

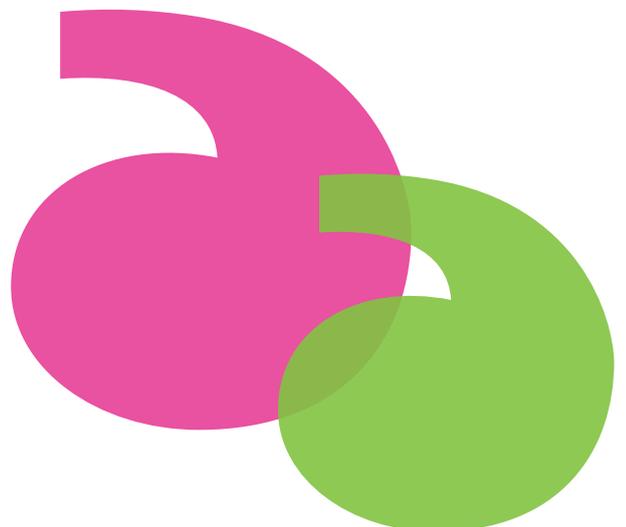


Care home life, what it's really like!

## Washington Grange



Date of Healthwatch Sunderland visit:  
6<sup>th</sup> October 2017





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## Distribution List:

Washington Grange - Paula Joicey, Manager

Barchester Healthcare - Pete Calveley, CEO

Care Quality Commission - [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)

Healthwatch England - Katie Johnson, Development Officer

### Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group:

Dr Ian Pattison, Clinical Chair

David Gallagher, Chief Officer

Debbie Burnicle, Deputy Chief Officer

Janet Farline, Clinical Quality Officer

Aileen Sullivan, Lay Member Patient and Public Involvement

### Sunderland Local Authority

Graham King, Head of Commissioning

Anne Fairhurst, Commissioning Specialist

Fiona Brown, Executive Director of Adult Services

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Essence Service - Anthony Gonzales, Service Manager

MP Washington & Sunderland West - Sharon Hodgson

### Local Councillors for Washington East

Councillor Fiona Miller

Councillor David Snowdon

Councillor Tony Taylor

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Sunderland would like to acknowledge the support of the residents who allowed us into their home and talked openly and honestly with the team. We would also like to thank those staff members, family and relatives who took time out of their day to answer our questions and give their feedback.



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## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Background and rationale .....	4
3. Methodology .....	5
4. Findings - Summary.....	6
5. Appendices.....	12
Appendix 1 - Questions for residents .....	12
Appendix 2 - Questions for Managers .....	13
Appendix 3 - Questions for staff .....	14
Appendix 4 - Questions for friends and relatives .....	15



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## 1. Introduction

### What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch England is the national consumer champion in health and social care. It was set up by the government to ensure that people's views around health and social care services are listened to and fed back to service providers and commissioners with a view to improving services.

There is a local Healthwatch for every Local Authority area in England. Healthwatch Sunderland aims to be a strong local consumer champion working with our partners to support:

- People to shape health and social care delivery
- People to influence the services they receive personally
- People to hold services to account.

We achieve this by:

- Listening to people, especially the most vulnerable, to understand their experiences and what matters most to them
- Influencing those who have the power to change services so that they better meet people's needs now and into the future
- Empowering and informing people to get the most from their health and social care services and encouraging other organisations to do the same.





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## 2. Background and rationale

Independent Age and Healthwatch Camden have recently carried out some initial research into the information currently available on care homes. The results indicated that there is a need to provide qualitative information on care homes that goes beyond basic safety standards. It shows that the information needed by people looking for a suitable care home, should provide a real sense of what a home may be like to live in.

Healthwatch Sunderland have responded to this need and will be carrying out visits to all 47 care homes currently available to older people across Sunderland. The complete results will be published to enable members of the public to make more informed choices when considering which care home to move into for themselves or their relatives.

To enable this, 8 indicators have been devised to be used and will focus specifically on issues of quality, rather than safety, such as how much residents and family can have a say in how the home is run, and whether residents are able to pursue their hobbies etc.

