

Care home life, what it's really like!

Archers Park



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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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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.



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, 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.



3. Methodology

An initial pre-visit meeting with the home Manager, Roslyn was held at Archers Park Care Home. This was to explain the reason for the ‘Care home life - what 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 it’s really like!’ visit took place on the 7th March 2018 and was carried out by Healthwatch Sunderland staff 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	 Strongly agree
2.	Staff with time and skills to do their jobs	 Strongly agree
3.	Good knowledge of each resident and their changing needs	 Strongly agree
4.	A varied programme of activities	 Agree
5.	Quality, choice and flexibility around food and mealtimes	 Strongly agree
6.	Regular access to health professionals	 Strongly agree
7.	Accommodation of resident's personal, cultural and lifestyle needs	 Strongly agree
8.	An open environment where feedback is actively sought and used	 Strongly agree



Findings

Archers Park provides care for up to 40 older people, focusing on those who are living with dementia. All bedrooms are en-suite, there are a number of communal lounges within the home which are used for various purposes, from relaxing together to taking part in an activity that appeals to the interests and hobbies of residents. This home has an Activity Co-ordinator.

See the latest CQC inspection report here;
<http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-2616024691>

At the time of our visit there were 38 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 6 staff and 5 relative surveys 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 STRONGLY AGREE this was met.

When asked who the Manager of the home is, some of the residents supported to complete the survey at Archers Park had difficulty identifying the Manager but this may have been due to their own individual health or capacity. Two residents knew the Manager by name, other residents knew the Manager by sight but did not know her name.

One resident commented “She is nice, pleasant and helpful, they are all helpful in here.”

All relatives agreed that the home has a strong visible Manager, who is approachable, always available to talk, makes friends and relatives very welcome and is very hands on and friendly. One relative commented; “Roz is very pleasant and listens to people.”

All staff agreed that the Manager and Deputy Manager are approachable, helpful and always available to listen and to give advice. Staff felt well supported and confident that they could speak to the management at any given time. Staff comments included; “I receive support daily from the Manager and the Deputy Manager, if I am not sure how to carry out a task I will always ask” and “The door is always open if I ever need to talk.”

The Manager informed us that she had previously managed Archers Park for 4 years from 1998 until 2002, after being Manager at a sister home for 13 years. She went on to say that she returned to Archers Park 2 years ago.



The Manager went on to say, “I enjoy the wider aspect of the role and meeting and being part of a wider team, attending conferences, being part of the policy review group and giving input to these roles.”

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 STRONGLY AGREE this was met.

When asked what they think of the staff and do they have time to stop and chat, residents said they were well looked after. This was reiterated by their relatives, with one stating that staff are busy but they always give the best possible care. All relative respondents stated that the staff take the time to talk to residents and have the skills to do their jobs.

The Healthwatch team observed staff having positive interactions with residents, they appeared to know each resident well and addressed them by name.

Comments from residents included; “Staff are very helpful, I am content here,” and “They are all nice here, I get on well with all of them.”

Relatives commented; “Every member of staff do their entire best for my brother. His every need is seen to.”

All staff agreed that they do have the time to care for residents as they work as part of a team so there is always someone on hand to support each resident. Staff also agreed that they are encouraged to develop their skills through attending



various courses, including the Orchard Care Homes bespoke online training programme. One staff member informed us that they are completing a level 4 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Health and Social Care.

All staff gave positive responses when asked if they enjoyed their job. This appeared to be evident to the Healthwatch team on the visit. Comments included; “I enjoy looking after residents and seeing them smile is a reward in itself. I work with a great team.”

The Manager stated that she ensures staff have the time and skills to do their job by holding meetings and supervisions and by implementing the company’s staff training and development programme. Staff are encouraged to discuss their aspirations and are paid to attend training on their leave days.

The Manager concluded that she ensures staff have enough time to care for residents by looking at the rota and staff mix on a given day, delegating tasks at handover and adjusting if required the working of the daily routine.

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 STRONGLY AGREE this was met.

When residents were asked if the staff know what they need and what they like and don’t like, most of the residents supported to complete the survey agreed that staff know them well. Relatives affirmed that staff have excellent knowledge of residents and talk with everyone as if they are their own family.

Staff and the Manager stated that good knowledge of each resident is gained by, gathering information around a new residents past life, including hobbies, health and wellbeing, completing a robust pre-assessment, speaking with friends and relatives regarding life history, likes and dislikes and any assistance required and by meeting with the resident prior to admission to the home. This information is then passed on to care staff and implemented as part of the care plan.

When asked, staff and the Manager stated that good knowledge of residents changing needs is maintained by various methods including, looking at care plans, discussion at staff meetings, speaking with GPs, medical staff, social workers and maintaining good communication between staff members.



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 **AGREE** this was met.



When asked about activities at the home, the residents the Healthwatch team supported to complete the survey stated that they do not join in with activities, some added this was due to ill health, lack of confidence or they just like to be on their own to watch television and do a crossword.

