



Care home life, what it's really like!

Maple Lodge



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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, Tony was held at Maple Lodge. 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 30th January 2018 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>Time</td> <td>Skills</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>Strongly agree</td> </tr> </table>	Time	Skills			Agree	Strongly agree
Time	Skills							
								
Agree	Strongly agree							
3.	Good knowledge of each resident and their changing needs	 Strongly 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	 Strongly agree						



Findings

Maple Lodge Care Home is based on Woolwich Road, Witherwack, Sunderland, SR5 5SF and is part of the Four Season chain of care homes.

Maple Lodge provides nursing and personal care for up to 46 people, some of whom may be living with dementia. This purpose built care home offers accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care, dementia, mental health conditions, treatment of disease, disorder or injury.

The facilities available at the home include, 6 communal lounges and a large garden and patio and decking area with scenic views of the surrounding countryside. Home cooked food is provided with special diets catered for where required.

See the latest CQC inspection report here:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-128584655>

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 8 residents to fully complete the survey. The team received 11 staff and 3 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.

Some of the residents at Maple Lodge had difficulty identifying the Manager but this may have been due to their own individual health or capacity. Others stated that they did know who he was and one resident commented that he was a brilliant Manager. The Healthwatch team witnessed positive interactions between the Manager and the residents, he addressed them all by name and made conversation with them as he went round introducing the Healthwatch team.

Relatives who were asked if they knew the Manager, were all able to give his name and stated that he was always present, polite, helpful and friendly.

All staff who completed the survey said that they were fully supported by the Manager in their role. Many mentioned that he operates an open door policy, is approachable and will help to resolve any issues they may have. Three staff members also mentioned how accommodating he had, had been when they had family bereavements.

The Manager stated that he was attracted to the role of Care Home Manager as he was previously a Deputy Ward Manager in a hospital and was attracted to become a



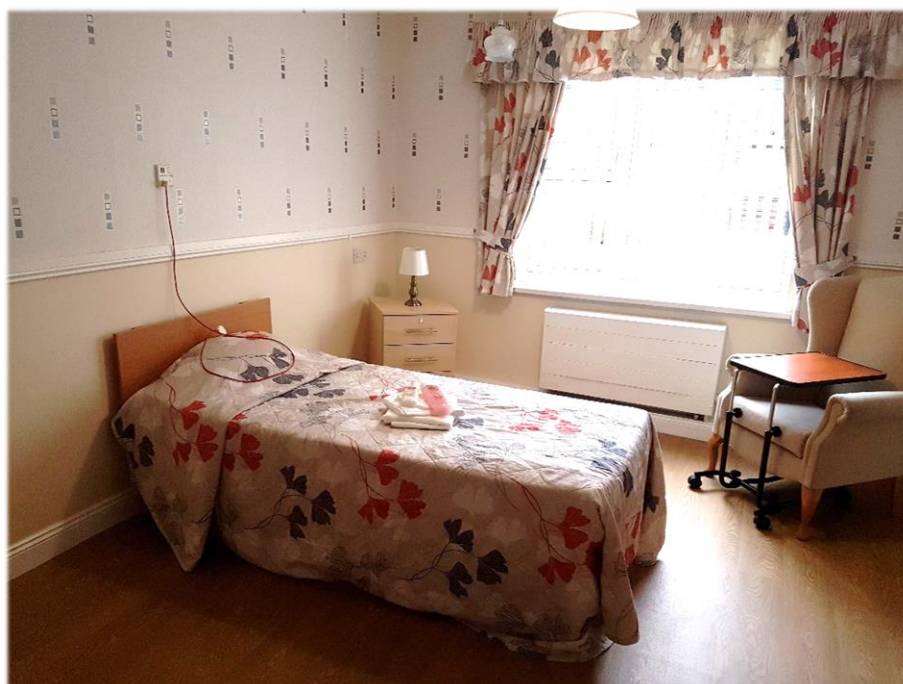
care home Manager as a career progression. He went on to say that he enjoys the job as it is very varied and involves various skills, with no two days being the same.

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 staff time an AGREE rating and staff skills a STRONGLY AGREE rating.

