

The Knowle Care Home Preston

Enter and View Report

Thursday 24th February 2022

10.00am - 1.30pm



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:

The Knowle Care Home

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Staff met during our visit:

Rachael Harrison (Registered Manager)

Date and time of our visit:

Thursday 24th February 2022

10am - 1.30pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Maria Lord (Engagement Officer)



Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Lancashire is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those that are hard to reach and seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service. This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Lancashire (HWL) who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced. The aim is to obtain the views and experiences of residents, relatives and staff and observe and assess the quality of services.

The team compile a report reflecting observations and feedback. Healthwatch Lancashire is an independent organisation, therefore we do not make judgements or express personal opinions. The report identifies aspects of good practice as well as possible areas of improvement. This is sent to the manager for their opportunity to respond. Where appropriate, Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. The report is then published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk and sent to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank Rachael Harrison, the staff, residents and relatives of The Knowle Care Home, for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

General Information

The Knowle Care Home is privately owned by PH Care Group (Kim and Philip Rogerson.) At the time of our visit, there were twenty-four residents, but the service has the capacity to support up to thirty-two residents.

They provide care for people over the age of sixty-five, who are affected by dementia, old age, physical disability, or sensory impairment.

Methodology

The Enter and View representative made an announced visit on Thursday 24th February 2022 and spoke to seven residents and three staff members. Six relatives completed and returned our questionnaire.

Healthwatch Lancashire obtain the views and experiences of residents, relatives and staff. Conversations with each are adapted to capture individual experiences to help assess the quality of services. Conversations with residents were structured around four themes (Environment, Care, Food and Activities). Conversations with staff included their experiences of staffing levels, support and training. Relatives were asked to speak about their general experiences including how they feel about the service, if they feel involved and informed. The team also recorded their own observations on the environment, facilities and staff-resident interactions.

Summary:

The Knowle Care Home is housed in a converted Victorian property, with the addition of a purpose-built extension. It is located in a quiet, residential area on the outskirts of Preston town centre, which is accessible by public transport. The care home has the capacity to care for up to thirty-two adults with dementia, old age, or physical disability. A new registered manager has recently been appointed.

Interactions between staff and residents were observed by the Healthwatch Lancashire representative to be both caring and professional, with all residents appearing settled in the environment at the time of the visit. All seven residents spoken to during the visit, expressed that they were happy at The Knowle. Two residents conveyed how pleased they were with the changes since the new manager had taken over and explained, *“It was good before but now it’s fantastic!”* and *“Look - tablecloths, flowers on the table. It’s made a difference.”* It was made clear to the representative that there was a weekly menu and activity schedule. However, residents were not consistently aware of choices, and even though this information was displayed, it was quite small and not very prominent. One resident did not think they were able to go out enough, although they thought that this was largely due to the impact of the pandemic.

All staff spoken to explained that they valued person centred care, choice and autonomy for residents, with comments such as *“the residents come first”* and *“staff really do care.”* However, feedback regarding staffing levels was variable. Some staff felt there were times when it could be difficult to provide person centred care. The new manager explained that staffing levels were adequate for the needs of the residents but that some days are busier than others. She confirmed that she planned to talk to the staff about this at their next meeting.

Feedback from relatives was largely positive, with comments such as *“very satisfied with the service”*, explaining that the staff *“genuinely care”* and are *“friendly, caring and are providing the best care.”* Improvements suggested by relatives focussed on communication, although recent positive changes were recognised, and it was thought that the staff were *“more generally proactive in communication with families.”*

In the short time that the registered manager has been at The Knowle, she has already begun to make positive changes. For example, she has recognised that some of the internal décor is in need of refreshing, and has appointed a maintenance worker to resolve this. She was also clear in her aims to create an ‘Open Door’ policy to encourage the views of residents, relatives and staff. For example, the manager had met with residents to consult about menu choices and décor. She also discussed giving further opportunities for residents to have a voice in decisions made at The Knowle.

The manager explained that she welcomed staff feedback and discussed the introduction of a monthly team meeting, including a ‘Topic of the Month’ to share good practice. Regarding communication with relatives, the manager confirmed that she was keen to increase this and had already established email contact. There are plans to communicate more regularly by newsletter and the activities co-ordinator shared a recent initiative to involve relatives in creating a ‘Life story’ for their loved one. This will be displayed in their room, to enable staff to engage with residents and learn about their story.

