

Enter and View – Visit Report

Name of Supported Living Scheme: 40 Verney Street, Brent, NW10 0BA
Managed by Precious Homes
Manager: Mr Abasse Djamaladini
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Healthwatch Brent Ibrahim Ali [Projects Officer Healthwatch Brent]

Authorised representatives: Mary Evans & Margaret Oyemade [Healthwatch Brent Volunteers]

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Introduction and Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View (E&V) visit undertaken by Healthwatch Brent Projects Officer and authorized & Enter & View Volunteers, as part of a planned strategy to look at a range of health and social care services within the London Borough of Brent 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 Healthwatch Brent team visit the service and record their observations along with the feedback from residents, relatives, carers and staff. The report is based on observations and interviews with residents, relatives, carers, staff - with recommendations. The Report is sent to the registered Scheme Manager for comments, corrections and responses 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, Brent 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.

General Information

Aim

The Healthwatch Brent Social Isolation Report - 'Staying Well in The Community' [May 2019], has concluded from surveys conducted that there was a rise in respondents living in supported housing reporting dissatisfaction with their social contact. As a result of this, we were particularly interested in monitoring levels of social interactions available to the residents of Supported Living Schemes. We were particularly keen to find out more about the ability of residents to engage in activities based on their own individual preferences, monitor the skills and abilities of staff, and gain knowledge of innovative good practice. The questionnaires used were similar to those previously used, however, we were particularly interested in the four main themes of -

1. Staff development & Clinical Input
2. Emotional and Psychological Well-being
3. Social Inclusion and Meaningful Activities
4. Organised Person-centred Holidays and Days Out

Background

Verney Street is a Supported Living Service located in Brent, North West London. It provides individualised and proactive support for up to 3 individuals aged 16-65 years to develop skills, independence and confidence as fully as possible both at home and in the community.

Verney Street supports individuals with the following needs:

- Learning Disability
- Autism Spectrum Condition
- Mental Health Needs
- Behaviours that may be described as challenging

Some residents maybe stepping down from secure settings and may have experienced previous placement breakdowns. The service provided is highly person-centred and provides a safe environment for residents to develop more independence. Precious Homes Vision is "To be a provider of choice and support of progress in Life."

According to the official website [1] - the key design features of Verney Street are as follows:

- 3 flats situated across ground and first floors, each including bedroom, living area, ensuite shower/bathrooms and kitchen with dining space
- Communal private garden and patio area
- Low stimuli environment to reduce anxiety and behaviour which may be described as challenging
- A Rapid Response Team is included in the support structure of Verney Street to assist in times of additional need for further support or rotation. This has also been put in place to reduce additional support when it is not required - increasing independence and reducing care package costs

Staff Development & Clinical Input

The HWB Enter & View Team were keen to explore whether the following or similar were provide: Physiotherapy, Learning Disability Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, or observe the skill level of the staff.

Residents are provided with their own newly refurbished flat, each of which is tailored to meet individual need and preferences, so as to promote the development of essential daily living skills.

Each flat has been creatively designed to meet a range of needs for people who are working towards further independence over time. Verney Street offers two ground and one first floor self-contained flats. Two flats provide lots of space and are ideal for someone who is stepping down from secure or residential services. The third flat has been specifically designed to support someone who is working towards further independent living in the community over time

The Manager, Mr Abasse Djamaladini, stated that staff turnover was initially high because of the high needs and intense nature of the work; but with the implementation of person-centred induction process, where potential employee spend time shadowing and getting to know residents and helping to creating a bond first - has reduced staff turnover significantly by attracting staff who are interested in a long term career in the care sector. The Manager said, "We don't rely on the CV, instead we have a different interview process, which focussing on role play - we are upfront and open about the nature of the work." The Manager stated that potential employees are judged on performance during the role play - they are assessed on how they work as a team. We do not look at the CV before the role play assessment - this gives everyone an equal chance to show their skills.

