

Care Home Provider:
Care Home Address:
Date and Time of Visit:
Authorised Representatives:

Stumpwell Housing Association
Church Road, Penn, HP10 8NX
24th May 2017 - 10.30 am
Jenny Cassidy, Joy Johns

Summary of findings



- A small friendly home with staff who have built up a good relationship with residents.

The Visit

Alde House provides residential care for up to 17 people. It is linked to the local churches and has a commitment to providing places for people who come from Penn. We talked to three members of staff and four residents. We observed another five members of staff and a visiting optician. Three residents live with dementia but the rest also have problems with memory.

How people are treated



The staff were very friendly and welcoming. When we arrived, some were sitting at the dining tables talking with each other. This seemed to be part of a scheduled break and there was a good atmosphere. This is a small home and the residents and staff seemed to know each other well. Occasional bank staff are used but these come from one agency, and it is the same bank staff who come each time. We were told that staff make an effort to sit down with the residents at mealtimes from time to time to make sure that if there are any problems they get to hear them. One resident told us that if they had a complaint or worry then they would be happy to speak to any member of staff about it, and that “Steve (the manager) will come”.

We observed staff offering hot drinks to residents and they were spoken to by name with gentleness and respect. We were told by one resident that a staff member will stay overnight, if needed, in the bedroom of an ill resident. The manager told us that they always try to accompany a resident when they go to hospital.

Personal Choice



We were told that residents began getting up around 7am, but can have a lie in if they wish. They were helped to wash and get dressed and then offered breakfast in their bedroom or in the dining room. There was a good selection of cereals on offer as well as hot options like porridge and one gentleman always liked a cooked breakfast. We observed that every resident had a cold drink in front of their chairs and they were offered a hot drink while we were there. Lunches are the main meal of the day, and there is a daily menu offering three options. We observed some residents enjoying a glass of wine with their meal and were told by one member of staff that they were offered a gin and tonic too. One resident told us that they can go to bed whenever they want, if they would like to go out the garden they ask and that visitors are very welcome and come and go all

day. This resident told us that sometimes they like to spend time in their bedroom to get a bit of peace and quiet and this is never a problem. There are various activities on offer, including a church service which we observed, and a resident told us they could join in if they wanted to. We were told by a member of staff that most residents were not able to help with meaningful duties, such as laying the table or putting out food for the birds but they have a new resident who may be able to do this. We were told that one very elderly resident has recently been able to repair her skirt and the staff helped but did not interfere with this.

Just like Being at Home



The communal areas of Alde House were very homely with ornaments, books regularly changed by the mobile library, plants and flowers. There is also an aquarium and a budgie in a cage. The gardens have recently been landscaped, and offer lots of tables and chairs, benches and a pergola to enjoy the view. We were told that one lady has a passion for antiques and indeed her room was full of lots of lovely furniture of her own. There was a beautiful very large wood sculpture of a dolphin in one of the lounges which was the property of one of the residents, but too big to go in their room. All beds are "profiling" beds. People who could, moved around freely and we were told that visitors were always welcome. There was a television on in one lounge but the other lounge was quiet. There are two newspapers left daily in the lounge and residents can order their choice of newspaper individually. An occasional outing is organised to a local pub for lunch. Usually 13 or so residents go, including those who need to use a wheelchair (wheelchair accessible taxis are used). We were told by staff that this helps them feel part of the local community.

Privacy



We witnessed staff knocking before entering private bedrooms and were told by one resident that this was always the case.

Quality of Life



The hairdresser visits every Thursday and nail care and personal grooming are carried out by the staff. While we were at Alde House we saw an optician who was there to visit a patient. There were only three activities advertised on the activities board; Tuesday Gentle Exercise, Wednesday Church, and Thursday Hairdresser. We were told by staff that there were other activities organised but to avoid disappointment if they didn't go ahead residents were not advised of these in advance. Activities included various singers and general entertainers throughout the week, a petting dog, involvement from the WI and some Duke of Edinburgh students who come in to sing and help with mealtimes on a Friday. There is a computer available for residents, but this is very rarely used. One lady did use it to Skype relatives, and they had also used Google Earth to show residents the places they used to live, but otherwise it is under-utilised. We were shown a folder which has been started by the staff. Each resident has a section, with detailed information about them, including their history, family background, interests and hobbies, their preferred routine and food likes and dislikes. They have started to create reminiscence boxes but have found that relatives have not yet provided much content.

Recommendations

We recommend that Alde House:

- continues its work to create reminiscence boxes, perhaps asking for relatives to provide a selection of photographs and objects, both for the boxes and to display around the building and/or on the residents' doors. We suggest that wedding photos of the residents and other items such as clothing, could be used to create a display board. This could inspire relatives and give residents, relatives and staff a shared talking or communication point.
- Thinks about how it can incorporate more technology to enhance the lives of residents (especially as new residents who are likely to be more computer literate enter the home). Painting apps and simple games can be used on tablet devices. Perhaps the Duke of Edinburgh students would be willing to teach and encourage the residents to use them.
- Makes signs and menus more user friendly, perhaps pictorial signs for the bathrooms and other rooms, and produces pictorial menus for people who are finding it difficult to read.
- Adds pictures to the activities board to illustrate the activities that can be expected.
- Several residents seemed interested in the religious services provided weekly by two local churches. Alde House may be able to find ways to make the services more interactive and tailored to the individuals who will clearly get a great deal from them.

Service Provider Response

We at Alde House have completed several reminiscence boxes for the residents since the visit and this will remain an on-going project. A large display board has been ordered and this will be used for seasonal displays which can be used by visitors, staff and residents to stimulate discussion and interaction. We also make use of The Daily Sparkle newspaper to assist with reminiscence activity; again, this stimulates conversation and interaction.

We are exploring ways of putting the residents' computer to better use, we also agree that tablet devices could be an effective way of getting staff or volunteers to interact on a one to one basis with the residents. A couple of these will be purchased.

Pictorial room signs for the communal rooms will be discussed at the next trustees meeting. We will produce a menu that contains pictures for those residents who have difficulty in reading. Likewise, picture signs will be added to the activities board.

We have shown this report to our chaplain, he will discuss this with his team. He is convinced that they will be able to come up with suggestions to make the services more interactive for the residents.



Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bucks would like to thank the residents, visitors and staff at Alde House for their contribution to the Enter and View visit as part of the Dignity in Care project.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report, on dignity in care, relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all residents and staff, only an account of what was seen and heard at the time.

Methodology

This was an unscheduled Enter and View visit in that the care home were given up to 2 weeks' notice of our intention to visit but not the time and date. Authorised representatives noted what they observed and were told.
