



# Enter and View Report

Bushmead Court

Announced

6<sup>th</sup> June 2023

## What is Enter and View

Part of Healthwatch Bedford Borough's remit is to carry out Enter and View visits. Healthwatch Bedford Borough Authorised Representatives will carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families, and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation so that we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Safeguarding Policy, the service Manager will be informed, and the visit will end. The local authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

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## Provider details

Name and Address of Service: Bushmead Court, 58-60 Bushmead Avenue, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK40 3QW.

Registered Manager: Ms Anne Bentley

Service type: Care Home for residents living with Dementia/Alzheimer's, old age/elderly care, physical disability, general care needs and complex care.

Client type: Mixed

## Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Bedford Borough would like to thank the Registered Manager, Deputy Manager, staff and all the residents for their co-operation during our visit.

## Disclaimer

Please note that this report is related to findings and observations made during our visit made on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The report does not claim to represent the views of all service users, relatives and staff members, only those who contributed during the visit.

## Authorised Representatives

Tracy Cresswell, Lead Authorised Representative  
Emma Fredda, Authorised Representative

## Who we share the report with

This report and its findings will be shared with the Manager of Bushmead Court, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Healthwatch England. The report will also be published on the Healthwatch Bedford Borough website.

## Healthwatch Bedford Borough's details

Address:

21-23 Gadsby Street

Bedford

MK40 3HP

Website: [www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk)

Telephone: 01234 638678

## Healthwatch principles

Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Enter and View programme is linked to the eight principles of Healthwatch, and questions are asked around each one.

1. **A healthy environment:** Right to live in an environment that promotes positive health and wellbeing.
2. **Essential Services:** Right to a set of preventative, treatment and care services provided to a high standard to prevent patients reaching crisis.
3. **Access:** Right to access services on an equal basis with others without fear of discrimination or harassment, when I need them in a way that works for me and my family
4. **A safe, dignified and quality services:** Right to high quality, safe, confidential services that treat me with dignity, compassion, and respect.
5. **Information and education:** Right to clear and accurate information that I can use to make decisions about health and care treatment. I want the right to education about how to take care of myself and about what I am entitled to in the health and social care system.
6. **Choice:** Right to choose from a range of high-quality services, products and providers within health and social care
7. **Being listened to:** Right to have my concerns and views listened to and acted upon. I want the right to be supported in taking action if I am not satisfied with the service I have received.
8. **Being involved:** To be treated as an equal partner in determining my own health and wellbeing. I want the right to be involved in decisions that affect my life and those affecting services in my local community.



## Purpose of the visit

The visit was announced and was part of the ongoing work programme of Healthwatch Bedford Borough.



## What we did

On arrival to the building, we rang the bell, waited for the staff to let us in and introduced ourselves. We were asked to sign in and we were then introduced to the Manager.

We were made very welcome from the beginning of the visit; and were offered refreshments.

We spent a good amount of time talking to both the Manager and Deputy Manager. We spoke to staff and residents. The members of staff had varying roles and positions within the home.

The Manager previously practiced as a Registered General Nurse and has been in the care profession for many years now.

The home is a 27 bedded care home. They are currently at full capacity for singular admissions. Bushmead Court has 24 single rooms and 3 double rooms for couples. They take residents on respite when they have capacity, this is for a minimum term of four calendar weeks to enable to staff to get to know the resident and the resident to comfortably settle.

The working day is split into staggered shifts at Bushmead Court: 7am to 2pm, 2pm to 8pm, 8pm to 7am and 7pm to 8am. Bushmead Court currently has a full staff quota of 18, covering the rota pattern mentioned above.

In addition to the staff numbers listed above, they also have an external handyman who is subcontracted to provide maintenance assistance on a regular basis. He appears to be accessible and very popular with residents

and staff alike. Whilst they do not have an inhouse Activities Coordinator, they outsource additional creative art sessions to Creative Mojo Bedford & District, and their freelance Consultant attends Bushmead Court on a regular basis. The Deputy Manager ran us through their programme of activities; which includes one large event per calendar month, as well as singers, fete's, canine visits and other events. The home has a regular hairdresser attend on a Wednesday, which is popular with residents. We were pleased to see continuity with external subcontractors to put residents' minds at ease and ensure they build rapport.