### **The 8 indicators are:**

1. A strong visible management
2. Staff with time and skills to do their jobs
3. Good knowledge of each individual resident and how their needs may be changing
4. A varied programme of activities
5. Quality, choice and flexibility around food and mealtimes
6. Ensuring residents can regularly see health professionals such as GPs, dentists, opticians or chiropodists
7. Accommodate resident's personal, cultural and lifestyle needs
8. Provide an open environment where feedback is actively sought and used.



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### 3. Methodology

An initial pre-visit meeting with the home Manager Paula was held at Washington Grange. This was to explain the reason for the ‘Care home life - What’s it’s really like!’ visit, to understand the needs of the residents and to arrange a visit that would cause as little disruption as possible.

The ‘Care home life - What’s it’s really like!’ visit took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and was carried out by Healthwatch Sunderland staff and volunteers who are trained so that they can effectively capture the resident’s experience.

At the visit residents were asked a range of questions via a set questionnaire (see appendix 1). The questions were constructed to reflect the objectives of the visit. Observations were also made on the physical environment and staff/resident interaction.

Staff and relatives were also given questionnaires to complete (see appendix 2, 3 and 4).

We also ran a facebook campaign asking local people to comment on their experiences of care homes across Sunderland. Any feedback we received was incorporated into the findings.



## 4. Findings - Summary

The Healthwatch team collated the survey findings we gathered from residents, their family and friends, staff and Managers and our observations made during our visit. The findings have been scored against the eight indicators in terms of the degree which they were met, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A neutral rating indicates both positive and negative feedback, which when averaged results in a neutral score. A summary of this can be found below:

Here is the key which shows the indicator scores



Strongly disagree



Disagree



Neutral



Agree



Strongly agree

1.	A strong visible management		Agree
2.	Staff with time and skills to do their jobs	<b>Time</b>  Neutral	<b>Skills</b>  Agree
3.	Good knowledge of each resident and their changing needs		Agree
4.	A varied programme of activities		Strongly agree
5.	Quality, choice and flexibility around food and mealtimes		Strongly agree
6.	Regular access to health professionals		Agree
7.	Accommodation of resident's personal, cultural and lifestyle needs		Agree
8.	An open environment where feedback is actively sought and used		Agree



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## Findings

Washington Grange is purpose built property located Burnhope Road, Barmston, Washington, NE38 8HZ and is run by Barchester Healthcare. It is a care home with accommodation for up to 40 people who require personal care, some of who are living with dementia. A respite facility is also available. All bedrooms are single rooms and include private en-suite facilities. The home has communal gardens and is in close proximity to the local shopping centre.

See the latest CQC inspection report here:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-125862934>

At the time of our visit there were 40 residents living in the home. Due to the capacity of the majority of the residents, the Healthwatch team were only able to support 5 residents to fully complete the survey. The team received 9 staff and 1 relative survey back.

The results of these surveys are given below:

### **Indicator 1 - A strong visible management**

The indicator states that the Manager should be visible within the care home, provide good leadership to staff and have the right experience for the job  
**The Healthwatch team AGREE this was met.**

Due to the level of their health and capacity the majority of the residents we spoke to were unsure of the Managers name, but were familiar with her. All residents did comment that they found her to be nice or lovely as did the relatives we spoke to.

When asked about the support offered by the management the staff at the home all commented that she operated an open door policy which made it very easy for them to talk to her and she was approachable in nature and supported them in their role.

The Manager commented that she had worked her way up from a carer to the Manager's role and enjoyed making a difference in the resident's lives. We also witnessed the Manager interact with the residents in a friendly and caring manner.

### **Indicator 2 - Staff with time and skills to do their jobs**

The indicator states that staff should be well trained, motivated and feel they have the resources to do their job properly.

**The Healthwatch team gave this a NEUTRAL rating for time which indicates both positive and negative feedback, which when averaged results in a neutral score. An AGREE rating has been given for staff skills.**

The residents spoken to all said that the staff were nice, very friendly, caring and good at what they did. The Healthwatch team also observed that staff interacting well with residents, they were attentive when tending to them with one staff member singing to the residents as she went about her job. However residents



also commented that they felt that the staff were busy and therefore didn't always have enough time to stop and talk to them. One resident commented that she had been feeling unwell recently and that she felt that staff were unable to attend to her promptly, especially when needing to go to the toilet and thought that more staff should be employed. One relative commented that the staff were invariably cheerful and patient with her mam and are all skilled in their job. She went on to say that they generally have the time to care for the residents but are occasionally rushed but that this is inevitable.

