

Enter and View – Visit Report

Name of establishment: Gadsbury Close Sheltered Housing Plus,
26-63 Gadsbury Close,
Goldsmith Avenue, London NW9 7EU

Staff met During Visit: Manager: Mrs Yvonne Smith

Date of visit: 8th September, 2016

Healthwatch authorised representatives involved: Linda Jackson, Jeremy Gold, Helena Pugh, Maureen Lobatto

Introduction and Methodology

This is an announced Enter and View (E&V) visit undertaken by Healthwatch Barnet's E&V Volunteers, as part of a planned strategy to look at a range of health and social care services within the London Borough of Barnet to obtain a better idea of the quality of care provided. Healthwatch E&V representatives have statutory powers to enter Health and Social Care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services and obtain the views of the people using those services. The aim is to report the service that is observed, to consider how services may be improved and how good practice can be disseminated.

The team of trained volunteers visit the service and record their observations along with the feedback from residents, relatives, carers and staff. They compile a report reflecting these, and making some recommendations. The Report is sent to the Manager of the facility visited for validation/correction of facts, and for their response to the recommendations. The final version is then sent to interested parties, including the Head Office of the managing organisation, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Adults and Safeguarding Committee, CQC, Barnet Council and the public via the Healthwatch website.

DISCLAIMER: This report relates only to the service viewed on the date of the visit, and is representative of the views of the staff, visitors and residents who met members of the Enter and View team on that date, and those who completed and returned questionnaires relating to the visit.

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Executive Summary

Gadsbury Close is a sheltered housing unit run by Barnet Homes. Tenants live in their own flats. The Manager is responsible for running the block, which includes limited communal facilities, for maintaining an overview of tenants' welfare and for providing emergency help when she is on duty. Providing for any tenants' individual social care needs is the responsibility of the individuals or Barnet Council, although the Manager takes a close interest in the performance of the contracted care providers.

The Team was impressed by the positive and community minded atmosphere in the unit. The tenants we spoke to seemed relaxed and friendly with each other and knew what to do if they needed help. The Manager was visible and accessible, and we commend her commitment to the unit and tenants.

The Manager had concerns that those tenants with Care Plans were not regularly monitored, kept up to date, and cross referenced with the Care Provider's records.

The unit was not consistently informed of the times of hospital discharges. This presented problems in the evening and at night.

The Manager felt it would be helpful if her holiday replacement could shadow her before she went on leave.

Although there was a communal toilet downstairs there was no toilet for wheelchair access.

It is difficult for tenants who use wheelchairs to have access to the terrace because of the narrow french windows.

Tenants would appreciate an occasional organised outing to places of interest. They would like to include outings for less mobile tenants and wheelchair users.

Although the remit of this visit did not include the care given by the care providers, we felt that the Manager voiced sufficient concerns in this area for Healthwatch to undertake an investigation in the future, after we have collected evidence. We have passed on the concerns mentioned by the

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Manager to Barnet Council's Contract Monitoring Team.

General Information

Gadsbury Close is a purpose built sheltered housing plus unit, built about 30 years ago. It has recently undergone refurbishment with what is described as dementia friendly redecoration of communal areas. It is situated in a quiet area just off a main road, but near shops, a park, a supermarket and buses. There is off-street parking. Entry to the building is via an intercom system and keypad. Tenants can also monitor visitors on a television screen in their flats. The unit caters for tenants who are over 60 years old, are vulnerable, or may need care during the night.

The building has 38 one bedroom flats; 11 of these are large enough for two tenants. On the ground floor there is the entrance hall with notice boards, and communal toilet, but no toilet with wheelchair access. There is a large communal sitting room, with a separate kitchen for the use of the tenants. There is wi-fi throughout the building, with a computer for the use of tenants in the communal sitting room. French windows lead onto a pretty terrace with attractive garden furniture. A relative told the Team that access to the terrace was difficult for wheelchair users, as the French window was so narrow. There was also a lip to negotiate, and no ramp to the terrace.

At present the unit has 39 tenants, 15 of whom have care needs. Care is provided by 4 Care Agencies specified by Barnet Council's approved list. Each flat has a kitchen, bathroom, lounge and bedroom. They all have alarm pull cords, and tenants can have other alarm systems such as pendants. There is a television aerial socket with Sky connections, and a telephone point. They are provided completely empty and the tenant brings in their own furniture, carpet and white goods. A number of tenants have lived in their flats for more than 10 years. They are quite often local, so know the area well, and have friends and family nearby. They said that it was peaceful and quiet, and they liked the garden. A tenant said that he was happy. He had a comfortable flat and everything he wanted in it. When asked about the maintenance of the building, another said it was "tops". The building has recently had a complete refurbishment. The Assists office which offers a 24 hour alarm system, is situated next door.