The Manager also delivers hands on care as and when required.

## Findings:

### Environment

#### External

Bushmead Court is situated in a picturesque avenue in the centre of Bedford town. It is in very close proximity to the beautiful Embankment gardens, which run parallel to Bushmead Avenue. There is on street parking and a clear path to the entrance of the home. The entrance is well signposted. The outside of the building is very well maintained. There are gardens which are accessible to residents. The entrance to the building is accessible with ramp and handrail placement for safety.

#### Internal

The entrance is bright and airy, filled with beautiful houseplants. A GDPR compliant signing in/visitors book is just inside the entrance. We were immediately asked to sign in for fire risk. The building has a secure entry system. The Manager's office is along the corridor from the entrance, as well as a library. There is a dining area that leads into a spacious and light communal conservatory. There were several residents sitting in the conservatory whilst we were in situ. The conservatory also houses an upright piano which residents play.

The staff all wore name badges, although they were a little hard to read in some cases due to how many letters were used.

There were signs on doors; these were easy for the residents to read.

## Essential services

The Manager explained that new residents are given a few days to settle into their new environment and advised that the discharge notes they receive are not always correct. When formulating new care plans, they speak to residents, their relatives, care staff and other professionals. All the care plans are still in paper format as the staff are reluctant to go digital. The Manager explained that they had started to investigate the transfer to digital records in the past but were unsure of the benefits over handwritten record keeping, so decided to continue with paper copies.

They explained that when they have an enquiry, an initial assessment is undertaken via a trusted assessor with families. This usually takes place within 48hrs. Home visits are undertaken should there be a requirement for this. Bushmead Court then liaise with the discharge planners, a team which includes Physiotherapists, the Speech & Language Team (SALT), and Occupational Therapists (OTs).

Once residents move in, their likes and dislikes are documented from the outset. Care plans are drawn up for a 1mth initial period. Discharge medication is checked with the hospital and any discrepancies are rectified. Bushmead Court appear to have a good working relationship with their pharmacy of choice, Wilstead Pharmacy. They deliver regularly to Bushmead Court and the Manager reports that this works well.

The Deputy Manager advised that a weekly ward round takes place and that they were in regular contact at other times with both the Nurse Associate and GPs at De Parys Group to ensure that residents remained safe and well cared for. This certainly appeared to be the case.

The residents that we engaged with said Bushmead Court was “**absolutely wonderful**”, and that they were “**well looked after**”. One resident expressed that they “**couldn't be better**”, with another expressing that “**you could go to bed at midnight if you wanted to, or 3am. It's like being at home**”.

The residents that we engaged with expressed that they had lived at Bushmead Court for a few years, expressing that they felt “**very safe**”.

## Access

The Manager and Duty Manager informed us that they speak to residents every morning. Staff assist with taking residents to hospital, GP appointments



etc., when required, although most relatives actively attend appointments. The residents expressed that they could see a GP or dentist when required. Monthly oral assessments were carried out and domiciliary dental teams attend, in line with NICE guidance.

The vast majority of residents are registered with the De Parys Group when permanently moving into Bushmead Court, however choice was given to stay with their previous practice, if within the geographical boundary area.

### **Safe, dignified and quality services.**

The residents at Bushmead Court clearly feel safe and very well cared for. This was extremely apparent, with one relative expressing that they were **"confident in raising any issues if they arise"**. This appeared to be a general theme.

Relatives who have previously had family members residing in the home, still send cards, letters and gifts. The welcoming atmosphere at Bushmead means that rather than a care facility, it feels like a family environment. This was a real joy to see.

It was observed during the time we were on the visit, mid to late afternoon during the week, that the residents, staff and relatives were happy in the conservatory and dining room, chatting merrily, awaiting news of their evening meal and listening intently to one resident playing some beautiful pieces, note perfectly, on the piano. This was extremely moving to watch and reinforced the real family feel that Bushmead Court has.

Mandatory core training was up to date for all staff and staff members informed us that if any bespoke training is required for the benefit of their residents, this is completed. Of late, this has involved specific oxygen training. Other courses staff had undertaken have included person centred care, allergens, oral health and nutrition levels 2 & 3.

