



Aaron Crest Care Home

Skelmersdale

WN8 6AZ

Enter and View Report

Tuesday 14th January 2020



DISCLAIMER

This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff, visitors and residents who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

Contact Details:

Ben Markham
Aaron Crest Care Home
Tanhouse Rd
Slelmersdale
WN8 6AZ

Staff met during our visit:

Ben Markham (Manager)

Date and time of our visit:

Tuesday 14th January 10.30am-12.30pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised**Representatives:**

Michele Chapman Project Officer (Lead)
Dawn Allen Project Officer
Lesley Miller Project staff



Introduction

This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Lancashire who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services and obtain the view of those people using the services. The representatives observe and speak to residents in communal areas only.

This visit was arranged as part of Healthwatch Lancashire's Enter and View schedule. The aim is to observe services, consider how services may be improved and disseminate good practice. The team of trained Enter and View authorised representatives record their observations along with feedback from residents, staff and, where possible, resident's families or friends.

The team compile a report reflecting these observations and feedback, making comment where appropriate. The report is sent to the manager of the facility for validation of the facts. Any response from the manager is included with the final version of the report which is published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank Ben Markham, together with staff, residents and visitors, for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

General Information

Aaron Crest Care Home is privately owned by Hillcare Ltd with places for sixty five residents. There were nineteen vacancies at the time of our visit. The person in charge is Ben Markham.

Information obtained from carehome.co.uk states that the home provides care for people from the ages of eighteen plus those who are affected by old age and dementia.

Methodology

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on Tuesday 14th January 2020 10.30am-12.30pm.

We spoke to eight residents, ten staff and two relatives, where possible within the constraints of the home routine, people's willingness and ability to engage and access to people in public areas. Discussion was structured around four themes (Environment, Care, Nutrition and Activities) designed to gather information concerning residents overall experience of living at the home.

The team also recorded their own observations of the environment and facilities.

In order to maximise responses the team chose to focus on the first floor nursing unit with a further team member on the dementia unit.

Our role at Healthwatch Lancashire is to gather the views of service users, especially those that are hard to reach and seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service regardless of their perceived ability to be able to do so. It is not our role to censor feedback from respondents.

We use templates to assess the environment of a facility and gather information from respondents, to ensure that reports are compiled in a fair and comparative manner.

Observations were rated on Red, Amber, Green scale as follows;

Green = we would choose this home for a loved one.

Amber = we may choose this home if some improvements were made

Red = we would not choose this home for a loved one unless significant improvements were

Summary:

Environmentally Aaron Crest presented as welcoming, clean and homely. Public rooms were warm and well lit with a variety of seating options in lounges.

Residents appeared well dressed and content telling representatives *“I like it very much. Its lovely and clean, the bed is made every day and I feel safe.”*

Comments about care were similarly positive with residents and relatives praising the staff telling us *“The staff are brilliant”* and *“The staff make me welcome and I have faith in them.”*

Responses about food were mixed; some respondents described the food as *“lovely”* whilst others described it as *“awful.”* One respondent told us *“the food menu is normally blank but there used to be a menu on the wall.”*

Yet another respondent reported concerns that the food budget was *“too low”* and the food *“poor quality.”*

However, respondents were generally positive about the activities provided describing the Activity Coordinator as *“proactive”*. Unfortunately the Coordinator was on leave on the day of our visit and we did not see a weekly activity schedule on display, nor did we observe residents engaged in activities.

Representatives observed high levels of person centred care being delivered by staff who were respectful and allowed time to engage in conversation with residents. Staff told us that they were raising money for residents *“treats”* and that *“we have a good team we all get on.”* Indeed many staff reported being happy in their work.

However a significant number of staff reported communication issues with the new Management believing there to be a lack of consideration and respect, which had impacted negatively on staff morale.

Based on the criteria, the Enter and View Representatives gave the home an overall score of:

Amber

Enter and View observations

Pre-visit and location

Prior to our visit we were able to view a Hillcare company website and a hard copy brochure was available by request on the day.

The facility is set on a main road and the brochure states that there are “*regular transport links to the town centre.*” However, when we asked respondents about the proximity of local amenities we were told that “*The Concourse*” was approximately “*one mile away.*”

The home was clearly signposted from the main road and there were appropriate and plentiful parking facilities.

