

Care home life, what it's really like!

Bryony Park Nursing Home



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14th November 2017





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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?

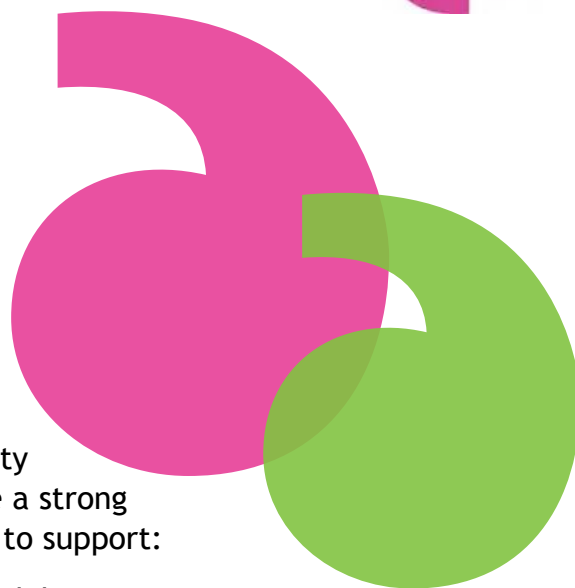
Healthwatch England is the national consumer champion in health and social care. It was set up by the government to ensure that people's views around health and social care services are listened to and fed back to service providers and commissioners with a view to improving services.

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, 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.



3. Methodology

An initial pre-visit meeting with the home Manager Jill was held at Bryony Park. 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 14th November 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	 Strongly agree				
2.	Staff with time and skills to do their jobs	<table border="0"> <tr> <td> Agree</td> <td> Strongly Agree</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Time</td> <td>Skills</td> </tr> </table>	 Agree	 Strongly Agree	Time	Skills
 Agree	 Strongly Agree					
Time	Skills					
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	 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

Bryony Park Nursing Home is a purpose built property located on Thompson Road, Southwick, Sunderland SR5 2SH. The home provides accommodation in single occupancy rooms, all of which have en-suite facilities.

Accommodation is available for 44 people and provides care for people who require personal care or nursing care, including people living with dementia.

See the latest CQC inspection report here:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-111196732>

At the time of our visit there were 43 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 4 friends and 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.

All of the residents commented that they knew who the Manager was and many were able to tell us her name. When asked what they thought of her they all positively answered saying that they liked her, she is very good, but a busy lady and that they don't see much of her. One added "For all we don't see much of her, should we need her for anything she would be there straight away." The Healthwatch team witnessed positive interactions between the Manager and the residents, where she addressed them all by name and made conversation as she introduced them to the team.

Relatives who were asked if they knew the Manager all stated that they did and found her helpful, friendly and very welcoming.

Staff stated that the Manager at the home is very supportive and operates an 'open door policy' which allows the staff to speak to her at any time. Some of their comments made about the Manager include; "She is very approachable for any question or issue you may have" and "Very open, easy to talk to and approach."

The Manager told us that she has a working background as a nurse on an Accident and Emergency Department, where she worked as a nurse within elderly care. She came to work at Bryony Park 7 years ago. She went on to say that the part of her role she enjoys the most is working as part of a team.



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 for staff skills and **AGREE** this was met for staff time.



(Thank you board which is located in the main reception area)

All of the residents asked commented that staff at Bryony Park are very good and added that they look after the residents well, are friendly and helpful. One resident said “I have no problems and if I press my buzzer they come in to see me. I’m encouraged to do this.” Residents also all commented that staff have time in their day to chat to them.

All relatives who completed the survey felt that the staff have the skills they need to carry out their role and all but one relative agreed they have time to do their jobs. One relative added that staff spend too much time filling out forms.

All but one of the staff who responded to the survey told us that they always have time for the residents. The remaining staff member said this is the case most of the time.

All staff stated that they are encouraged to undertake training, whether this be mandatory or additional courses. One staff member said “I am always encouraged



to develop my skills with various training and encouraged to try new things with the residents.”

Staff told us a range of things which they enjoy about their jobs including; “The friendly environment in which I work.”

“It is a very happy home environment and a very pleasant place to work due to great management and good staff.”

“Making the residents happy and comfortable.”

The Manager reiterated that staff are encouraged to undertake training sessions to develop their skills and these are discussed in individual supervision sessions and appraisals.

