



Report

Temple Croft

December 2020

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What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire (HWNEL) is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. HWNEL exist to make sure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. HWNEL share their views with those with the power to make change happen. Helping people find the information they need about services in their area is another of our priorities. HWNEL have the power to make sure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves HWNEL also encourage local health and social care services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care and services better for people.

In summary, Healthwatch's main aims are to:

- Help people find out about local care
- Listen to what people think of services
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care
- Encourage people running services to involve people in changes to care

What is Virtual Engagement?

Every local area in England has a Healthwatch, which is the independent consumer champion for Health and Social care. Our purpose is to listen to the views and experiences of people who use local services, especially the most vulnerable. We make sure these views are heard by those who plan and deliver services, so you can get the best out of them.

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, Hull and East Riding have come together to develop the Healthwatch Humber virtual care home engagement project to understand the experiences of residents, families, friends and carers in care homes across the Humber region.

We know that in order to keep people safe during the Covid -19 Pandemic, care homes have had to make changes, and some very difficult decisions.

We want to understand what impact this has had on -

- Residents living in a care home
- Family and friends
- Staff working in a care home

We want to celebrate what has worked well and help care homes to improve on areas that haven't been quite as positive.

Overview/Background

Temple Croft is a residential care home providing personal and nursing care to people living with dementia and people aged 65 and over, in North East Lincolnshire. Temple Croft Care Home is one of a group six homes across North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire, part of the Dryband One Ltd Group.

It is a large Victorian house situated in Grimsby which caters for Palliative and End of Life Care, Additional Support Services and Respite/Short Term Care. In September 2019, they received a CQC overall rating of Requires Improvement.

Methodology

Temple Croft Care Home was sent an email invitation, inviting them to be involved in the project and the Manager Suzanne Cooper accepted. A date for the project to start was confirmed and information was sent to Temple Croft Care Home. A social media campaign was started by Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire and social media posts were shared by Temple Croft Care Home.

Staff and friends and family of residents were given the opportunity to either speak to us directly or complete the online surveys. The registered Manager Suzanne spoke to us directly about her experiences for herself, staff and residents during the covid-19 pandemic.

Interview with the Care Home Manager

HWNEL spoke with Suzanne Cooper who is the Registered Manager at Temple Croft Care Home. The website states that Suzanne is an experienced and knowledgeable Manager who encourages new development to promote the care and wellbeing of all residents. She has been at Temple Croft for a year

Visiting

We asked the Manager if visiting was facilitated during the pandemic. She explained that garden visits were facilitated, she added that the weather was lovely at that time. When the weather was bad, she explained that there was a spare room if needed. Nobody was allowed in the building at all unless in exceptional circumstances, such as end of life. Suzanne continued to explain that friends and family of residents are still able to call or use zoom, she added that even if the residents do not engage, it is nice for the family to see them. There has also been some window visits.

The Manager was asked if garden visits and window visits would continue during the Tier 3 period. We were told that the care home are waiting for heating in their 'pod', until then

they are able to sit in the garden however the weather is colder now. She continued to explain that residents can also sit in the conservatory where it is warm and relatives sit outside to visit. She then added that some relatives question guidelines, but every home is different.

Outbreak Management

When asked about how the care home is managing testing for Covid-19, the Care Home Manager explained that all areas in tier 3 have access to the 20 minute testing. She explained that staff and residents are being routinely tested. Staff are being tested once a week, and Suzanne praised her team by adding,

“Staff come and ask for it now, they want it and there’s no issues. They have been brilliant.”

We were informed that despite some challenges, the residents are being routinely tested. The Care Home Manager explained that they have found ways to overcome the challenges that can arise to make it less distressing for residents.

“We find if we can’t get throat and mouth, a nasal swab is less invasive if they don’t want both. No tests have come back void.”

Activities

The Manager stated that the care home’s biggest focus is around resident’s wellbeing. She continued to add that before the pandemic they had people to come in especially to facilitate a variety of activities. She added that there is pressure on providing “spectacular” activity but said that it depends on the people in the home.

“We are trying to look for innovative ideas, but our residents have got very severe dementia, it’s hard to engage them.”

We asked the Manager about the care home’s plans for Christmas, and was told there would be extra staff on Christmas day to provide extra interaction and enable a more relaxed atmosphere. She also explained that the residents would still have Christmas dinner, and presents from family and that staff are going to dress up.

“We are going to try and keep it as normal as possible.”

Staff Wellbeing

We asked the Manager how her team are coping during the pandemic. She explained that staff are mainly concerned about the residents and are so worried about being the person that brings it into the Care Home. She added that Covid-19 is now part of their working life, and explained that PPE (personal protective equipment) has been a struggle to get used to wearing all of the time.

“They are a fantastic team, they’re trying to come into work and be as positive as possible.”

When we asked the Manager about her wellbeing, she explained that she tries to keep as positive as possible as she is aware of the effect her mind set can have on her team. She added that she knows her limits, and said that if she has had a particularly tricky day she will go home.

“I am lucky I’ve got such resilient staff, who think outside of the box. Staff are working together to keep the home running. It’s not just down to the Manager, it’s the whole team.”