On visiting Archers Park the Healthwatch team observed several residents in the communal lounge taking part in a ball game with the support of a staff member.

Relatives who responded to the survey stated that there is a varied programme of activities across the year and that staff do encourage each resident to join in.

Relative's comments included;

"Every time we visit the home we are informed of the activities, or told by phone if the need arises. There is always something going on."

"The Activities Co-ordinator is very good at getting people involved."

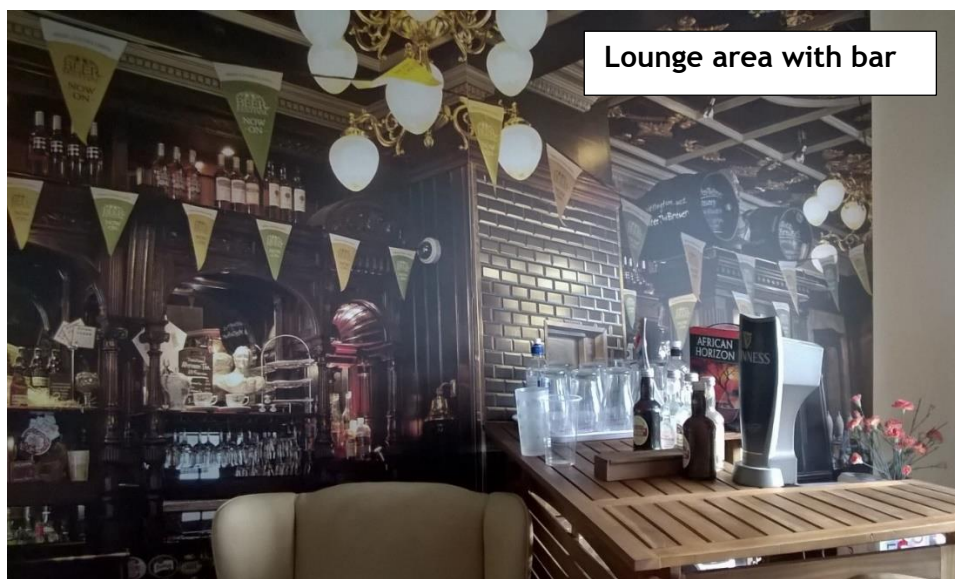
Staff and the Manager informed the Healthwatch team that a varied programme of activities is available for residents both inside and outside the home. Examples given included links with local schools and churches who visit the home regularly, several fetes and open days throughout the year, social gatherings and the men's club. There are also visits to the local pub, a mini bus is available for day trips and the home has joined links with the company 'Oomph' (a programme designed to enhance the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of older adults) which takes residents on outings weather permitting. Residents also enjoy meaningful activities, such as a 'cup of tea' and a chat with staff members, they also enjoy visiting local shops, bingo, arts and crafts, sing a long sessions, parties and movie nights. Wagg n Co, doggy is to visit soon.

Staff stated that they encourage and assist residents to participate in activities by offering support to the activity space and by joining in themselves. Staff also



informed the Healthwatch team that they respect residents who don't wish to take part.

The Manager reported that residents are supported to continue with the hobbies and interests they have always enjoyed, an example of this is by having access to a raised garden bed and patio area, which encourages residents to help with planting out, a doggy visit is planned as part of therapy, also, where possible the home tries to incorporate interests and pursuits into the daily living routine.



The Healthwatch team were informed that the communal garden areas were closed for winter and that new garden furniture had been bought with funds raised by the local community.

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.

When asked about the food at the home, residents and their relatives stated that it is very good, there is plenty of choice and the desserts are fabulous.

Some residents stated that they eat in the dining room, where they sit with their friends and it is a sociable time. Other residents said they are happy to eat in their own room, which is their choice.



During our visit the Healthwatch team witnessed a selection of peeled and chopped fresh fruit being served to the residents. The Manager explained that they have found this to be the best way to encourage residents to eat fresh fruit.

One relative commented; “The choice and quality of food is excellent and the home ensures mealtimes are made more sociable by including families.”

Only one member of staff answered the question around flexibility of mealtimes, informing us that there is flexibility and if residents are not ready for their meal, the home will accommodate this.

All staff who completed the survey agreed that choice, presentation and quality of food is very good or excellent, also that all dietary requirements are accommodated. One staff member informed us that all the food is home cooked.

They went on to say that all new staff get to know residents dietary and nutritional needs by reading through care plans. All staff stated that they offer encouragement by informing residents in advance of menu choices and support residents who have difficulty eating. There is a choice of where residents eat meals, some prefer the dining room, others their own room or a small table will be set up in the lounge area if preferred. Mealtimes at the home are made sociable by playing ambient music in the dining room, tables are properly set with condiments, placemats and serviettes. Residents sit and chat together with friends and staff support is available at all times.