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.

All residents which the Healthwatch team spoke to felt that the staff know them, including their likes and dislike. An example one resident gave was that they disliked the use of a hoist and the staff were aware of this but supported them to feel less nervous. Many also commented that staff continually talk to them and ask questions to help them to understand the residents.

Relatives who completed the survey all agreed that the staff know their relatives well. One told us “My mam’s full life story was taken when she came to live in the home and all staff read this within a short space of time.” She also stated that her mam’s individual needs are all well catered for. When asked how the home notices and responds changes in their relative or friend all responded that this is good, stating staff are very proactive. One added “The nurse is brilliant and they have been very good with mum’s health needs.”

Staff and the Manager told us that prior to a person being admitted into Bryony Park they receive a pre-admission assessment which helps staff learn about the new resident and develop the individual care plans. Care plans are evaluated and updated over time and available for staff to keep updated with any changes to a resident’s needs. Other mechanisms in place which give information about residents are social profiles, daily notes, ‘This is me’ documents and handover meetings. Staff also told us that they gain information by speaking to residents and their families and asking nursing staff and the Manager.

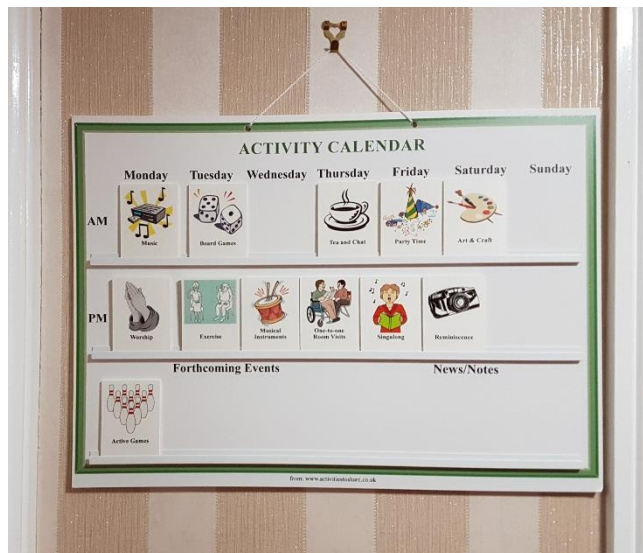
Kitchen staff are given a residents likes and dislikes chart to indicate their preferences around food.



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.



The care home employs a dedicated Activity Coordinator who provides and facilitates a range of indoor and outdoor person centred activities. These include; big screen movies, sing-a-longs, one to one time with residents, dominoes, painting, arts and crafts, exercise, seasonal activities and balloon exercise. Various outings on the mini bus are also available, which include site seeing, memory café visits, choir services and visits to local churches for religious services.

Many of the residents we spoke to spent a lot of their time in their rooms due to their physical health needs. Some also did this through choice and enjoyed watching the TV. Other residents told the Healthwatch team that they join in with the activities occasionally. One younger resident felt that the activities were geared towards the older generation and felt that they didn't suit his needs. He gave an example of movie nights where the films shown are old and he stated that he would like to watch more up to date movies. Another resident told us that they would really like to get out and about more like he did before his physical health deteriorated.

One resident said "I can't get enough of going on outings, but the home could do with a new bus."

Staff stated that they assist residents to take part in activities to encourage involvement and personal preferences are taken into consideration when planning activities.

One staff member said "I always try to encourage residents to take part. If they don't want to take part, I will see if there is something they would rather do."



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 ground floor dining room)



(The daily menu board)

The majority of the residents told us that the food at Bryony Park is good, with some stating that they no longer have big appetites, so often have a large breakfast followed by sandwiches and snacks throughout the day. When asking residents about the choices available, many mentioned that they are offered two choices at main mealtimes and alternatives if they don't like them. One resident also explained that they are encouraged to try new things and when she had a fancy for a pie the chef went to the shops and bought one specially. Another resident stated he would like rabbit pie but wasn't sure where the home would source this or if any of the other residents would like it. We fed this information back to the Manager who informed us she would speak to the resident about making this a possibility.