Enter and View observations

The external environment

The Knowle Care Home is a beautiful, detached property converted from two large Victorian houses, with the addition of a modern, custom-built extension. It is situated in a quiet residential area, set back from Egerton Road. There is prominent signage to the front of the property, along with a small, well-maintained garden area, with wide borders for mature plants. To each side of the grassy area, is a tarmacked driveway, providing space for parking, in addition to any on-street parking available on Egerton Road.

Stone steps, with a wrought iron handrail lead up to the front entrance. This, however, was not the entrance currently being used, which was not clear for someone visiting for the first time. On exiting, our representative was able to use another, smaller entrance to the side of the property, which had been made accessible by a ramp.

It became clear during the visit, that the property also benefitted from additional outside space in the form of a courtyard garden (a secure quadrant, surrounded by the internal corridors.) The block paving makes it very accessible for those using mobility aids, and there is also a selection of benches, companion set seating, together with larger tables and chairs. Two residents and a member of staff explained that this was an area which was used for barbecues in the warmer months.

The internal environment/reception - first impressions

The Healthwatch Lancashire representative was given a friendly welcome by a member of staff at The Knowle. There was no obvious visitors' book to sign in, there didn't appear to be any hand gel, or provision of Personal Protective Equipment made available for visitors, although hand sanitiser was visible in other locations throughout the home. The hallway was clean and tidy, and led to a room with a seating area, where residents were being treated to a cut or style from the visiting hairdresser, which seemed to be very popular. Our representative was invited into the office to meet Rachael Harrison, the registered manager, who explained that she had been in post at The Knowle since January.

The observation of corridors, public toilets and bathrooms

The Knowle is split over two levels, with a staircase and a small lift for accessing the rooms on the upper floors. Our representative observed all corridors to be clean, free of clutter and accessible for a standard width wheelchair. The newer extension benefits from, spacious, wider corridors, with capacity to accommodate

larger wheelchairs. In the extension, the bedroom doors have been decorated to charmingly recreate the concept of a 'front door', and there is a comfortable seating area which looks out onto the patio. The current décor is very minimal, with walls largely bare. However, this is in the process of being addressed by the new manager, who explained they had already held a meeting to consult with residents about new paint and wallpaper and had added some small touches to give a more homely feel.

On the upper floor, there is a small landing area with single glazed windows, and this resulted in a noticeable drop in temperature. There was a dark residue on the ceiling above the window frame, but the manger explained that the area wasn't used by residents. They were also awaiting the start of a newly appointed maintenance person, who would be tasked to improve areas which were unfinished, tired, or worn, particularly in the old part of the building. It appeared that the manager was confident they could quickly make significant changes to the interior appearance of The Knowle, and they were clearly excited about how this would improve the experience for residents.

There are three public bathrooms and a shower room. There is one particularly large bathroom, with an assisted bathing facility. All bathrooms were observed to be clean and were fitted with modern facilities, although in the older parts of the building, paintwork in one bathroom needed to be refreshed, and small sections of flooring required completion. Again, the manager explained that this was going to be addressed by maintenance staff in the coming weeks.

The lounges, dining and other public areas

Since the arrival of the new manager, there have been some changes to how certain rooms are utilised. The manager explained that the room previously used for dining was fairly small, with an overspill area in a room further down the corridor. However, this area now contains comfortable seating, and there are plans to decorate it as a priority, to give it a 'café-style' feel. Relatives will be able to use the area when visiting their loved ones, and join them for tea and coffee. There are also two lounge rooms which are homely and comfortable.

The adjoining conservatory has recently been set up as a dining room, with ample tables covered with tablecloths, and decorated with flowers. The room has incredible natural light and also looks out onto the courtyard garden. However, it was observed that there was a leak from the conservatory roof, and a small pool of water was pointed out by our representative to a member of staff. It was explained that this was due to be fixed, along with alterations to the plastic roof which would ensure the temperatures in the conservatory do not become excessive in the warmer weather.

Observations of resident and staff interactions

Staff were observed to be very caring towards residents in their interactions. Residents in the lounge and other seating areas were observed to be comfortable interacting with the new manager as she was showing our representative around. One resident shared their delight at the improvements they had seen since the manager's appointment - *"It was good, but now it's fantastic!"* They continued, *"It's changed for the better since Rachael."* Staff could be seen smiling and laughing with residents, helping residents move between the lounge and the dining room, or return to their rooms when they wanted to. Staff were observed to be professional, and they were able to quickly identify if residents became unsettled and were able to adapt the support to the needs of the individual.