Staff and the Manager informed the Healthwatch team that tea trolleys with cake and biscuits are available several times a day and drinks are also available in communal areas. If residents are hungry at other times of the day, food will be prepared for them. Staff encourage residents to have regular drinks throughout the day.



The Manager informed us that they carry out surveys around the food at the home, food is of a good quality, there is always a choice, alternatives are available and residents often compliment the food. The Manager also informed us that support will be given by staff to assist residents to maintain their dignity.

The Manager stated; “At present we only have one person who is under the SALT Team (Speech and Language Therapy), she requires a soft diet, this is covered by information passed on to the kitchen, we would also pass on any known allergies to the kitchen.”

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 STRONGLY AGREE this was met.

When asked if residents have regular access to health professionals, residents and relatives stated that there is good access to health professionals, including the GP, optician, dentist and chiropodist.

One relative stated; “I think the home does a really good job with all healthcare.”

All staff and the Manager informed the Healthwatch team that residents have regular visits from health professionals, including a dentist, a chiropodist who visits the home every 8 weeks or when required and Spec Savers who visit to complete regular eye tests, supply new spectacles and undertake repairs.

The Manager went on to explain that there is a named GP linked to the home, as well as the Care Home Nurse Team, (named nurses who visit and work alongside the GP team). The home also uses National Early Warning Score (NEWS) - a tool which improves the detection and response to clinical deterioration in adults and is linked to the surgery, giving information as required around health.

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 STRONGLY AGREE this was met.

When asked if residents cultural, religious and lifestyle needs are met, the majority of residents and relatives agreed that these needs are met at Archers Park.

The majority of residents we spoke to stated that they do not follow a religion.



One resident asked by the Healthwatch team, informed that a member of the clergy visits the home. All residents agreed that they have regular access to haircuts and styling and are happy with the laundry service.

All relatives who completed the survey stated that the home helps to ensure that residents are always clean, well dressed and well presented.

Staff and the Manager informed the Healthwatch team that as part of the pre-assessment process information is gathered and sourced to meet the needs of the resident. The Manager confirmed that religious needs are met by representatives of the clergy visiting the home to give Mass and Holy Communion. Any dietary requirements are passed on to the kitchen staff who will then implement these needs. Families are encouraged to label and mark the resident's clothing to ensure the correct clothing is returned to them after laundering.

Residents are asked their preference around bathing/showering/attending to personal hygiene, what clothes they would like to wear, if a resident would like to visit the hairdresser (who visits the home on a weekly basis) and this is then added to the care plan.





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 STRONGLY AGREE this was met.

The Healthwatch team asked residents if they are happy at the home, all residents who were supported to complete the survey stated that they are happy at Archers Park.

Resident's comments included; "I am happy here. I have been very lucky because I have always been able but now I get looked after very well."

"Facilities here are right for me, I just buzz and staff come quickly."

All relatives who responded to the survey agreed that the home has a friendly atmosphere and that they are always made welcome. They also stated that they can speak with management and staff at any time and influence what happens at the home by attending regular meetings. All are confident to report any concerns or complaints and feel these will be acted on.

Relatives comments included; "We can ask anything or give an opinion."

"I am confident I will never have to complain."

"I couldn't complain, they are all lovely."

Staff and the Manager stated that residents, their friends and relatives can have a say on how the home is run by making suggestions at the monthly resident's meeting and the Manager has an open door policy and encourages everyone to speak to her.

The Manager stated that regular surveys are undertaken throughout the year, adding that Orchard Care is a company who like to have feedback from relatives. Findings from the surveys are then sent to the home Manager, from which a residents and relatives meeting would be held to discuss the results, any lessons learnt and how to move forward and improve services and resolve any issues.

All staff who completed the survey agreed that they have a say in how the home is run by being able to offer suggestions, hold discussions with the Manager and by attending monthly meetings.

The Manager stated that Orchard Care send out an independent survey to staff on a yearly basis and staff are also encouraged to input at staff meetings.



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. What activities are there outside the home?
8. Is it easy to join in the activities?
9. Do you get a chance to do any of the things you used to enjoy before you came here?
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. What happens if you need to see a doctor or have an appointment at the hospital?
15. Is there respect for your religion or your culture here in your home?
16. Do you get asked what you think about the home or if you are happy?
17. Would you like to change anything about the home? Have you told anyone about this and what happened?
18. What would you do if you wanted to make a complaint about the home?



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?

How 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?

How do you support residents to continue to do the things they used to enjoy before coming into the home i.e. hobbies/interests/pets
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**
Please tell us about visits from health professionals such as GPs, nurses, dentists, opticians, chiropodists or other health care support mechanisms.
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?

What provision is there for residents to regularly get their hair cut/styled?

How do you ensure that the laundry staff getting the residents own clothes back to them?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that residents are always clean and appropriately dressed?
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?



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?



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 you 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?



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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