The staff expressed that they felt able to spend adequate time with all the residents. One staff member expressed that they ensure that all the residents are engaged with, even the ones that do not like spending any time in the communal conservatory or those that are bed bound. They go to them in their rooms to chat with them and look after their personal care and emotional needs. This was echoed by a bed bound resident, who was very happy with the care they received.

It was observed that the dignity of residents in their own rooms was maintained, with staff asking first if they could enter and explaining clearly who we were and the purpose of our visit, reassuring residents to speak freely and that there were no wrong answers.

Personal pendants and sensor mats were used to reduce falls risk. Wait times for staff to answer were described as good. No lengthy waits were reported.

## Information

The residents and relatives raise any concerns or complaints directly with the staff; these are documented on an App, brought to the attention of the Manager and Deputy Manager and swiftly actioned.

One resident expressed that there was “no problem” doing this in terms of potential repercussions and advised that they felt listened to on the rare occasion they had raised concerns. The same could be said of staff.

The staff retention rate is excellent, with some staff having worked at Bushmead Court for 30 years. This is a true testament to the support and wellbeing needs of staff being met and staff feeling nurtured. This in turn means that they are able to project this nurturing onto the residents they care for, who were jolly and well engaged. The Manager expressed that their main priority is the resident and what is best for them. The open and relaxed communication between staff, residents, relatives and senior management was clear to see, with plenty of banter from all parties.

## Choice

The residents that we engaged with all expressed that they had choice, this was from what food they had, what they wanted to drink, to being asked what time they wanted to go to bed. They choose their own clothes to wear and can choose what activities they want to do. Activities are well planned and included music therapy and interaction with schools. Grandchildren are encouraged to come in to take part. Plans for the coming months include ‘bringing the beach to Bushmead’ and a petting zoo. Dates are displayed clearly on the notice board. The Deputy Manager advised that in-house chair-based exercises were a regular feature, as well as dancing and singing.

Tea is offered at the table during art sessions, this encourages shy residents to take part with their peers and was working well.

If the residents have dietary requirements/additional needs, the staff work with professionals to ensure that these are managed. One resident expressed that they were “pretty sure what I eat, and drink is monitored well for nutrition”.

Residents are able to choose the contents of their bedrooms and soft furnishings. We observed family photos up in residents' bedrooms. There seemed to be a very good escalation process for emergency repairs, both with their maintenance man and external contractors. One member of staff advised that “if residents wish for new pictures to be put up or anything like that in their bedroom, they just leave things out for Glen and one of us will give him a quick ring. He's very good”.

## Being listened to

The residents/relatives have quarterly meetings with staff and the management team, however if they have any concerns they speak to a member of staff or the Manager, as and when required.

One resident expressed that their “family are able to visit any time” and went on to describe an imminent family wedding.

Another expressed that “everyone is called by their first names on both sides. A good day here looks like sunshine”.

## Being involved

The residents and relatives can speak to any member of staff around any concerns, comments or complaints they wish to make. Bushmead Court is accessible 24/7.

Nothing appeared to be rushed. As Bushmead Court is well-staffed and well-led, there was a general aura of relaxation, despite it being a busy home. Residents appeared involved in decision making and were positively encouraged to report things. Regular meetings took place with residents and relatives.

## Current challenges for the home

The Manager expressed that their current challenges included disappointment and dissatisfaction with certain NHS teams regarding their residents needs not being met. This included the management team not feeling listened to when reporting clinical concerns and instead being dismissed. This had escalated to such a point that they refused to engage with one team, instead used the GP, who agreed with them. Whilst we understood the frustration this caused, we were concerned moving forward about the additional pressure this was placing primary care under, when already stretched to capacity.

A lengthy conversation ensued whereby we advised them that should they continue to meet the same issues moving forward, with the same teams, to copy Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Deputy CEO into correspondence and we would step in to offer guidance. It was very disconcerting to hear of the lack of joined up working and trust certain NHS provider teams have in care homes of such a high standard. Particularly as we found Bushmead Court to be well-led, methodical in their approach to planning, compassionate in their care and open to receiving support.