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When asked if there was anything they did not like about living in Gadsbury Close, one said there was sometimes trouble with another tenant, and noisy tenants coming back from the pub. Another mentioned that prowlers had easy access into the garden over the fence from the car park, even though there was a light sensor. Another mentioned that after recent building renovations there had been an infestation of mice. The Manager said that this had been dealt with, but there were still sightings in some flats, related to food being exposed.

All the tenants said they felt safe and secure, and liked the TV monitor admission at the front door. Access to their flats was by key, and each flat entrance had a key safe for Carers' access. Many tenants put their key into the safe before going out. They all said they had a good relationship with the Manager, and could go to her with a problem.

Care Planning

Though the majority of tenants are independent, where a potential tenant has certain care needs, a social worker will assess and recommend them to Gadsbury Close. All potential tenants are encouraged to visit the unit. The Manager explains the running of the unit, and what living there entails. When the tenant is signed up they are given a tenant's pack containing contact telephone numbers if they have health or other problems, or need to make a complaint.

Having been assessed by Adult Social Services the tenant will have a Care Plan, which is kept in a red folder in the tenant's flat. Adult Social Services will commission care from accredited care provider agencies, depending the level of care the tenant needs. Tenants may contribute to the cost of this care, depending on their financial circumstances. At present four Agencies provide care at the unit.

The care providers are responsible for giving the commissioned care to the tenant, but fill in their own records, which are kept separately from the Care Plan. There is also a conversation diary which is completed by the manager and night carers to inform each other of issues. This is kept locked away. The Manager said that nobody appears to be responsible for keeping the original Care Plan up to date or monitoring it. She also feels

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it would be helpful for her to have her own copy of the tenants' Care Plans. However tenants appeared happy with their Care Plans. The Manager also feels that although most of the Care Agencies provide good day care, there are concerns especially at night. A relative to whom we spoke, said that care staff were not able to change the continence pads of their family member because the family member not let them, although the relative said they had no trouble. In the opinion of the relative, the care workers were not sufficiently trained.

The Team asked if a tenant could stay in the flat and receive End of Life Care. The Manager said she would be happy to do this, provided good support and palliative care was given. Her experience was with one tenant who needed palliative care, but as this was not provided at the appropriate time, the tenant had to be moved. She said that some tenants had early on-set dementia, and would have to move at a later stage.

The Manager said the unit had problems with tenants being discharged from hospital. She said she was not consistently informed of the time of the tenants' discharge, and this caused problems if the tenant was returned between 5.15pm when she finished her shift and 9.00pm when the night carer came on duty. The tenant would have to let themselves into their flat. There might also be problems at night if the tenant's medication had been changed.

Management of Residents' Health and Wellbeing

The Manager said that tenants are able to keep their own GP, or else she made arrangements for them with a local GP.

The Manager said she was not responsible for the care given to tenants, but was alert to any health problems or deterioration in their mental ability. She would inform the GP if she had concerns. Tenants said that there were alarm systems in their flats if they felt unwell, or else they would go to their GP. Another said he had phone numbers he could use, such as the 24 Barnet Assist office service. He also had the Manager's number.

Staff

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The Manager said she was in charge of the day to day running of the unit, and responsible for interacting with the tenants. She does not live in and her hours are 9am to 5pm five days a week. In addition a cleaner comes in three times a week to clean the communal areas. Barnet Homes maintain the garden, and mow the lawn on a regular basis. In the evenings and at weekends Barnet Assist provide a 24 hour service.

Barnet Homes provide cover for the Manager's holidays. She said it would be useful if her replacement could shadow her for a few days before her departure to enable a smooth handover.

Tenants said that the unit was well run, and they could get help whenever they needed it. One tenant said he had all the essential phone numbers, and used the communal computer to lodge his concerns "in writing".

Staff Training

The Manager said she received all the mandatory training on a rolling basis, such as safeguarding, health and safety, first aid, as well as Building Regulations

Activities

The unit does not have a paid Activities Co-ordinator, as the Manager said that tenants would not want to pay for it. The unit is funded by Barnet Homes for certain events, such as a twice yearly shared tea party at a local church hall (towards which the tenants pay £3), and will pay for communal items such as a table and chairs and umbrella for the terrace. Otherwise tenants organise and pay for activities themselves. They have breakfasts in the lounge twice a week, and special occasion lunches such as Christmas and St. George's Day. These are cooked by a tenant who is a former chef, helped by a volunteer. Tenants organise takeaway meals in the lounge from time to time. They also have impromptu music and dance sessions. The Manager organises a coffee morning twice a week to chat to the tenants, and hear concerns.