One staff member said, "It's hard work, but it is rewarding."

Staff 5 in day and 4 people at night at Verney – and one paid response on hand

One resident with complex multiple needs requires 3 staff during the day and 2 at night.

Residents have additional support through a psychotherapist, podiatrist, music therapy, etc.

Emotional & Psychological Well-being

(e.g. ability to tune into non-verbal cues as to what the person is feeling and wanting)

The Healthwatch Enter & View Team carefully observed the interactions of the support workers during a resident's mealtime. The resident required 3 support workers during the day, because of her complicated needs. The support workers were observed to be very caring, able to cope with challenging behaviour such as self-harm and kicking. The support workers talked softly and helped to calm the residents - they were empathetic and showed warmth and compassion. At least one female support worker is on shift to cater for the needs of the female resident.

The ability of the support workers to tune into non-verbal cues was observed. The resident made hand gestures as if squeezing something with her hand - this sign was understood by the support workers as a request for orange juice; which was promptly served. The resident was also encouraged to sign for a pen and was asked which colour she would like. Staff were observed being patient, smiling and were very calm - their communication skills were excellent.

Verney Street scheme also uses an App with software that is able to accurately record length of sleep, drink intake, medication intake, food intake, supplements intake - a nutrient drink ['Cal shake'] was prescribed for the resident and this was carefully monitored along with the residents' weight. This resident also uses Makaton. The Manager stated that since residing at Verney Street significant improvements have been seen in residents - for example one resident could not brush teeth - but can now due to the person centred and individually designed care provided by the scheme.

Social Inclusion & Meaningful Activity based on individual preferences

Even though residents had very high needs, the scheme manager made sure that a variety of outdoor and in-door activities are available. One young male resident with high needs was assisted in enjoying regular bike rides to the places such as the Welsh Harp Reservoir. The scheme manager provided extra bikes for the staff so they could accompany the resident on his bike rides.

The Manager of the scheme has made additional efforts to make sure residents have access to social activities. Mr Abasse has a person-centred approach which is demonstrated by his willingness to use hire transport to help residents access family visits and social activities. Since moving to the scheme, residents have been able to go out every day - sometimes twice a day, which was not possible at their previous place of residence. The scheme manager frequently hires a van with wheelchair access so that family visits can be frequently made.

One resident has access to 'WhatsApp ' and Skype so as to access video calls with her mother and father.

The scheme manager has processed an application for a van for one resident, which the family has recently test driven. The service was observed to be highly person-centred.

Organised Person-centred Holidays & Days Out

(do they pro-actively support the resident to access person centred and carefully planned holidays and days outs – based on the resident's preferences. What evidence is there?)

Each of the residents had very different needs, and these were catered for individuality. One young resident with autism and heightened anxiety has outings specifically designed for him individually. The recent purchase of a van has increased the ability to provide a variety of organised outings and family visits.

Compliments/Complaints/Incidents

Compliments

The serviced provided at the scheme is highly person-centred - the Manager's commitment and knowledge is very impressive. The 2 residents observed were provided with very person-centred care - the support workers were highly empathetic, and the level of care observed was at a very high standard. The use of technology, such as WhatsApp and Skype, so that residents can stay in touch with family members – and the use of an App by staff to record residents' daily details such as food intake, medications, sleep patterns, etc., was extremely impressive.

The scheme was well managed and provided a new lease of life for residents who have previously been difficult to place with other services. The service is of an exceptionally high standard and the contribution made by the Manger should be commended.

Recommendations for Precious Homes

The service provided at the Scheme was exceptional - the management and staff were highly skilled and compassionate.

The Scheme Manager, Abasse Djamaladini, performance in his role is exceptional and should be recognised.

Comments from Precious Homes

The only amendment I would like to make is that service user don't come in my car but I was hiring vehicle for some. Good news is that we now have a van for our service user and she is loving it.

References

[1] <http://www.precious-homes.co.uk>