
Avonbloom Retirement home

August 2016

Healthwatch Blackpool



Resident's Voice - a Healthwatch Blackpool Review

1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service Address	351 Squires Gate Lane, FY4 3RG
Service Provider	Mrs M Jackson
Date and Time	10/08/16 at 10:30am
Healthwatch Representatives	Steven Robinson, Adam Evenson
Contact details	hello@healthwatchblackpool.co.uk

1.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackpool would like to thank the service provider, service users, and staff for their contribution and for facilitating us to carry out our consultation.

1.3 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

The views expressed in this report are primarily from those who reside in the home. It is acknowledged that some of the participants in our studies may suffer from conditions such as dementia or other memory impairments which do not enable them to give fully balanced and reflective views. However we feel that it is essential that every voice is heard and recognise our duty to all who receive care in Blackpool. In order to allow for this to happen we request feedback from the care home for clarification of the issues that are raised.

2 What is a Healthwatch Review?

Healthwatch Blackpool is the independent consumer champion for health and social care. Its purpose is to listen to the experiences of people using services and feed them back to those who run them to make positive change.

Part of the local Healthwatch Blackpool program is to carry out reviews of health and social care services to find out how services are being run from the service user perspective and make recommendations for improvement where possible.

Local Healthwatch are granted the ability to *Enter and View* premises to observe service delivery and talk to service users. Visits can take place if there are reported issues with a service, but equally, they can occur when services receive praise so that examples of good practice can be shared.

2.1 Purpose of Visit

To gather information about the experience of living in a care home in Blackpool directly from those who reside in them, including quality of life factors such as privacy and dignity, quality of care, and choice of activities and food.

2.2 Why did we do this?

In June 2016 Healthwatch Blackpool produced a [report](#) which asked Blackpool residents which health and social care services were of concern to them. Care Homes were reported as the 5th most concerning service in Blackpool.

As a result of this Healthwatch Blackpool sets out a statutory annual work plan. This process includes reviews of all Blackpool care or nursing homes deemed to be “requiring improvement” in any of the five inspection areas in their latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) reports.

The Blackpool [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) notes that *“Dementia is the single most frequent cause of admission to care homes, and of the need for community care services for older people. The demographics of an ageing population indicate the number of people with dementia in Blackpool is predicted to rise to around 3,841 by 2020”*.

2.3 What were our aims?

Our aim was to allow the residents to have a say in the care that they were receiving. To do this, we required the cooperation of residents, family/carers, and the management and staff of the home. By collating this information, we could evaluate the quality of care within each care home we visited.

2.4 Methodology

We did not wish to perform an enforced *Enter and View* visit to this home. We felt that to be invited to attend the home would give us a more balanced view and encourage openness and co-operation with the care home management. To do this we wrote to the care home we intended to visit with a comprehensive outline of our intentions and purposes of a review. We also supplied the home with a poster confirming the date and time of our visit and its aims. We asked that the home place the poster in a prominent position for residents, families/carers and staff.

All Healthwatch representatives wore identification badges during the review. Before speaking to any residents, it was explained who we were and the purpose of our visit. Those residents that were happy to speak to us were asked a series of open-ended questions about what they liked most and what they felt could be improved. We confirmed that the information they gave us would be anonymous and that they were free to end the conversation at any point. Healthwatch representatives also made informal observations throughout the visit and made notes of what was seen around the home.

Healthwatch reviews are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Blackpool's safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything they have a query about, they will inform the lead reviewer who will either discuss with the service manager or make a judgement on whether this requires reporting to the Blackpool adult social care team.

Also, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer, they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to find out more about whistleblowing guidance.

Avonbloom's most recent CQC report ([October 2015](#)) gives an overall rating of "Good", although the home is deemed to be requiring improvement in its safety.

Healthwatch Blackpool aimed to assist the home to recognise any potential improvements in its safety from the service user perspective, as well as all other areas of its service delivery.



Overall Good

Read overall summary

Safe	Requires improvement ●
Effective	Good ●
Caring	Good ●
Responsive	Good ●
Well-led	Good ●

2.5 Summary of provider

Avonbloom retirement home is situated on the outskirts of Blackpool close to the seafront and local amenities. The home has a capacity of fifteen residents. Twelve residents were residing at the home at the time of visiting. Mandy Jackson, the registered manager of the home showed representatives around the home before speaking with residents.