The majority of staff questioned commented that they would like more time to sit and chat with residents or would like not to feel so rushed when caring for them. One also commented that they found the volume of paperwork overwhelming. They all stated that they take part in ongoing training and are encouraged to do new training by their Manager. They all told us that they really enjoy their job and commented that they got so much from working in the home and enjoyed spending time with the residents and making them laugh and smile.

### **Indicator 3 - Good knowledge of each resident and changing needs**

The indicator states that staff should be familiar with resident's histories and preferences and have processes in place for how to monitor changes in health and wellbeing.

**The Healthwatch team AGREE this was met.**



Residents spoken to all agreed that the staff were fully aware of their likes and dislikes and also felt comfortable to speak up and to talk to them about any changes regarding this. One relative spoke to also said that she was impressed by the staff's ability to respond appropriately to her mam's moods and her needs. On the visit the Healthwatch team observed that the resident's bedroom doors had boxes or pictures on them which included items that the resident liked such as football clubs, music, etc.



Staff and Managers told us that the home has 'getting to know me' books which hold personal information on each individual resident and is stored in each of their rooms for staff to read. They also have care plans which are person centred and are updated on a regular basis, staff handovers and team meetings so that all staff are kept up to date including kitchen staff regarding dietary requirements. Some staff also mentioned that from chats and conversations with residents, they make a point of finding out about their lives, likes and dislikes.

#### Indicator 4 - A varied programme of activities

The indicator states that care homes should provide a wide range of activities (and ensure residents access these) in the home and support residents in taking part in activities outside the home.

The Healthwatch team **STRONGLY AGREE** this was met.



The home provides a range of activities including bus trips, church visits, tea dances, chair exercises, Age UK Sunderland visits, bingo and entertainment. The Healthwatch team witnessed these displayed on a notice board in the reception.

Residents we spoke to all took part in these activities and found them to be suitable to their tastes. Some residents said that they didn't mix well with others but still joined in with those activities that they enjoyed and were encouraged by staff to have a go at others. Some of the residents also commented that

the Activities Co-ordinator was lovely and they enjoyed being in the activity room, not necessarily for joining in on the activity but to take part in the atmosphere and conversation. Whilst on the visit the Healthwatch team witnessed several activities taking place in the home including bingo and arts and crafts and saw the area where the films were played on the big projector screen. One resident commented how she was supported along to film nights/afternoons to watch a DVD, of which there was a large selection available and this was one of her favourite activities.

Staff commented that they try and make the activities as fun as possible for the residents, offering them the choice to attend and for those who don't fully understand they are shown pictures. For those residents who don't want to take part, staff explained they still try to encourage them as much as possible and let them know that they can give the activity a go but if they don't enjoy it they can come away. They commented that they often find that once the residents try an activity they will stay, take part and enjoy it.



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## **Indicator 5 - Quality, choice and flexibility around food and mealtimes**

The indicator states that care homes should offer a good range of meal choices and adequate support to help residents who may struggle to eat and drink including between mealtimes. The social nature of eating should be reflected in how homes organise their dining rooms and accommodate different preferences around mealtimes.

**The Healthwatch team STRONGLY AGREE this was met.**

The home's kitchen is staffed constantly from 8am to 7pm, residents are given a choice from two meals at every mealtime and there is also an alternative menu with additional snacks throughout the day.

Those residents we spoke to all enjoyed the food, finding the choice good and tasty. The staff encourage them to eat in the dining room where they will show them the choice of the two meals plated up to help them to make their decision. One resident particularly enjoyed her breakfast, stating it was the best meal of the day and it filled her up. One relative we spoke to commented that her parent really enjoyed the food, regularly has a big breakfast and has put on weight since moving in to the home. Residents also commented that they enjoy mealtimes as it gives them the opportunity to sit with their friends and have a chat. Some residents choose to eat in their rooms.