Tenants say they would like to have more organised coach outings to the seaside or garden centres. They would also like some communal outings to include the less mobile tenants, and wheelchair users.

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One tenant said he would like to have keep fit classes, but otherwise he had his own interests.

Food

The unit does not provide meals or have a restaurant. Tenants tend to eat their meals in their own flats. One tenant said he preferred to cook for himself. We noticed a Care worker take a tenant back to her flat to have her meal.

Engagement with Relatives/Residents/ Carers

Barnet Homes send out audit surveys regularly to monitor tenants' satisfaction with the service they receive. The unit also has monthly tenants' meetings, so their views can be aired. These are minuted and actioned, and the action dated when completed. The Manager also sends out a monthly newsletter advertising upcoming events.

A number of volunteers come in to help around the unit. In particular the Team noticed a volunteer changing the bedding plants in front of the unit. He was also looked after the pretty terrace at the back. Another volunteer would come and help with the communal meals organised by the tenants. The Manager was also easily accessible, and had a good rapport with the tenants.

Compliments/Complaints/Incidents

The unit's complaints procedure is in the tenant's pack. The Manager will also enter complaints and incidents into the daily diary. These are actioned and dated when finished. Any accident that happens in a communal area is reported. If an accident happens in a flat, an ambulance is called even for a fairly minor event. If a tenant's behaviour proves unacceptable to the other tenants in the unit, arrangements will be made for them to move. The police are called in for any complaints of theft, and their findings accepted by the unit.

The Team did not see the daily diary, or the method for logging accidents. We were told that all accidents/incidents throughout the organisation are recorded electronically and emailed to the line manager, and health and safety team for their input and action. Though the tenants were mainly

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positive about living in Gadsbury Close we did not see any way, for example a Compliments Book, for them to register this.

Recommendations

For Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group

1. To address the issues of appropriate hospital discharge for tenants of Gadsbury Close, ie advising the unit of discharge avoiding night-time and evening discharge where possible.

For Adult Social Care Barnet

2. Ensure Care Plans are kept up to date regularly by monitoring and cross-referencing with the Care Provider's records.
3. Consider if it would be beneficial to provide a copy of each tenant's care plan to the Manager

For Barnet Homes

4. Install a communal accessible toilet on the ground floor.
5. Adjust French windows to provide easy access to the terrace for wheelchair users, including a ramp.
6. Consider if a better handover before the Manager's holiday could be arranged to ensure a smooth handover.

For the Manager

7. Look into ways of organising outings or coach trips to include wheelchair users.

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Responses

From Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group, (Associate Director of Quality (Interim))

1. Discharge from hospital should be a planned event with all those informed of the patients discharge date and time in advance. It is good practice to give at least 24 hours notice of hospital discharge but as you can appreciate, there may be times when this is not always possible due to extreme pressure on hospital beds. That said, patients living in sheltered housing plus are the more vulnerable patients where good practice should always be adhered to.

The Royal Free London hospitals are in the process of setting up a Discharge Working Group to improve the quality of hospital discharge. Dr Jonathan Lubin and I will be on this group and I will certainly raise within this group the need to keep care homes and sheltered housing managers better informed of a patients discharge from hospital and for hospital discharge to not happen late in the day or overnight.

I hope this helps give assurance on the work the CCG is doing with its local hospitals.

From Adult Social Care Barnet (Assistant Director of Adults and Communities)

2 and 3. Annual reviews are completed for all people who receive services from us. Part of this review is the updating of the support plan so this should always be as up to date as possible.

Clearly there is work to do in terms of cross-referencing with the care provider and also keeping the manager of the establishment informed with regard to any changes. I will highlight this requirement to the Head of Reviewing, so that we can improve this part of the experience.

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From Barnet Homes/ the Manager

6. An automatic door and ramp for wheelchairs is due to be installed from the communal lounge to the garden.

7. Updates regarding resident's wellbeing etc are recorded in a Communications Book which is stored securely in a locked filing cabinet on the scheme and also at Assist at handover time prior to any planned leave. These updates are clear and current for the SHO who is covering to follow easily. This system also works well for unplanned leave like sickness or accidents. Staff Rotas are circulated weekly on a Wednesday or Thursday for staff covering each other and we encourage staff to liaise with their colleagues freely wherever possible.

Assist also has the role of alerting the night time carer to any calls from resident which come through via the alarm pull cord system and feedback any events to the SHO when they log on-site the next day.

8. Outings can be complex as some of the more frail residents would need carers to accompany them, and also the remaining residents would still need to be supported.