Suzanne told us that she has received some support from the Local Authority and her CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) Officer. She added that infection control have been really helpful with questions and clarifications.

“It is lonely being a Manager. Everyone looks to you as though you should know all of the information, and I don’t know everything but I’m trying.”

Changes in Care and Access to Services

The Manager explained that professionals such as physiotherapists are still entering the building, as long as they are doing so safely. Team leaders have also undergone insulin training in an attempt to minimise the amount of external professionals entering the building. Suzanne also explained that because District nurses are the main people who are required to enter, staff are also undergoing wound training.

The manager told us that they have had no issues with GP’s, or the red bag scheme.

We asked the manager what she feels has been the biggest challenge for residents.

“Keeping them safe I think, we do our best activity wise to keep them stimulated. In beginning residents were very unsettled, but now it’s a way of life, it’s a routine for them now.”

Other

When asked if there was anything that had been implemented in the pandemic that will now continue, the manager said that the outdoor visiting pod could be turned into a potting shed. She also said that overall they have tried their best to keep the normal day to day running of the home going. They have also had some “great new starters”.

Suzanne, the Care Home Manager also stated that residents Care Plans had gone electronic so that Family & Friends had access to them. This ensures that Family & Friends are updated of any changes of needs are met.

“Give the staff a payrise, or some kind of recognition. We just take each day as it comes really.”

What Staff said

We received feedback from ten members of staff from Temple Croft Care Home, with the length of employment ranging from 28 years to 2 months. All of whom told Healthwatch NEL that they enjoyed working at the care home.

When asked why they enjoyed working at the care home, they gave the following responses:

“Because we have a bunch of wonderful residents and great team of colleagues and a good Manager.”

“We're like a family lovely environment to work in we all work well has a team.”

“The staff and residents are so nice. It's such a fulfilling job.”

“Because I get to apply my skills and knowledge to the job and empowered to do so by the management. I am able to adapt change and my opinion matters. I work alongside some wonderful and caring people who I don't just class as my colleagues, but as my friends. Our lovely residents are our utmost priority and the level of care and attention is first class. We are not just another care home, but we are a family.”

“It's a very rewarding job lovely residents and staff.”

“Good staff and management.”

“I have always felt part of a team from the day a started and the residents whom I've come to really adore over the 2 years just make going into work a pleasure.”

“Because we work as a team, regardless of which sector we work in.”

“The residents are like my family (adopted Grandparents) the staff are always friendly and ready to help.”

When asked if their job role had changed during the pandemic, four respondents answered yes and explained as follows:

“I have been able to expand my skills and knowledge with new responsibilities that have been tasked to me. I have been able to grow further within my role and learn new skills.”

“More pressure on staff while safeguarding all are residents in and out of work.”

“To make sure staff were trained in correct procedure for donning & doffing ppe.”

“Working 3 days instead of 5 days but same hours so I'm not going into the home everyday.”

We asked the staff if they felt there were any aspects of their jobs they were unable to deliver. 80% of respondents said no, but two respondents answered commented:

“There are times when certain aspects have not been able to be achieved due to the nature of the job i.e. time scales, new responsibilities that the covid pandemic has brought, high demands that the job role entails. If myself has not been able to deliver the care at the time due to other responsibilities, I have a fantastic team I work with who are always there for support and help.”

“Supporting family members and friends of the residents more as they are not able to visit.”

HWNEL asked staff members what their main concern was during the pandemic, and 90% of the respondents said that their main concern was the safety of residents and staff. One respondent said,

“Everyone who lives and works at the home. The staffs own families and the risks of being key workers. The residents lack of communication with their loved ones and their loved ones feelings of not being able to see them. The fear of what the pandemic involves and the risks to all involved. Initially, at the beginning of the pandemic, the lack of information and guidance from the government. Still, at present, the uncertainty of it all. What will happen if staff do need to be off, or many at a time. The support that is out there for us. The weekly testing has helped to relieve some stress. But it's a very hard time for all.”

All of the staff members who spoke to HWNEL told us that they felt their views had been listened to. Staff told us that there were regular support meetings held which kept them well informed and that policies and information were sent out as needed. One staff member did say that they feel the only remaining uncertainties were due to government.

“The Manager has passed on any information as soon as she has it and any changes to company policy.”

“Updated on information and new policies regularly. Management would ensure they did at least daily briefings with staff to update them on any changes and discuss any concerns at the time.”

When HWNEL asked staff members about their experiences of working in a Care Home during a pandemic, the most popular answers were **“stressful”, “busy”, “scary”** and **“worrying”**. Others added that they feel the team morale has grown throughout the months.

“It actually made the team stronger. We were United and more determined to ensure the wellbeing of everyone was managed. It's hard and very uncertain at times, but we are managing well as a team. Lack of health care professionals visiting the building. We have had more responsibilities e.g. administration of insulin, wound dressings. We have had

limited support with wound care dressings. There are times we have not had enough dressings supplied, so its extra responsibilities to ensure these are in supply also. We are able to always get advice over the phone, but is not the same as face to face. Zoom meetings. These are great, but there are cons also. I don't feel you get the whole picture over zoom as you do in person. And technology and the internet lets you down. There is more responsibility and added stress."