Additional information

On the day of the visit, it was noticed that there was a visiting hairdresser, which led our representative to enquire about other visiting practitioners. It was explained that there was a district nurse who came twice a day to see specific residents, and also a podiatrist who visited regularly. Dental treatment was currently carried out on an 'emergency' basis, but the manager explained that they were looking to register all residents with a local dentist, so that regular check-ups could prevent problems forming.

Feedback from residents

Environment

Two of the residents expressed that they were very impressed with the changes that had been made since the arrival of the new manager. One pointed at the table they were sat at and said, *“Look - tablecloths, flowers on the table. It’s made a difference.”* Another resident talked about being able to sit and socialise, and explained, *“It’s like what you would do in your own home with friends.”* When one resident was asked if they liked their surroundings, they smiled and said, *“It’s quite fine for me.”* Two residents explained that they felt it was *“comfortable”* and one shared that they had helped to choose the new paint.

Activities

A recent change to the location of the dining room had allowed additional space for an activities room. Residents were observed spending time with the activities co-ordinator, who explained that she had been in post since December. Four of the seven residents our representative spoke to, talked about the activities co-ordinator, with three ladies proudly showing off the manicure they had received that morning. One resident talked about going to play bingo, cards or dominoes. They continued to explain that not all of the residents join in but *“it’s open to everyone.”* One resident was incredibly appreciative of the help they were given with reading, and they loved going to spend time with the activities co-ordinator. Two residents were not sure what activities they did. However, the activities co-ordinator explained that there were different activities available each week and a timetable was displayed on the noticeboard and also delivered to each resident. Resources for activities could be seen, including aqua painting, bingo and picture scrap books to spark reminiscence.

When our representative asked residents about different things they would like to do, one resident shared that they don’t go out much, but were looking forward to going to the church opposite the care home, as they had recently been invited. They were also keen to develop social relationships with others outside of The Knowle, and they added, *“We’d like to return the invitation.”* The activities co-ordinator explained that there was a dementia friendly café held there on the first Tuesday of each month, and they were also hoping for there to be a singing group at that time too. One resident talked about wishing they could go on a trip to Lytham to see the windmill. The same resident explained that they were hoping the canopy would be replaced so that they could have breakfast outside *“even when it’s raining, to get fresh air.”*

Care

All residents who wanted to share their views were extremely complimentary towards the staff. One resident explained, *“We get on well with all of them”*, and another added *“They’re lovely, they are.”* Residents could be seen smiling and laughing with staff members, and one commented *“We have a laugh. You have to have a laugh!”* Another resident explained that they had cared for others throughout their life but explained that now, *“I’m being cared for, and I can put my feet up!”* Two residents commented on individual staff members who happened to be walking by, saying, *“She’s fantastic!”* and *“She’s lovely. They really are good.”* A further resident said, *“I have a nice life.”* One resident explained that they weren’t always able to recall the names of the staff and wondered if it could help to have name badges.

Food

Comments about the food were positive, although it appeared that residents weren’t always clear about if they could choose what they wanted to eat and the responses they gave were varied. One resident explained that they had been involved in deciding what was on the menu but wasn’t sure what they were having to eat that day. Another said, *“I think we’re having hotpot.”* When asked about the quality of the food, one resident explained that it was *“very good”* although another said, *“it varies.”* When discussing choice of meals, one resident didn’t think they were able to choose and thought it was quicker to serve everyone if they all had the same, and it meant that the dining room was *“not as packed.”*

Views of relatives and friends

How do you feel generally about the service?

On the whole, feedback from relatives was very positive. One relative was pleased that the “*best interests*” of their loved one was “*at the forefront of the care in the Knowle.*” Another explained that they were “*very satisfied with the service, and the welcome given when phoning and visiting.*” One relative shared some of the thoughts expressed by their loved one, and explained that they were “*content, not just generally, but also with the quality of care.*” They added that the team “*work with a person-centred ethos.*” Staff were thought by one relative, to be “*friendly, caring and most understanding*” and were viewed by another as providing “*the best care.*” One relative described the service as “*generally ok*” but also added that their loved one was “*happy there.*”

Three relatives referred to the restricted visiting throughout the pandemic, and two recognised that their ability to see things first-hand, had been limited. However, one was very impressed with the “*pre-emptive and rigorous restrictions*” which they believed to have reflected “*care for both residents and staff.*”

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

Praise was given to the new registered manager, with one relative appreciating the fact that they are “*more generally proactive in communication with families as evidenced by regular emails.*” They added that they had also been asked to give input into their relative’s review. Another relative said that they were kept informed “*by emails and phone calls.*” Two relatives shared that in the past, any issues had been “*dealt with promptly*” and they felt they were “*told straight away.*”

The lack of regular communication from staff was mentioned, and one relative referred to there being frequent staff changes. They explained that this made things particularly difficult during the period of restricted visiting, and they had wished for more updates during this time. However, one relative added that they were always informed by telephone if there had been an event requiring immediate attention, such as a fall.