Staff commented that they monitor resident's food and fluid intake, letting them know they need to take on fluids to stay healthy and if the resident isn't happy with the choice of food they note this in their records and inform the chef. Also at residents meetings the choice of food is discussed and feedback questionnaires are given out to monitor food preferences.

## **Indicator 6 - Regular access to health professionals (GPs, dentists, opticians, chiropodists etc)**

The indicator states that 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.

**The Healthwatch team AGREE this was met.**

Some residents commented that they have regular visits from opticians, dentists etc. for regular check-ups and GPs and/or nurses visit when required. Others commented that they visit the doctor's surgery which is close by with either staff or relatives. All were happy with the level and frequency of access they received from healthcare professionals.

Staff and the Manager commented that they complete all annual checks for residents and if and when they need a health care professional staff ensure they see one.



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## **Indicator 7 - Accommodate resident's personal, cultural and lifestyle needs**

The indicator states that care homes should be set up to meet residents cultural, religious and lifestyle needs as well as their care needs and shouldn't make people feel uncomfortable if they are different or do things differently to other residents.

**The Healthwatch team AGREE this was met.**

Some residents commented that they visit church on a regular basis. Many also said that they have their hair done on a weekly basis and the ladies can have their nails painted. One resident did comment that some of her new clothes have gone missing despite marking her name on them and have then turned up weeks later.

Staff informed us that they have regular visits from members of the local church who provide a service for interested residents and they always encourage and support residents to participate in their faith. One example given was a resident who was a Jehovah's Witness who is collected by other church goers to participate in their religion.

## **Indicator 8 - An open environment where feedback is actively sought and used**

The indicator states that there should be a mechanism in place for residents and relatives to influence what happens in the home, such as a residents and relatives committee. The process for making comments or complaints should be clear and feedback should be welcomed and acted on.

**The Healthwatch team AGREE this was met.**

The home seeks feedback by sending out surveys and hosts family and residents meetings. The Healthwatch team also witnessed a comments box in the foyer and the open door policy in action.

When speaking to residents most felt that they could talk to the staff about changes they wanted to make with one mentioning the residents meeting and another mentioning a book where everyday records are made about what has happened to them and any feedback they give staff. Two relatives informed us that they feedback on their relatives to staff and Managers on a day to day basis and felt confident that if they were to make a complaint it would be acted on appropriately. Some staff also commented that they can feedback to management on how the home is run via the Managers open door policy or in supervision sessions. A few informed us that although they had opportunity to feedback on how the home is run this information isn't always acted upon or changes are made.



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## 5. Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Questions for residents

1. Do you know the Manager of the home?
2. What do you think of the Manager?
3. What do you think about the staff here?
4. Do the staff have the time to stop and chat with you?
5. Do the staff know what you need and what you like and don't like?
6. What activities are there for you in the home?
7. Is it easy to join in the activities?
8. Do you get a chance to do any of the things you used to enjoy before you came here?
9. Do you go on trips outside?
10. What do you think of the food here?
11. Is there enough choice of what you eat and when you eat?
12. Do you enjoy mealtimes?
13. Have you seen a dentist to check your teeth or an optician to check your eyes recently?
14. Is there respect for your religion or your culture here in your home?
15. Do you get asked what you think about the home?
16. Would you like to change anything about the home? Have you told anyone about this and what happened?
17. What would you do if you wanted to make a complaint about the home?



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## Appendix 2 - Questions for Managers

1. **Have strong, visible management**  
What attracted you to the role of care home manager?  
  
What do you enjoy about the role?
2. **Have staff with time and skills to do their jobs**  
In what ways do you encourage staff to develop their skills?
3. **Have good knowledge of each individual resident and how their needs may be changing**  
How do you ensure that staff get to know a resident's life history, personality and health and care needs when the resident first arrives?  
  
How is information about a resident's tastes and their health and care needs updated as these change?
4. **Offer a varied programme of activities**  
What activities are available for residents inside and outside the home?  
  
What encouragement and assistance do you give to residents so that they can take part in activities?
5. **Offer quality, choice and flexibility around food and mealtimes**  
What systems are in place to support residents to eat and drink at mealtimes and outside of mealtimes?  
  
