

Enter & View Visit

Lodge Avenue Independent Living Unit,
Lodge Avenue, Dagenham, Essex



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Introduction

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham is the local independent consumer champion for health and social care. We aim to give our citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided for people in the borough.

Enter & View is carried out under Section 186 of the Health & Social Care Act 2012. It imposes duties on certain health and social care providers to allow authorised representatives of local Healthwatch organisations to enter premises and carry out observations for the purposes of Healthwatch activity.

Authorised representatives observe and gather information through the experiences of service users, their relatives/friends and staff to collect evidence of the quality and standard of the services being provided.

To do this we:

- Enable people to share their views and experiences and to understand that their contribution will help build a picture of where services are doing well and where they can be improved.
- Give authoritative, evidenced based feedback to organisations responsible for delivering and commissioning services.
- Are able to alert Healthwatch England or the Care Quality Commission, where appropriate, to concerns about specific service providers of health or social care.

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to thank the residents and the staff who were on duty at the time of the visit, for their assistance and co-operation.

Premises Visited

Lodge Avenue Independent Living Unit
183a Lodge Avenue
Dagenham.

Reason For The Visit

To monitor care and support services provided for 15 residents of the unit who live independently in their own flats. This is part of a wider programme of work being undertaken by Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham - to gather views and experiences from residents about the standard and quality of care and support being provided to them.

Purpose and Aims of The Visit

Healthwatch representatives visited to observe and record information about the areas of enquiry; to speak with residents and staff and to record information about services being provided.

The areas of support and service that Healthwatch representatives focused on were:

- **Nutrition** - looking at how residents are supported to eat and drink taking into account individuals needs. How do residents buy and get their food. What choices do they have and is it enough?
- **Personal Hygiene** - enquiring whether individuals need support with personal care or look after themselves. Is the level of support provided satisfactory and meeting their needs?
- **Health and Wellbeing** - how easily residents can access medical services. Are they happy and content with the choices they have to live life the way they want to?
- **Interaction with Staff** - do staff communicate well with residents to ensure their needs are clearly understood. Are residents treated with dignity?

The Organisation and Service Provider

Lodge Avenue Independent Living Unit has 15 individual flats within the building. The service and facility are managed separately: Joan Prior manages the building and accommodation; Mandy Prince from DABD manages the care services and staff.

Currently there are 15 residents. Care and support is paid for by 13 residents pooling their social care personal budgets together as a consortium, with support provided to each individual in accordance with their needs. The other 2 residents employ their own personal assistants.

Staff time and support is set in a flexible way, times that representatives were advised about on the day of the visit were:

4 support staff to help residents get up between 7am and 10am

3 support staff between 11am and 1pm

4 support staff between 3pm and 5pm

4 support staff between 7pm and 9pm

2 support staff work a night shift

Information, Observations and Resident's Experiences

Nutrition

Residents said they chose what they wanted to eat and could go shopping for what they wanted if they needed to - shopping trips are planned in advance to give notice for staff support to be arranged. Alternatively, a staff member will go and buy food items for them.

Residents said that they can have hot or cold food and a drink when they want it. One resident said they needed help to prepare their food and to eat and drink. Support is provided by the staff to assist her to do this. Two residents told representatives that they didn't need help with eating and drinking - they used adapted implements and straws for drinking. One resident said they enjoy going out to eat from time to time.

Personal Hygiene

The residents we spoke to have individual care plans that highlight their support needs for personal care. Some residents have 2 carers that use a hoist to access a bath/shower and for other transfers.

One resident explained how the carers checked their skin regularly to ensure that no pressure sores or broken skin developed.

There are no fixed times set for residents to have a bath or shower - they choose when they want.

A resident said they can get personal care and support at any time during the day or night when they need it. The residents that we spoke to said the care and support they received was good.

One resident with limited arm and hand movement was unable to access the call button in her home. A 'life line' pendant used to call for assistance was not round her neck at the time of the visit. There was a personal assistant supporting her with various tasks when we were there.

There is a community dental service based at Five Elms Clinic; one resident said that they go there for their oral hygiene although it was not established from the visit whether this service is used by all the residents at regular times or if they accessed dental services in another way.

There is a communal laundry on the ground floor. The staff support residents with washing and cleaning their clothes. One resident pointed out that they need help with this a lot and that it is provided when they need it.

Health

Residents told us that they were registered with local GP's - some residents said their GP goes to their home to see them.

A resident said they can get access to a GP in an emergency when they need one. Regular medication is organised into 'dosset' packs by the local pharmacy. Residents that need help to take their medication are supported with this by their carers.

Two residents we spoke with had recent experiences of using local hospital services; both said that they were supported quickly and well with their health needs.

One was happy with the service they received; the other said that they were told they had to remain in bed without being given the option to be got out of bed and put in a chair. Both individuals are full time, permanent powered wheelchair users who require careful moving and handling with the use of hoists.

Residents that were spoken with did not access any regular forms of exercise or physiotherapy.

Wellbeing

Of those spoken with, they all said that they have choice to decide what they want to do each day.

One resident said that they went horse riding once a week.

Another said that they don't go out very much and would like to have a friend - perhaps a volunteer from a community service - come into visit them for a chat regularly.

Some family and friends come to visit residents and might take them out for a day. One resident said that he was quite happy with his own company and chose not to mix with other residents. There is a communal area where people can meet and watch TV or just generally socialise. This is also a place where residents can eat together if they wish.

Interaction With Staff

One resident, that representatives spoke with, said that he was treated really well by the staff and got on well with them - nothing was too much trouble and he said he always felt comfortable in asking for help and support with their care needs.

Conversations observed between staff and residents were engaging and real.

One resident said he was really pleased with the support he gets from the staff.

Another resident said that when they use their call button, the staff respond as quickly as they can.

Three residents, that were asked, all said that the staff treated them with dignity and respect.

Another resident said the staff converse with them, but if they didn't feel like speaking much, the carers didn't force conversation upon them for the sake of it to fill a silence.

Additional Observations

The atmosphere in Lodge Avenue is very relaxed.

Each self contained flat that representatives visited are individual homes that each person living there said they was happy with.

Some residents said they had been living there for many years.

There was some cause for concern from one individual who was worried that their care might be affected by local authority cuts to social care funding

The communal areas were clean, tidy and airy.

The staff were open, welcoming and cheerful. Each resident we spoke with said they were well cared for.

Where additional help and support is needed during the day - a relative, friend or volunteer from the organisation may provide this.

Conclusions

Healthwatch representatives felt this was a positive visit.

During the time we spent there talking with the residents, there were no negative points either spoken about or seen that raised concerns about the standard and quality of the care and support being provided. The residents Healthwatch spoke with said they were well looked after, had no complaints and didn't want their support changed.

Although residents have choice and control over their lives from day to day, it did emerge that individual circumstances inhibited access to some activities for some residents.

Recommendations

Healthwatch representatives spoke with 5 residents. From the feedback received from them, conversations with staff and observations carried out; Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham has no recommendations for the 4 areas of enquiry focused upon during this visit.