



Enter and View Holly Tree Lodge

Announced Visit

31st July 2023

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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 residents, 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's Manager will be informed, and the visit will end. The local authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

Provider details

Name and Address of Service: Holly Tree Lodge, 122 Spring Rd, Kempston, Bedford MK42 8NB

Registered Manager: Miss Gabrielle May Kilpatrick

Service type: Care Home for adults with learning difficulties, Autism, mental health issues, sensory impairment, physical disability, Dementia and associated complex needs.

Client type: Mixed

Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Bedford Borough would like to thank the Registered Manager, staff and 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 31st July 2023. The report does not claim to represent the views of all residents, relatives, and staff members, only those who contributed during the visit.

Authorised Representatives

Shanice Kazaly, Lead Authorised Representative

Emma Freda, Authorised Representative

Who we share the report with

This report and its findings will be shared with the Manager of Holly Tree Lodge, 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

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 service:** 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 for 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 for fire regs and we were then introduced to the Registered 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 the Manager about the service provision and changes, before speaking to staff and residents.

The Manager was new to the role in this setting but advised that she has previously worked in a leadership role in other care settings.

The home is currently being run as a 10-bedded care home. This has been scaled down, which appeared a good decision based on seemingly limited space. Holly Tree Lodge are currently at full capacity for singular admissions. They are set up to offer single rooms within the main building, as well as outdoor bungalows fitted with small kitchenettes and ensuites, although these are in a very poor condition. These are included in the extensive plan of works by the new provider.

Whilst they do not have a separate inhouse Activities Coordinator, residents reported to regularly attend local events with other care homes and the Manager organises local and national trips for residents, which have recently included a day trip to Brighton which was spoken of with sheer delight by residents, local BBQs, and learning disability discos etc., as well as regular local trips to the park, supermarkets and shopping in the town centre.

Findings:

Environment

External

Holly Tree Lodge is situated on a busy, residential through-road in Kempston, Bedford.

There is on street parking and both a path to the entrance of the home and a front garden that is overgrown with weeds and shrubs. The entrance is not very well signposted from the road and was therefore difficult to find. Whilst we appreciate that the provider has commenced a considerable programme of works, the external presentation of the building was unkempt and unwelcoming. There is a limited outdoor space which is accessible to residents, with very basic seating arrangements.

The entrance to the building is accessible with ramp and handrail placement for safety.

Internal

The entrance is bright and clean. A GDPR compliant signing in/visitors book is just inside the entrance hall. We were immediately asked to present ID and sign in.

The Manager's office is along the corridor from the entrance, as well as the kitchen.

There is a separate lounge area for residents at the front of the property. This has already been refurbished and although bright and clean would benefit from some artwork and soft furnishings as it appears too clinical. A selection of residents were watching television in the lounge during our visit.

Building contractors were also on site, building a new dining area for residents.

It was noted that none of the staff wore name badges. The Manager explained that the residents consider Holly Tree Lodge as '*their home*', so would feel '*unsettled*' should staff wear name badges, as it would create a different environment for them. Whilst we understand concerns, residents across a variety of care and nursing homes should consider the care home facility to which they reside as their home.

We observed there were no signs on doors.

Essential services

The Manager explained that new residents are supported by staff when they arrive and a basic support plan is drawn up re their needs, likes/dislikes etc. It was noted that these support plans are constantly reviewed and added to as the residents needs change. The care plans are in hard copy paper format; however, daily notes are completed electronically on tablets.

The Manager explained that when they receive a concern/complaint, they log it and follow the necessary steps in line with their complaint policy.

The residents that we engaged with said that they were happy living in Holly Tree Lodge and one expressed that "it's very nice here. I like it here". All residents appeared to be very comfortable around the staff and one stated "I love them". This was evident to see during the visit.

Access

The Manager informed us that she has an open-door policy and a good relationship with the residents. Whilst in situ we witnessed residents walking freely into the open office of the Manager and feeling very comfortable in doing so.

Staff assist residents needing to attend the hospital and GP appointments, as well as supporting them by attending trips to the supermarket, hairdressers, and barbers etc., when required.

Safe, dignified and quality services

It was evident that residents at Holly Tree Lodge feel safe and very well looked after. This was expressed by a resident who stated that they "feel extremely safe here" and another who reported that they felt "perfectly safe".

Of those residents that we spoke to who were verbal, they explained that they were very comfortable in speaking to the Manager whenever they wished to and that they have "never had any concerns".

It was observed during the time we were on the visit, mid to late afternoon during the week, that the residents and staff felt very calm and relaxed in the lounge, watching a tv show together. One resident was enjoying colouring with a support worker. This was a very comforting sight as it affirmed that residents were content in their home environment.

Mandatory core training was up to date for all staff and the Manager informed us that she is currently undertaking additional Mental Health training. She reported that the provider was very good in relation to training and development.

The staff expressed that they felt able to spend adequate time with all the residents. One staff member expressed that they could spend around "12 hours a day, sometimes more, with residents".

Information

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 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 open and relaxed communication between staff, residents, relatives, and senior management was clear to see, with plenty of laughter and smiles from all parties.

Choice

The residents that we engaged with all expressed that they had choice; this was from what food they were offered, what they wanted to drink, to being asked what time they wanted to go to bed. They choose their own clothes to wear and what snacks they would like to have during the day.

