

“The Health and Social Care Champion for East Sussex”  
Tel: 0333 101 4007

**Name of care home:** Woodlands, Beacon Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1UD

**Date and time of visit:** 14 December 2017 from 10.30am until 1.00pm

**Names of authorised representatives:** Phil Hale and Chris Marks

## 1. Introduction

Healthwatch is the independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public on issues relating to health and social care. We have a legal footing, as we were created under the Health and Social Care Act. Part of our responsibilities is to ‘enter and view’ health and social care establishments and services, to seek the views and experiences of people receiving a service.

The focus of the visit was twofold:

1. The degree to which residents were involved in the choice of care home.
2. The level and ways in which residents are actively supported and enabled to make choices and decisions and to be as independent as possible.

This visit was part of a programme of visits to care homes, numbering in total between 40 and 50 care homes. An overarching report will be written on general conclusions from all these visits and made public on our website.

## 2. What we did

- We met with the manager
- We had a tour of the building
- We met with a group of three residents in one of the small lounges and three other residents in the dining room, just prior to lunch

## 3. What we saw

- The premises are purpose built and are bright and light, with good natural light. All bedrooms are for single occupancy and have an en suite facility, which includes a wet room. A number of bathrooms are available throughout the premises, near to bedrooms. There is a very good choice of communal areas. These include a main dining room, lounge and at least three other

lounges. There is also a chapel and a sensory room. The care home has the benefit of a dedicated hairdressing salon. There is a bar area in the main lounge.

- We saw artwork done by residents on the walls in many lounges. Much of this was in a room where many of the activities take place. This room has a memory board, which includes a photo of the residents with a brief outline of what they used to do.
- We saw several containers with bulbs just beginning to grow. These were put together by residents and some had the name of the resident on them.
- A white board in the dining room was used to inform residents what the choices were for the meals on the day of the visit as well as staff on duty.
- The dining tables were well presented, with flowers on them.
- We observed a carer going to support a resident, as they were not happy about something. The carer spent time with the resident, putting them at their ease.
- We observed residents being offered a choice of drink with their meals as well as a choice of what they wanted for lunch.

#### **4. What people told us**

##### **Residents told us:**

- Residents confirmed that they could bring in what they wanted when they moved into the care home. One resident said they had “an empty room so could bring everything”.
- They said they could make all their own decisions. They gave the examples of what time they got up, go to bed, where they spend their time during the day. They confirmed that they have a choice at meal times and can choose something else if they do not like any of the options. One person said they can have a cooked breakfast if they want this. Another resident said that she does not like potatoes, that the care home knows this and provides an alternative.
- One resident said they help in the garden and enjoy this. They like gardening and used to do this a lot.
- They said there is something to do every day, a different activity. They have a document every month with a list of what’s on. They find this helpful.
- Residents described the staff as very good.
- One resident told us that they would like to go to a regular meeting at hospice in the weald, as they used to go there before coming into the care home. This was passed onto the manager, who agreed to investigate this.
- There is a residents’ meeting each month. Some said that they attend these meetings, whereas others said they choose not to go.
- Residents said they can have their own phone line in their bedroom and also have a television. One person said it was difficult to have a television in her bedroom due to poor reception. This was reported to the manager who

thought there should be good reception in all bedrooms and would investigate this with the resident, who had previously said she did not want a television in her bedroom.

- One resident thought the care home could be improved if they got an exercise machine.

### **The manager told us:**

- The care home is registered for a maximum of 40 residents and at the time of the visit there were 36 residents. Most of the vacant rooms have been booked, but people are tending to wait until after Christmas before moving in.
- The care home takes people on respite care and currently has seven such residents. Many new residents come direct from hospital and so it is difficult for them to visit before moving in. However, the manager explained that one person visited the home a number of times including staying for a meal, before making the decision to move in permanently. Where people themselves cannot visit, a relative will visit on their behalf. They are given a brochure and other information about the care home, for the relative to show to the person, so they know where they are going.
- The manager explained that residents are given an empty room so they can furnish it themselves if they wish and are able to. They can also choose the colour scheme in the bedroom including painting the walls and the choice of curtains. Residents can bring in their pets and have, in the past, had cats and dogs.
- There are three GP surgeries locally and residents can choose which one they register with, if they previously lived out of the area.
- The home is producing a pictorial menu, to assist residents to make effective choices.
- Residents could have a kettle in their bedroom if they wished and had been deemed safe to do so.
- Residents are encouraged to help in the home. For example, one person likes the chickens and so helps collect the eggs. Another resident regularly likes to assist with folding laundry and laying tables.
- There are monthly resident meetings. These are used to get ideas from residents and also to inform them of any planned changes, to seek their views. An action plan is devised following the residents' meeting, to show what is being planned in response to the views and ideas from residents. This will be reported back to residents at the following meeting.
- Although there is no dedicated activities coordinator, carers provide a range of activities and external entertainers visit regularly. On the day of the visit, a singer was present. He is a regular and very popular with the residents. The main lounge was very full for his session. Carers have received training through 'oomph', which provides specialist training on activities for care homes. An activity plan for the month was seen in various parts of the care home, to alert residents what is taking place and when.

- The only limitation to movement at the care home is being able to leave the premise, as there is a key pad on the main exits. Those residents who have been assessed as safe to leave the care home unsupported are informed of the key pad code, so they can leave when they want. There is access to the garden areas at any time.

**Staff told us:**

On this occasion, we did not meet individually with any members of staff.

**5. Conclusions**

The care home is purpose built and offers single rooms all with en suite facilities and a good choice of communal areas. All areas seen were bright, light and welcoming. Residents were observed to move around the care home as they wanted to. Residents spoken with were positive about the care home and confirmed that they can make a wide range of choices. They were favourable about the staff and the food. Residents also confirmed that they are supported to be as independent as possible but can seek assistance at any time. Staff were observed to interact very well with residents.