One staff member told HWNEL that they feel more support could have been given to the Care Home at the start of the pandemic by the Local Authority and the Government.

"In the beginning not enough support from Council or Government on how serious it is. NHS given all credits and care homes expected to pick up the pieces. Discharging patients without testing from hospital not acceptable."

What Family & Friends said

HWNEL had the opportunity to hear from three relatives, who's loved ones had lived in Temple Croft Care Home between 1-3 years and all of whom we were told have severe dementia. The relatives told us they would usually visit an average of 3-5 days a week before the pandemic and unfortunately due to covid-19, visiting was disallowed in March. The relatives say this was communicated to them via social media, email, during a visit and with a notice on the door of the Care Home. When we asked relatives how they felt about not being able to visit, they told us it was, **"devastating", "heart-breaking" and "very upsetting"**. However, all relatives told us they have been able to maintain some form of contact with their loved one throughout the pandemic.

"It's been a difficult process, outside garden visits during good weather, Sat just inside, open french door at a 2 metre distance. A promise of a visiting pod that has only just been erected and still needs lighting and heating, so not in use."

We asked the relatives if they experienced any challenges, and we were told that the weather affected socially distanced visits. Relatives also explained that there were some organisational issues and some issues due to the nature of the resident's illnesses.

"Limited appointments slots which were sometimes double booked"

"Mum often wasn't ready for my appointment, to be understood with the unpredictability of advanced dementia. Often the staff weren't sure what the visiting rules were which was very upsetting and confusing."

"No communication really of the situation, the only reason I know is that I have had a lot of phone calls with the home over recent problems with my Mum."

"We have had a few problems in which a third party had to be involved in my Mums care, after measures were put in place to stop my Mum falling things have improved. We were kept informed throughout."

Conclusion

Overall, it is evident that the care home staff team are working effectively under very difficult circumstances to ensure residents are safe. At the time of undertaking this research, the Care Home had not had an outbreak of Covid-19. The responses HWNEL received from staff members reflect the strong leadership of the manager, Suzanne. This was also evident throughout our conversation with Suzanne, as she spoke highly of her team. The residents remained at the heart of all she told us.

The Care Home have a high proportion of residents with severe dementia, which HWNEL understand has its own set of challenges outside of the pandemic. The safety guidelines will be difficult for residents to comprehend, making it more difficult for staff to manage. Staff are working harder than ever before, under immense pressure, and have often taken on extra responsibilities. The guidelines also cause an already emotional circumstance to be more difficult and very upsetting for relatives who are not able to maintain the same contact they ordinarily would have.

Suzanne the Temple Croft Care Home Manager stated that with the residents of the home it has often only been possible to take nasal swabs. This has worked and residents have still been tested and no tests have been classified as void. This good practice has enabled residents to take the test and has been better for their own well-being.

Good practice that will be continued after restrictions start to lift, staff have been trained to give insulin injections, also they have had wound training. The visitor's pod that will be used also has the potential for further uses, after visiting can return to the pre-covid situation.

Temple Croft Care Home has opted new working practices and adapted well during the pandemic. Staff have condensed their hours so they are attending the Care Home less, and have had training to upgrade their knowledge and skills. This has enabled the Care Home to run more efficiently.

HWNEL would like to praise the Manager, staff, friends & families and residents in coping with the current situation and adapting.

Recommendations

- The Manager to ensure the visitors pod is up and running, this will ensure friends & family can visit in a safe and warm environment
- The CCG need to continue their regular updates to Care Homes
- The Care Home to ensure that Family & Friends of residents understand the booking system for visits. Also ensure that double booking of visiting appointments does not occur

The Care Home to ensure that Family & Friends are aware of how they necessary access the electronic Care Plans of residents and make comments and amendments as

Care Home Manager's Response

The staff have worked hard during the COVID outbreak and still continue with this, sacrifices have been made without question by the staff to safeguard the residents that we support and care. We work in a very busy environment and the wellbeing of our residents come first and foremost and can appreciate that it is sometimes difficult keeping the lines of communication open and current guidelines supporting visits, I can appreciate that this has been a difficult time for relatives and friends with the restrictions in place and the home has tried to facilitate safe visits and always follow government guidelines. The visiting booking system was set up to what worked well for the Home therefore we had to restrict the amount of visits each day and was booked on a first come basis. Regarding the POD this is now up and running and visits are going ahead however did take a little longer than we would like to get this prepared.

As a staff we would like to thank all the support and guidance that has been given during this uncertain times.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the volunteers and anyone on the LA or CCG who have helped with the project. We would also like to give a special thanks to the Manager, Staff, Residents and the Family & Friends of the residents at Temple Croft Care Home.

Distribution

This report has been distributed to the following:

- Healthwatch England
- Caroline Barley (Contracts manager for HWNEL)
- Marie Oxley (Quality Programme Officer CQC)
- John Berry (Quality Lead NELCCG)
- Jan Haxby (Director of Quality & Nursing NELCCG)
- www.healthwatchnortheastlinshire.co.uk