living with dementia in the communal area. We did not see any daily or local newspapers in the communal lounge area. There was a clock in the room, but we did not notice a calendar displaying the day and date. We were told that residents did not access a computer or the internet.

HWW recommendations
Fern House could consider-

- Whether something that helps to remind people of what is happening in the present (day, date, year, weather, “on this day” or topical news) could be available in the lounge area
- Whether existing resources could be made more easily available for residents (for example by putting them closer to residents) or possibly introduced to individuals more frequently
- Whether additional tactile/sensory resources could be made easily available or appropriately introduced more frequently to residents, particularly residents living with dementia
- Whether a computer/electronic technology might be used to engage residents and offer them ways of keeping in contact with family (e.g. face time or e-mails)
- Whether an additional quiet space could be created
- Whether the creation of a hobby room/meeting place (in the back garden shared between the homes?) would give further choice to residents

Involvement of relatives and the local community

We were told that several of the residents have visitors on a regular basis, though none were present during our visit. We were told that relatives of residents had been asked about what people like to do, and about their life histories. Currently there is no relatives’ group.

The Manager told us that there are links with local secondary schools and students visit on placement from time to time.

It is understood that there are currently no volunteers involved with Fern House

HWW recommendations
Fern House could consider-

- Whether a relatives’ group would be helpful in encouraging relatives to participate in meaningful activities with residents, or in providing staff with further ideas and information.
- Whether there is potential to use more volunteers to support residents in pursuing their interests inside and outside Fern House, and to forge more connections with the local area

6. Service Provider Response to HWW recommendations

Please find below our responses to each of your recommendations: -

Consider whether there are ways in which all residents including those living with significant degrees of dementia related illness might be further supported

We do not feel that this is the appropriate place for us to discuss individual residents and their needs, as this is confidential information. Every resident in Fern House has a personal care plan and as a result of which determines what they can do, what support is required and how they are supported individually.

Consider whether staff could use residents' care plans and personal information more effectively to enhance the interests and activities on offer

Care plans are being enhanced to be able to provide more information and thus enhance the interests and activities on offer.

Consider whether knitting could be introduced for residents who want to do this

Knitting is available to any resident who wishes to take part and has been the case for some time.

Consider whether there are further opportunities for residents who are able and choose to do so, to be encouraged and supported to be more involved in the day to day running of the home

Residents are always able to assist with the day to day running of the home for example; washing up, laying the tables, pouring drinks, sorting out the washing etc where their specific conditions allow and also whether the resident wishes to assist.

Consider whether something that helps to remind people of what is happening in the present of what is happening in the present (day, date, year, weather, "on this day" or topical news) could be available in the lounge area

A whiteboard is in place in both the lounge and the dining room. Each board displays the date, menus for that particular day and/or any other changing messages.

Consider whether existing resources could be made more easily available for residents (for example by putting them closer to residents) or possibly introduced to individuals more frequently

Fern House is a much smaller and more intimate environment, which means that space can be limited with the safety of our residents being paramount, but we are very aware that the layout of the home needs to be consistent to ensure residents know where things are in order to maintain the balance of their conditions. We have tried on several occasions to change the

layout and make resources more accessible, but the residents do not like this and ask for it to be changed back.

Consider whether additional tactile/sensory resources could be made easily available or appropriately introduced more frequently to residents, particularly residents living with dementia

Arts and crafts as well as baking are offered to all residents irrespective of their conditions and are ongoing activities within the home. However; not all residents wish to participate in all or any activities.

Consider whether a computer/electronic technology might be used to engage residents and offer them ways of keeping in contact with family (for example face time or emails)

This form of communication is not appropriate or applicable for the residents within Fern House and they all have their preferred methods of contacting their family and friends, which have also been agreed with those family and friends.

Consider whether an additional quiet space could be created

A further quiet space cannot be created, as there are no further areas that can be used or built. There are existing areas available for any quiet times, for example the conservatory or their own bedrooms etc. Residents or their families/friends often request for privacy during visits and prefer to receive visitors in their rooms or if the weather permits, outside.

Consider whether the creation of a hobby room/meeting place (in the back garden shared between the homes) would give further choice to residents

This is unfortunately not a viable option.

Consider whether a relatives' group would be helpful in encouraging relatives to participate in meaningful activities with residents, or in providing staff with further ideas and information

We run feedback surveys with the relatives and ask for suggestions. We also send out newsletters in which we advise when events are being held for them to attend, we also explain what activities are on offer and positively encourage suggestions for improvements or changes.

Consider whether there is potential to use more volunteers to support residents in pursuing their interests inside and outside of Fern House and to forge more connections with the local area

Where possible we do take on volunteers or work experience into Fern House, which helps to create positive interactions with new people and where residents can leave the home to pursue their own interests, they do, which again is positively encouraged for maintaining independence and their connections.