Relatives all said that the food at the home is good quality, although one person felt the choice was restricted. Another said "You only have to ask for what you want!" All felt that their relative is encouraged to eat and drink as much as is needed. One person said "They are very good with monitoring the drinks." Relatives added that their relatives are encouraged to eat in the dining rooms to help them to socialise with other residents and staff. This is a work in progress for



some residents. Two relatives felt that mealtimes are a sociable time for their relatives.

Staff and the Manager at the home informed the Healthwatch team how they encourage residents to eat and drink as much as is needed. This included; menus are on display in communal areas, dining tables are set in an attractive way, food is always available for residents, professional recommendations around diet are followed, physical assistance is given by staff when needed and refreshments are offered throughout the day. They went on to reiterate what the residents had told us about there being two choices available and that alternatives are prepared if the choices do not suit residents.

To encourage mealtimes to be sociable, staff told us that they try to encourage residents to have their meals in the dining room. Background music is played in the dining rooms and residents with similar interests are seated together to encourage interaction and conversation. Staff are available at the tables to facilitate conversation too.

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.

All residents spoken to said that their health needs are met at the home and that they have regular access to dentists and opticians. One resident explained that they had been in and out of hospital lately and the staff have been very responsive in supporting this. Another resident explained how he had had recent trips to Sunderland Eye Infirmary and other hospital appointments and staff had assisted with these.

Friends and relatives reiterated that there is regular access to health professionals for the residents at the home. Two people stated that there is a chiropodist who visits the home on a regular basis and that their relatives are waiting to see a dentist. One other respondent told us that their relative is going to soon be changing to the GP who has been allocated to the home.

Staff and the Manager of the home stated that the residents have regular, preventative dental and optometry appointments. Here are some of their comments; “Residents are always popping out for appointments or people are coming into the home to see them” and “the nurse arranges the appointments for residents.”



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.

All residents felt that their religion and culture was respected with many commenting that a religious service is held once a week in the lounge and other commented that a lady from the church often pops in to their room for a chat. Many of the residents explained that they get their hair washed/styled by the hairdresser who visits the home and some have assistance from staff with shaving if they need support. One lady told us that she has visits from her own hairdresser, as this is her preference.

Relatives who completed the surveys stated that despite their family member not being religious other aspects of their lifestyle needs are met by the home.

Staff and the Manager told us that a resident's religious and cultural needs are assessed at the pre-admission stage and documented in their 'Life Stories'. Some of the staff gave an example of how these needs are met as one of the residents is a Jehovah's Witness and has special dietary needs due to their religion which are accommodated and respected. Here are some of the staff comments;

"We always do our best to accommodate each person as an individual."

"All of the resident's choices are maintained with respect."



(The onsite hair salon)



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.

When speaking to residents the Healthwatch team asked if staff ever asked for their feedback about the home. All of the residents we spoke to said that staff often ask them about this and they all replied that they were happy. All but one resident also added that there wasn't anything that they would change. The one resident who did want to make changes mentioned to the Healthwatch team that he would like to have gym in the home and had mentioned this to the Manager but that this wasn't feasible.

One resident said "I am very happy and wouldn't be here today if I didn't move into this home."



All residents said that should they ever need to make a complaint they knew the process and that they would approach the Manager.

All relatives who responded to the survey process stated that they felt a welcome participant in the home and are regularly asked for the feedback. One person mentioned the regular family and friends meetings which provide updates. One relative, in conversation, also stated that they had received emotional support from the staff at the home when she was going through difficult times. She went on to say that she had also witnessed other relatives who's family members had passed who still continued to visit the home, as they felt 'part of the home and treat like an extended family'.

(Information available in the foyer for all to read)

Relatives also were familiar with the complaints procedures available at the home and had no issues approaching the Manager if needed to complain and were confident it would be acted on appropriately.



Staff and the Manager told us that the Manager's office door is always open if there are any residents, friends or relatives who need to offer feedback about how the home is run or speak to the Manager. They also gave other examples of how feedback is given to the home, which included; residents meetings, surveys and care reviews. None of the staff offered any examples of how feedback has been used to change things at the home.

One staff member said "The Manager is always open to new ideas and can be easily approached by staff and families."

All of the staff respondents to the survey said they have their say as to how the home is run and here are a couple of their comments; "There are regular staff meetings so we can have our say" and "Yes very much, all input from all is considered."



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?



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 meal times?

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?



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 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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