Green

The external environment

Aaron Crest Care Home is a large and relatively modern 65 bed facility set amongst residential housing in the town of Skelmersdale.

The facility services nursing, residential and dementia unit residents.

The building appeared to be well maintained and the garden equally so if not a little confined, with a central courtyard being available for sitting out in the summer months.

Representatives observed benches and tables for outdoor seating and bird tables to add interest. However, the team felt that some winter planters and tubs would add colour to the outdoor aspect and the spent hanging baskets could have been removed from the main entrance.

The main entrance was easily identifiable being a porch with an accessible yet secure entrance.

The door was answered in a timely manner by staff.

Green

The internal environment/reception-first impressions

The Manager and staff were very welcoming and the atmosphere of the home seemed busy yet relaxed, the Manager taking time to chat with us about his role.

The reception appeared homely with sofas, armchairs and soft furnishings. Colours were restful and the walls were decorated with pictures of previous activities, with contemporary music playing in the background.

Representatives were able to sign the visitors book and we noted that hand gel was readily available throughout the home.

The team were pleased to see the Healthwatch Lancashire poster prominently displayed as requested and noted a resident's information board and a separate relative's information board. Topics included were a visit by a community singing group on 23rd January 2020. A "Can you help?" poster requested suggestions for activities at the Chinese New Year on the 25th January 2020.

Staff were readily identifiable by uniform, and during our visit a blackboard was updated with the names of staff on duty that day.

Green

The observation of corridors public toilets and bathrooms

The corridors throughout the home presented as clean, bright and uncluttered with many corridors displaying nostalgic black and white photographs.

However, corridors were somewhat uniform and representatives felt that this may make it difficult for some residents to navigate the environment. To mitigate this some temporary laminated "street names" (for example Matthew Street) had been affixed to doors. However, Representatives felt a more colourful permanent fixture would be more conspicuous.

Likewise, there was some dementia friendly signage at various points throughout the home but this was not consistent. A sign for the hairdresser displayed bright and clear images of a hairdryer, scissors and comb in red on a bright green background, and a sign for the dining room was pictorial colour coded (blue) and written.

Given that the rooms at Aaron Crest are en-suite, representatives considered that there were sufficient numbers of public toilets to service the residents. All the bathrooms we observed were clean and well decorated with sufficient supplies of soap hand towels and toilet rolls. The team observed that all the appropriate adaptations for assisted bathing were provided, but that these were not generally colour coded.

Green Amber

The lounges, dining and other public areas

The public areas throughout the home generally presented as clean and pleasant, the majority of surfaces being wipe clean.

Many of the residents in the nursing unit were situated in the main lounge where a wall mounted television was unobtrusive. Seating was plentiful and of various types and heights and arranged around the perimeter of the room. However, representatives did not feel this layout encouraged social interaction. Many

residents had small round tables placed in front of them and the team saw that staff offered them hydration and snacks at regular intervals.

The representative who visited the Dementia unit reported a similar layout however it was observed that some furniture here may have needed replacing (a chair arm was broken) and one respondent reported that a relative had been obliged to use a bin bag to sit on a damp fabric chair.

The Nursing unit provided a second quieter lounge area which had a temporary “Training Room” notice affixed to the door. The room did not look like it was currently in use as it was unlit and rather untidy.

The mid morning snacks offered included crisps, biscuits and an impressive array of fresh fruit. These were situated in an area adjacent to the main lounge and designated “Hydration Station and Snack Bar.”

A blackboard above the hydration station advised residents of the day, date and weather conditions. During the time of our visit a small laminated notice was added indicating items of food available as an alternative to the main menu and “on request”. Options included soups, sandwiches, omelettes, toast and chips.

The dining areas in the two units we visited were both spacious with sufficient capacity for extra tables. Tables were attractively set with matching table linen napkins and a centrepiece to enhance the residents dining experience. However, a respondent told us that this was not a daily occurrence.

Small serving sideboards were placed at the end of dining rooms which gave limited function for care staff to serve meals from, with one respondent expressing concern about suitability and hygiene.

Unfortunately, the team did not see a menu on display on either the tables or a noticeboard, we asked the Manager about this and he said that he would forward this on to us later.