The home has an activities co-ordinator who spends time with residents and assists them on journeys out in the community, as well as involving them in reminiscence activities. The activities co-ordinator also takes residents to themed events such as the *Dancing with Dementia* event at Blackpool Tower. The home has use of a minibus for these purposes.

On arrival, the home had scheduled entertainment. Healthwatch Blackpool was able to observe this fulfilling activity, although in order to not impact on service delivery representatives did not speak with all residents.

Healthwatch Blackpool spoke with three residents and two family members.

2.6 Results of visit

General

On arrival, Healthwatch Blackpool representatives found the home to be clean, tidy, and had an open and inviting atmosphere. Staff were observed as being supportive and caring to the residents, speaking kindly to them by name. The residents were sitting round the small living room and several were conversing with each other. Healthwatch representatives asked residents what they liked about the home and they reported that the main thing they appreciated was the fact the home is safe.

"[We] enjoy every minute of living here."

One resident however felt a lack of freedom and privacy, noting there was *"nothing private at all"*. They said they would like to see the home be a little more *"sincere"* in its approach to care.

Food and drink

Residents reported a lack of choice and variety of food, although none had issues concerning the quality. Residents explained that they would like a wider menu to be available, but emphasised they were happy with the food they received each day.

"I'd like more eggs, and potatoes in the meals."

Activities

Representatives were informed by management that activities were frequent and varied. The entertainment activity which was ongoing appeared to be engaging with the residents being involved and a part of the performance.

Residents explained that they are permitted to attend church which some were content with, although others said that they sometimes felt pushed to go, and would rather stay at home.

Residents reported attending several different activities which were all enjoyable. Some noted that the number of activities were not enough for them and at times felt “*bored*”. It was also reported that some of the activities displayed on the board in the home either did not happen or were out of date. Some residents also explained that activities did not last as long as they would like and would appreciate either longer activities or more regular ones.

Staff & Safety

All residents and family members were positive about the staff including their attitudes and ability to provide care. Representatives were told that the staff are helpful and friendly with one resident saying that they “*do their best to cheer you up when you feel down*”, calling staff “*marvellous*”.

Family members explained that the staff were very easy to speak to and one said Mandy in particular was very supportive.

All of the residents said they feel safe in the home at all times.

Comments, Concerns & Complaints

Residents and family members reported they would speak to the manager or another staff member if they had any issues or comments, and most felt confident any issue would be resolved. One resident said they may have to mention it a few times before they would be listened to, but felt comfortable speaking to the staff about any issues. However one resident said they would not feel comfortable raising an issue with the staff as they did not want to cause an issue, worrying that this may impact on their care.

The only concern raised to us by a resident was of the staff “*babying*” them. The resident felt “*trapped*” sometimes and wanted freedom to do more things for themselves independently. They said the staff care a little “*too much*”.

2.7 Recommendations

This report highlights the practice that we observed and reflects the views that residents had about the care and support that they were receiving. While it was not our intention during this visit to make recommendations, it was our intention to talk to residents and ask if there was anything that they felt would improve their quality of life within the care home. Both Healthwatch representatives and residents felt that the following areas could be looked at for improvement:

General

- Staff should ensure they are aware when someone may wish to retain their independence and autonomy, and act appropriately to allow for this whilst ensuring they maintain a duty of care.

Co-Ordination of activities and guests

- Due to the activity taking place on the same day of the Healthwatch visit, this potentially meant some people were not able to take part in giving feedback. In future visits from outside agencies, residents should be as informed where possible and encouraged to take part in non-conflicting activities.

Food

- While the standard of food was reported to be good, more variety is needed, and residents should have a method of requesting meals/foods which they may wish to have.

Activities

- Although residents generally enjoyed the activities, longer or more regular activities would be more fulfilling for residents.
- Boredom could be alleviated by more regular small activities within the home.
- Checks should be in place to ensure that all those who are doing activities wish to take part in them.

Safety

- In relation to Healthwatch Blackpool's aim to assist the home with specific CQC related improvement issues, it is noted that all of the residents who were spoken to said they felt safe in the home at all times.

2.8 Service Provider response

The service provider did not provide a response to the report or recommendations.