The management, staff and residents were asked if they could change one thing what would it be and why.

One of the staff expressed they would like to have more hours if possible, although stated that they were fully staffed at present. She advised that she had been offered other posts elsewhere with more hours but advised that she stayed at Bushmead Court because of the family feel, strong, supportive leadership team, and her genuine care for the residents. This was evident when she spoke.

The Manager and Deputy Manager expressed that aside from the issues mentioned above in relation to feeling let down by particular NHS teams and concerned over the lack of continuity, they felt extremely well supported by each other and their staff, and indeed the owner; who they described as wonderful and very generous whenever they reported anything to him in relation to items that needed to be purchased, or services that needed to be commissioned.

The residents we spoke to advised they would not change anything, with one resident stating "I wouldn't change anything as I am very well looked after. I made a wonderful choice coming to live here, something that was also expressed by my GP".

## Recommendations

### Recommendations to the service.

1. Ensure that staff name badges are easy to read for residents. This means clear font and bright colour due to worsening eyesight and memory loss. For professionals and relatives having the photo board that you have containing photos of each staff member, their full names and roles on the existing notice board in the entrance is good practice. Name badges however should ideally be in the format of the “My name is” yellow badges, displaying first names to make them easy to see and read.
2. The management team are encouraged to have more faith when needing to report concerns to NHS providers and safeguarding. Whilst we recognise that you have had multiple issues in the past, Healthwatch Bedford Borough will ensure that you are listened to, and that your concerns are validated, acted upon and investigated by relevant teams moving forward. Should you not be happy with the outcome of discussions with NHS providers and continue to believe that your patients are being compromised by external professionals, we would encourage you to report to safeguarding and the Care Quality Commission. We have provided correspondence details for our Deputy CEO; who will fully support you to raise concerns/complaints, should you require assistance.
3. Consider re-investigating the move to electronic care plans in the near future, in line with Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) digital transformation plans. Whilst we fully recognise that pen and paper are the preferred option for most of the workforce, we are mindful that as everything these days is moving online, Bushmead Court will be left behind and that this would eradicate a proportion of time chasing results and updates as they would be available at the click of a button. We are also mindful of the fire risk of having everything in paper files as opposed to backed up in the cloud.
4. Consider investment in website redesign. Whilst we appreciate the benefits in good old-fashioned door knocking, your website is extremely basic and would benefit from external IT redesign support. This will ensure that anyone looking for a care home can see the fabulous services, team, setting and activities that Bushmead Court have to offer, and for any professionals wanting to check anything, information is at hand.

5. Consider basic menopause awareness training for all staff. With such a large workforce experiencing multiple day-to-day struggles with perimenopause and menopause, whilst we recognise how wonderfully supportive the management team and owner have been in managing staff living with this often-debilitating period in their lives, we feel it would benefit all staff to undergo some basic awareness training, to enable them to have a deeper understanding.
6. Consider basic introduction to British Sign Language (BSL) training in line with the NHS Accessible Information Standard (DCB1605). Particularly pertinent for Bushmead Court due to having a member of staff who's primary language is BSL. Healthwatch Bedford Borough are happy to provide details of reputable trainers locally.
7. Consider semi regular drop-in advice clinics from Healthwatch Bedford Borough for residents, relatives and staff, to support them to access wider health and care services and allow them to have their say on local service.

## Provider feedback

### **Anne Bentley- Registered manager, Bushmead**

"I have read the report, thank you, and very pleased with the outcome as it demonstrates how hard we work for the residents we care for and this report reflects this. Your recommendations have been looked at and have taken heed. We already have the yellow name badges in place. I would like some information on British Sign language training as I have already looked into it online, but the training offered is not practical, although we have started to learn from two of our staff who sign. Regarding the website, we were going to have a new website designed pre Covid then it got put back when the pandemic hit us. We have someone looking into redesigning our website at this moment in time. We are considering digitalisation now that you have talked us through the benefits and risks and I am going on a course on Thursday 6th July 2023. I have already looked into menopause training for the workforce and hope to get this set up in the near future. Thank you for your support and guidance, it was much appreciated."