The Manager told us that all food at Aaron Crest was made “*on site*.”

Aaron Crest benefitted for a dedicated hairdressing salon and during our visit we observed this to be enjoyed by the residents.

Green Amber

Observations of resident and staff interactions

Their appeared to be sufficient staff on duty and although there was frequent activity from call bells these were attended to in good time.

Representatives saw kind and caring interaction between staff and residents. We observed positive body language, staff kneeling by resident’s chairs to speak and maintaining eye contact during conversation. We noted staff initiating

conversations using the residents name asking open questions “*Do you like this film Name?*”

Similarly, we observed staff offering positive affirmation to residents “*Name your hair looks nice.*” and “*Do you feel better?*”

A staff member was observed hugging a resident and the resident responded by smiling broadly.

Despite staff delivering high levels of person centred interaction, the environment had little person centred provision, the team did not observe memory boxes, or personalised doors. However, photographs of previous activities indicated that residents were “*absolutely overjoyed that staff had arranged to bring in their own beloved dogs.*”

Unfortunately the full time activity coordinator was on leave on the day of our visit and we were unable to obtain a weekly activity schedule, neither did we see an activity schedule displayed. Likewise, although representatives had seen evidence of previous activities being available and a respondent telling us “*The activity coordinator is very proactive*” we did not see any activities taking place during the time of our visit.

Green Amber

Additional information

A significant amount of feedback received from staff was negative in respect of the management of Aaron Crest. Staff reported a number of Managers “*over the last 5 years.*”

Many staff reported difficulties with the Manager’s communication style and as a result of this Healthwatch Lancashire were obliged to share respondents’ additional comments with statutory agencies.

Likewise, Healthwatch Lancashire representatives were concerned to hear respondents allege that the residents’ food budget was “*too low*” and the food “*poor quality.*”

Similarly, respondents claimed that the Manager had spoken to them prior to our visit and advised them of acceptable responses to our questions.

Feedback from residents

Environment

"I like it very much. It's lovely and clean, the bed is made every day and I feel safe."

"It's very good. It's light and airy I have my own ornaments."

"I've lived here for twelve months. My room is next to the Managers office."

"The night times are nice and quiet."

"I have been here ten days I spend a lot of time in my room. I like my room I have a lot of space."

"I have been here a few months but I am moving to Greece."

"I have had a lot of items stolen by other residents, including my purse."

"I like my room I have my own things, but I miss my home."

Activities

"We get together in an evening."

"There is plenty of art and drawing."

"We get trips out to venues and young people sing."

"My daughter visits every two weeks."

"For Christmas I dressed up as an elf."

"I don't call it fun living here."

"I get upset doing activities but I would like to go out more."

"I try to mix with other residents, but the majority of the time I don't think its person centred."

"I get the daily newspapers every day."

"I'd like to go out more. I used to go out for a walk and do the cooking when I was at home."

Yes, but I don't join in it makes me anxious."

Care

"They are all very nice."

"They are very friendly and good with you."

"The staff are brilliant."

"I have my shower or bath as much as I want."

"The staff assume I want the same as everyone else."

"The staff are helpful if I want a shave, and they help me with personal care."

"Staff work hard in the circumstances."

"I feel safe. About 90% of the staff are very caring but occasionally you get someone who is sharp and quick and they will treat you as a number."

Food

"The food is lovely I eat everything there are three choices."

"The food is good you get a choice."

"The food is awful I have told the Manager who said he would try to improve."

"Hot meals are rubbish, I don't know of any choices and I get what I am given. The food menu is normally blank but there used to be a menu on the wall."

"I like the food, I would like more food."

"I eat in the dining room but I feel isolated as the others sit separate."

"The foods ok, I eat in the dining room and have better contact with the nurses."

"I don't want to eat food" (has medical issue)."

*"Sometimes it's brilliant when **Name** cooks it."*

"20% of the time the food is mushy and tasteless (corned beef hash)."

"I like fish and chips my son brings me fish and chips from the chippy."

Relatives and friends' views

How do you feel generally about the service?

"The staff are great."

"The staff base has been more stable than the number of Managers."

"Mum's been here seven years and any minor bumps have always been resolved."