All but one of the residents who the Healthwatch team spoke to commented positively about the staff of the home. Some of the comments given included “Brilliant” and “Staff are lovely and everybody is really helpful.” The remaining resident gave a mixed response to the question stating some are nicer than others. When asked if the staff had time to stop and chat to them all residents stated that they have the time and often stop to make conversations.



Family members who completed the survey felt that the staff had the skills to care for their relative stating they are very professional and understanding of their needs. When asked if staff have the time to care for residents, all responded positively with one stating “Staff always make time and effort to treat and relax my mother.”

All but one staff member stated that they had enough time to care for residents. The one staff member who felt they didn’t stated “There is a lot of paperwork and this is affecting the care given to the residents.”

All staff members mentioned that they are encouraged to carry out initial and ongoing training in their role. Some of the training mentioned included e-learning, face to face and company placements.



When asked what they enjoy about their job, staff mentioned a variety of reasons including, “I enjoy working with staff who care about the needs of my residents,” “Feeling like I’ve made a difference in someone’s daily life” and “Providing good homemade tasty nutritional meals.”

The Manager informed the Healthwatch team when asked about staff skills; “Induction is important, all staff complete this as well as courses in their role. E-learning and face to face training also take place.” He went on say that he ensures that staff have enough time to care or residents by having the correct staffing levels in place, “This involves a comprehensive recruitment process. I am especially proud we have not had to use agency staff in 9 years.”

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 asked if staff knew what they liked and didn’t like i.e. routines and their personality etc. the majority of residents were unable to answer the question, this may have been due to their own individual health or capacity. Of those who did answer some of the comments included, staff always calling them by their name, knowing what they enjoy eating at mealtimes and how they liked their coffee etc.

Those relatives who answered agreed that staff have a good understanding of the residents. One relative stated that despite his brother not long being in the home, staff have got to know quite a lot about him and have made a memory book to help with the process.

They also highlighted that the home always responds to changes in their relative and they are kept up to date with these changes as they occur.

The staff stated that they get to know residents in various differing ways including having conversations with those residents who are able to and speaking with their family and friends, social workers etc. to collect information on life history, favourite foods, religion etc. All staff commented that they keep themselves up to date with any changes residents may have by reading care plans and notes,



especially at staff handover periods. Some staff also mentioned that monthly reviews take place, where needs and changes of residents are evaluated. One staff member also stated that nurses and carers are encouraged to attend multi-disciplinary meetings with other health professionals.

The Manager added that prior to coming into the home a comprehensive assessment is undertaken to ensure that the individuals needs can be met by the home. On admission care notes, journals, my choices and life history information is collected.

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 care home has a Personal Activities Leader who is employed 38 hours per week to provide activities with support from other staff.

Activities provided are aimed at both groups of residents and individuals and includes bingo, cards, dominoes, singers, cooking, pamper afternoons, films, music, cooking, jigsaws, knitting sewing and exercises etc. A full list of activities is displayed weekly on the home's notice boards and in the monthly newsletter.

The home also has a sensory room that is available for use and is aimed particularly at those residents with advanced dementia. The home also books outside entertainers such as singers.

Outside of the home residents go on pub lunches, visits to local schools, the beach and spend time in the garden etc. All residents when asked

were able to identify a range of activities that the home provided. Many residents stated that they take part in them and enjoy them and others stated that they pick and choose what they take part in depending on what interests them. All of those residents who to take part, commented that it is easy to join in and also





mentioned that staff come and remind them when activities are taking place and notices are put up on the wall.



When asked if they are able to continue with hobbies/interests etc. since coming to the home, some of the residents didn't answer the question, this may have been due to their own individual health and capacity. One did state they are a keen gardener and will continue to do this in the summer months.

Relatives commented positively about the activities and were aware of the variety available at the home.

Management and staff informed the Healthwatch team that they try to offer activities to suit residents' likes and what they would enjoy. Then went on to say some residents will join in more

readily than others, for those who don't they try and encourage them as much as possible and offer one to one support if needed.

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 STORNGLY AGREE this was met.