What choices do residents get about what they eat and drink and when and how they eat and drink?  
  
In what ways do you try to make mealtimes sociable?
6. **Ensure residents can regularly see health professionals such as GPs, dentists, opticians or chiropodists**  
Do residents have regular, preventative dental and optometry (eye-care) appointments?
7. **Accommodate residents' personal, cultural and lifestyle needs**  
How does the home find out about and cater to residents' cultural, religious and lifestyle needs? Can you give an example?
8. **Be an open environment where feedback is actively sought and used**  
In what ways can residents and their family have a say in how the home is run?  
  
Are staff able to have a say in how the home is run?  
  
How do you make use of feedback or complaints from residents and relatives?



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## Appendix 3 - Questions for staff

- 1. Have strong, visible management**  
What support do you receive from the manager?  
  
How easy is it to talk to the manager when you want to ask a question or raise an issue?
- 2. Have staff with time and skills to do their jobs**  
Do you feel you have enough time to care for residents?  
  
Are you encouraged to continue to develop your skills? In what ways?  
  
What do you enjoy about your job?
- 3. Have good knowledge of each individual resident and how their needs may be changing**  
How do you ensure that staff get to know a resident's life history, personality and health and care needs when the resident first arrives?  
  
How is information about a resident's tastes and their health and care needs updated as these change?
- 4. Offer a varied programme of activities**  
What activities are available for residents inside and outside the home?  
  
What encouragement and assistance do you give to residents so that they can take part in activities?
- 5. Offer quality, choice and flexibility around food and mealtimes**  
How do you make sure residents are able to eat and drink at mealtimes as well as outside of mealtimes?  
  
What choices do residents get about what they eat and drink and when and how they eat and drink?  
  
In what ways do you try to make mealtimes sociable?
- 6. Ensure residents can regularly see health professionals such as GPs, dentists, opticians or chiropodists**  
Do residents have regular, preventative dental and optometry (eye-care) appointments?
- 7. Accommodate residents' personal, cultural and lifestyle needs**  
Can you give an example of how the home caters for religious and cultural needs?
- 8. Be an open environment where feedback is actively sought and used**  
In what ways can residents and their family have a say in how the home is run?  
  
Can you provide an example of how a resident or their family member has influenced how the home is run?  
Do you feel staff can have a say in how the home is run?



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## Appendix 4 - Questions for friends and relatives

- 1. Strong visible management**  
Do you know who the Manager of the home is?  
  
Is the Manager friendly and helpful?
- 2. Have staff with time and skills to do their jobs**  
Do you think the staff have the time and skills to care for your friend/relative?
- 3. Have good knowledge of each individual resident and how their needs may be changing**  
How well do you think the staff know your friend/relative's life history, personality and health and care needs?  
  
Does the home notice and respond when your friends/relative's needs change?
- 4. Offer a varied programme of activities**  
What do you think of the activities available for residents inside and outside the home?  
  
Is your friend/relative properly encouraged and supported to take part in the activities?
- 5. Offer quality, choice and flexibility around food and mealtimes**  
What do think of the quality and choice of food?  
  
Are you confident that your friend/relative is supported to eat and drink as much as needed?  
  
Do you think that mealtimes are sociable?
- 6. Ensure residents can regularly see health professionals such as GPs, dentists, opticians or chiropodists**  
Does a dentist and an optometrist (optician) come to see your friend/relative regularly or only if there is a problem?
- 7. Accommodate residents' personal, cultural and lifestyle needs**  
Does your friend/relative have any specific lifestyle or religious or cultural needs? Are these respected and accommodated?
- 8. Be an open environment where feedback is actively sought and used**  
Do you feel that you are a welcome participant in the life of the home?  
  
In what ways can you and your friend/relative have a say in how the home is run or give feedback?  
  
Would you know how to make a complaint if you wanted to?  
  
Would you feel confident to make a complaint and do you think it would be acted on appropriately?



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**DISCLAIMER:**

- The observations made in this report relate only to the visits carried out.
- This report is not representative of all residents' views; it only represents the views of those who were able to contribute within the time available.

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