Do you think that you are kept informed about your relative e.g. Health and future care plans?

*"**Name** is a good nurse my wife has a chest infection."*

"Yes, but I am proactive."

Do you know how to make a complaint if you need to?

"I have been to see Name about her missing coat. "I felt I was able to speak to the staff and it was sorted."

"I think (my relative) should be supplied with incontinence pants."

"Yes I do, and I have, it was resolved really well."

Are you aware of the social activities at the service and do you feel welcomed to join in?

"I know there is an activity coordinator. My sister comes with the school she is a teacher."

"Yes and Yes. There have been many activities, I have seen choirs in and the activity coordinator will tell me."

"The activity coordinator is very proactive."

Would you recommend this service to others?

"The staff go out of their way to help."

"Yes, I would definitely. The staff are lovely and caring."

"The staff make me welcome and I have faith in them."

Staff views

Do you have enough staff when on duty?

"Yes, the majority of the time."

"We do at the moment, but we have been short staffed."

"Yes, for most of the time."

"Yes."

"Yes and no."

"its hit and miss, if someone calls in sick. It has been ok lately".

"There are five staff in today because you (Healthwatch Lancashire) are here. There is a higher turnover of staff now."

"There have been four Managers in five years."

"There have been changes for the better."

"I like working here. Generally we have enough staff."

"The majority of the time we have enough staff, because we haven't got as many residents."

"Yes most of the time, but we may struggle when people are sick."

Do you feel supported to carry out person centred care?

"Yes."

"Yes."

"Yes, no problem."

"Yes, we try and keep the residents entertained."

"Yes we have plenty of training."

"We have been told to do half hourly checks on the corridors. This has made things a little more hectic and meant residents are losing out on contact."

"Treats have been rationed, so there is not enough to share around."

"The TV aerial doesn't work in bad weather."

"The senior carers are great."

"I am confident in my job to carry out person centred care."

"The staff are fundraising to buy the residents treats and toiletries, especially for those who don't have families."

"So yes, if someone wants something to eat we make it."

"I was asked to clean dirty equipment during supported mealtimes."

Do you feel you have enough training to carry out your duties well?

"Yes, we definitely have enough training."

"Yes we have E learning. We were told we would be paid for this but have not received any payment."

"Yes we get too much. We have E Learning and face to face."

"Yes, I am doing NVQ Level 3."

"I have plenty of training to carry out my job."

“Yes, I have had training at a previous care home.”

“We have a lot of training, we were told we would be paid for online training but we haven’t been. They take us off the floor to train.”

Are you happy working here?

“Yes, I love it.”

“Yes, I am.”

“I am yes.”

“Yes, I love it.”

“Yes.”

*“Yes I am, but there are conflicts with staff and **Name** needs to be more hands on.”*

*“**Name** clicks his fingers and talks down to people.”*

“I like my job here but there could be more support. I don’t get supported to develop my career.”

*“There are tensions between the **Name** and staff.”*

*“**Name** has already told us to tell you he was nice.”*

“Yes, I have been here a while, we have a good team we all get on.”

*“**Name** has told staff he doesn’t like them. He is very arrogant.”*

“I have seen staff crying.”

“Would you be happy to recommend this care home to a close relative?”

“Yes, if there was a change of Manager.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“No the food is horrible there is no cook and where the carers dish the food out from is unhygienic.”

“No the budget for food is too low and it is very poor quality. There is little variation.”

“Yes, the care staff are wonderful.”

“Yes, I would my Nan was here before.”

“Yes.”

Response from provider

We would like to thank healthwatch for their visit to Aaron Crest, we consistently seek feedback to help us with continuous improvement of the home.

It was great to hear how engaged the staff team were during the visit.

Following the visit, a full investigation was complete around the concerns raised, this was provided to the Quality Care Commission.

The team at Aaron crest have already commenced improvements around:

Menu's, Activity and signage.

Hill Care, has the Provider: reviewed the Management of the home; support available to staff; staffing levels; review of menus, food served and what food orders are placed in the home, this has helped us identify training needs and development within the team.

Following the new environment plan areas of the home are planned for refurb over the next 3 months.

We look forward to your next visit.

Sophie Gardiner

Regional Manager

www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

info@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

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