When asked about the food choice, quality and flexibility, all residents responded positively. Stating that the food is good, there is plenty of variety and choice. Many also commented on the amount of refreshments that staff make available to them, "There's always enough cups of tea." One resident also commented that if there isn't anything that they would like, they would only need to let staff know and they would make them an alternative of their choice. Another resident informed us of how she has helped out with baking, she described to the Healthwatch team of an occasion when she went along to the kitchen and made some scones and explained how much she had enjoyed it.

When asked where they like to have their meals the residents gave a mixed response some choosing to eat in their room and others eat in the dining room. Of those who eat in the dining room they all informed us that they enjoy this experience with one resident telling us "I sit with four to five others at the table and we have a laugh".



Relatives were complimentary of the quality and choice of food, comments included “The food selection is very good, the meals vary from what they had years ago and present day.” They all also commented that any support required by residents is always available and staff members will assist those who can’t manage to feed themselves.

Staff and management informed The Healthwatch team that residents are given a choice of meal from the menu or are able to request something else they might prefer. They are also given a choice of when they want their meal, with some residents preferring a late breakfast or tea and the home will respect and accommodate this. The home has a four week menu with choice being of paramount importance, with individuals likes being discussed and catered for. Throughout the day residents are given hot and cold drinks and snacks.

The staff and Manager went on to say that they support residents to eat and drink at mealtimes by offering the support they require as identified. Also referrals are made to specialist such as SALT (Speech and Language Therapy) if required and



Ground floor dining room

some residents are required to have their fluid intake monitored. They also informed us that they try to make mealtimes sociable by encouraging residents to eat in the communal areas for social interactions, relatives are invited in and music is played in the background. Residents also have the choice to eat in their rooms if they would prefer. The Manager commented “Meals can be one of the highlights of the day.”

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.

When asked if they have regular access to health professionals all residents mentioned about the various checks they have had recently. Some mentioned about opticians checking their glasses and issuing new ones or dentists coming into the home for annual checks. When asked specifically about GP access and other hospital appointments, the residents informed the Healthwatch team of the support they received to either gain an appointment with their GP who then



visited them in the home or staff and relatives support them to appointments outside the home.

Relatives all positively responded to this question stating that their relations have regular access and that they are kept up to date with this information if they are not able to accompany them.

Staff and management informed us that dentists, opticians, chiropodist's etc. regularly visit the home. Nursing staff will also assist residents to contact health professionals if they require an appointment and staff will accompany any resident who requires support to them.

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.



The residents we spoke to informed us that there are regular religious services provided in the home with some of the residents attending and enjoying them.

All of the residents mentioned that they have their hair regularly cut and styled by the hairdresser who visits the home. Some of the residents also told us that the laundry service is good and that their own clothes are returned to them with no issues.

Relatives reiterated this information. One relative mentioned their relation was religious and receives Holy Communion within the home. All relatives informed us that a hairdresser visits the home on a fortnightly basis and feedback on the laundry service was also very positive one

relative said "The laundry is first class, dirty clothes are taken away and washed, returned and placed in necessary drawers."

Staff and management informed us that a comprehensive assessment is carried out to find out about residents cultural choices. Examples given of how they accommodate this included the provision of a monthly church service, Holy Communion once a week and various events to celebrate different religious dates throughout the year e.g. Easter, Christmas etc.



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 they were asked if they ever get asked about what they think of the home and if they are happy, the majority of the residents said that they do get asked regularly and they all said there isn't anything that they would change about the home. One resident said "If I wasn't happy, I wouldn't be here and I would say so." All residents knew who to complain to if they ever needed to.



Dementia Care Framework Celebration event

All relatives who responded said that they were made to feel welcome participants of the home and were regularly asked to feedback their thoughts on the home. One used the example of a questionnaire issued by the home and another mentioned the residents/relatives meeting the home provides. All felt confident that should they ever need to make a complaint that it would be acted upon appropriately.

The Manager and staff informed us that the home has a computer tablet which is available 24 hours for suggestions and feedback from staff, residents and relatives. When asked to give examples of how feedback is acted upon examples given included family suggesting different flooring in resident's bedrooms and ideas incorporated on activity provision and menu change.

Staff informed us that they can contribute to how the home is run via staff meetings, supervisions and appraisals. One staff member said "If I have any ideas of how anything can be improved or run more efficiently then the manager is always there to run ideas past."



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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