Activities are planned and include interaction with other care home residents and staff, trips to the seaside, shopping trips etc. The Manager hosts weekly resident meetings, where future activity suggestions are discussed. One resident expressed “If I wanted to go out anywhere, I’d go out” and another that they like “going to the town and retail park, the beach and the library”.

Another resident stated that they “pick whatever hairdresser I want to go to and book it”.

Residents are able to choose the contents of their bedrooms and soft furnishings.

One resident was eager to show us their bungalow in the grounds and it was evident they have a choice in what they like to put up on the walls, what bedding they choose etc. It was good to see that the resident was able to express themselves through posters and visual display of hobbies. However, we did observe how poor and dingy the current furniture, ensuite and small kitchenette were in the resident’s bungalow. We raised this with the Manager, who assured us that the bungalow, along with others, was included in the programme of refurbishment works, and that each resident room/bungalow was due to undergo major renovations. This will mean that residents have more of a choice in their furniture, paint colours and furnishings etc. When asked for a timescale for the works, noting the limited number of contractors on site and raising concerns based on this, the Manager also shared her concerns in regard to this issue.

Having been upstairs in the main building and being shown around a newly refurbished room, this was much better. The resident informed us that they had chosen their bedroom furniture set and had already got all their personal effects laid out. The furniture choice, flooring and décor was clean and crisp.

We were pleased to see a good variety of hot food options for the residents. These were chosen by them via a voting system at weekly residents meetings. Cook advised there are always additional options of cold, light meals such as sandwiches or salads. It was noted that if a resident changed their mind about having the hot meal option one day, they could ask Cook for something different.

It was also encouraging to see that residents (if safe to enter) were able to grab themselves a snack if they would like.

The residents are able to request whatever snacks/drinks/foods/toiletries they would like the staff to purchase in the big weekly shop. However, they can request support to purchase items on the day as well. For example, we observed one resident who said they wanted "Quavers and a sausage roll", so one of the staff members excused themselves and took them to the local supermarket.

If the residents have specific dietary requirements/additional needs, the staff work with relevant health professionals to ensure that these are managed.

Being listened to

The residents appear to routinely engage with staff and the management team, however, if they have any concerns, they speak to them as and when required.

Both residents and staff feel that they are listened to, with one staff member expressing "I feel confident discussing anything here".

Being involved

Nothing appeared to be frantic or rushed at Holly Tree Lodge which is testament to the wellbeing culture that the new Manager appeared to have instilled. As a small home, there was an aura of relaxation and calm, even despite building work going on and residents having a wide range of complex needs.

Residents appeared involved in decision making. This fosters the very obvious feeling for residents of feeling nurtured and safe.

Current challenges for the home

Only being in post since March 2023 and having been taken over by a new provider, this has meant a lot of change at Holly Tree Lodge, including the extensive renovations and need to update the process for recording documentation.

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

One of the staff members expressed that they would like to see "more varied activities" for residents. We discussed with the Manager the benefits of attending local day centres for residents with Autism needs and specific hobbies.

One resident commented that they would "like to have a little snack sometimes in the evening but I can make myself toast if I want."

The Manager shared that aside from the issues mentioned above, they would like for the front garden overgrowth to be dealt with as soon as possible to create a welcoming environment, and for the bedroom refurbishments to be undertaken swiftly as some of them were well below par.

Apart from these minor comments, most other residents reported to feeling very content at Holly Tree Lodge, had a great relationship with the Manager and staff and reported that they would not wish to change anything.



Recommendations

- 1. Front garden** – Due to the unsightly looking front garden, despite the ongoing building works, we would recommend a garden tidy up and temporary signage. This would improve the aesthetic and visibility of the front of Holly Tree Lodge from the road for visitors, staff and residents.
- 2. Clear plan and timeline for programme of works** – We recommend that the Manager seeks further clarification from the new provider on the proposed timescales to undertake the programme of work, paying particular attention to residents personal living spaces.
- 3. Decor** – Other homes that we have visited have shown visible signs of personalisation in the décor, through having artworks, photographs which were meaningful to residents and soft furnishings. We recommend that these items are considered for Holly Tree Lodge, in regard to the rooms which have already been refurbished to eradicate the clinical feel.
- 4. Badges** – We recommend that Holly Tree Lodge looks to implement the inclusion of a notice board being erected in the entrance hall, with photos of each staff member and their role. Name badges to be worn in the format of the “My name is” yellow badges, featuring first name only.
- 5. Activities** – We recommend that Holly Tree Lodge requires more investment in a formal activities programme, looking at the educational and wellbeing requirements of residents with complex needs.

Provider Feedback

Thank you for your visit, it was lovely to welcome you to the home and for your feedback on the service we provide. It is nice to receive an outsider’s point of view on Holly Tree Lodge, and always good to hear feedback on what we can improve on too and what is working well.

In regards to the works that are being carried out at Holly Tree Lodge, this was happening every day from March until August, we have decided it is only fair to allow the service users a break in their own home from all of the contractors and noise for a few months. The works on the bungalows will start in the springtime, when the weather is nicer and after the service users have had that break from the works. The front garden was also tidied up a few days after you had left, when I had informed the maintenance team of the feedback we received.



healthwatch

Bedford Borough

21-23 Gadsby Street
Bedford
MK40 3HP

www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

t: 01234 638678

e: enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

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