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

There were mixed responses from relatives when it came to their understanding of the complaint procedure. Two of the relatives said that they knew how to make a complaint if needed, and one said that they were not aware of how to do this. Two relatives praised the improved levels of communication by the new manager, with

one explaining, *“I am sure that any problems there might be could be sorted out before any complaint has to be raised.”* This was echoed by a further relative who explained that they would consider a formal complaint to be a last resort, and it was hoped that issues could be resolved through direct communication with staff at the home.

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

Three relatives recognised that involvement in activities had been impacted by the pandemic, although one commented, *“I am sure that in the future I will be able to join in where appropriate.”* One relative was complimentary about the display of activities on The Knowle Facebook page and explained, *“They do seem to do plenty of activities with the residents.”* However, another thought there were only occasional updates on social media. Our representative observed seven posts throughout the month of February, although there were none in January. Pebble painting could be seen on display in the activity room, and one relative also confirmed, *“I have seen and received many of the craft items done.”* Another shared that they had seen special decorations linked to activities or pictures on the walls, but that they thought this was infrequent.

Would you recommend this service to others?

All relatives spoken to said that they would recommend The Knowle to others. One explained *“I would wholeheartedly recommend The Knowle Care Home to others!”* and another said, *“Absolutely! I have just recommended The Knowle to a friend.”* Additional positive comments included one relative praising the environment, *“The home is not too big, and I feel that when I visit it feels homely and comfortable, which is how it should be.”* Another commented on having confidence in the care provided and stated, *“I don’t have to worry about mum while she is there.”* One relative said that they would recommend the service, although with some reservations linked to communication. However, they acknowledged that the carers are *“doing a difficult job well”* and they *“genuinely care.”*

Staff views

Do you have enough staff when on duty?

All staff spoken to confirmed that during the day there are two senior members of staff and three carers, and at night there are no senior staff and two carers. The manager had explained to our representative that senior staff are 'on call' during the night, and also referred to the possible introduction of a 'twilight shift' from 5pm until 11pm. One member of staff explained that, because no two days are the same, there are some days when it feels like there are enough staff and others when it doesn't. Another member of staff talked about the fact that all staff working at The Knowle, regardless of their role, had completed mandatory training, which enabled them to support if necessary.

Do you feel supported to carry out person centred care?

All staff were clear about the importance of delivering person-centred care. One explained how they really wanted to get to know the residents, including their history, so that they could provide activities which were tailored to things they enjoyed. Another talked about the importance of residents making their own choices, including when they get up, what they wear and the food they eat. Another talked about the importance of record keeping using the Care Management System, but that sometimes staff would complete this after shifts had finished, in their own time. For all staff, "*the residents come first*" and to complete during shift time would impact on person-centred care. However, it was also expressed that this could impact staff having to juggle responsibilities and this could be stressful.

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

All staff felt they had enough training to carry out their duties, with one saying that they were very happy to have appraisals to identify training needs, explaining "*They're a good thing!*" Two members of staff felt they had regular training and that mandatory training was up to date. However, they also explained that the majority of the training was online, and although this did not affect the quality, it was completed by staff at home in their own time.

Are you happy working here?

One staff member commented *“I’m very happy!”* and another explained *“I love it here - it’s so much better when you love your job.”* Another member of staff explained how much they enjoyed caring for the residents, but felt it could be beneficial if the staff got to know each other more, perhaps through team building activities. This would allow them to be sensitive to each other’s needs and enable them to know how best to support each other. Staff also mentioned about the recent recruitment drive and the appointment of new staff members, which they thought would be positive and help to provide stability.

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

Some of the staff spoken to said that they would recommend The Knowle. One said, *“We’re down to earth and we care”* and another reiterated *“staff do really care”*. Another felt a recommendation would only be appropriate for someone *“if they had dementia.”* A reason given for not recommending were because it was thought that increased staffing was needed to ensure a consistently high level of person-centred care.

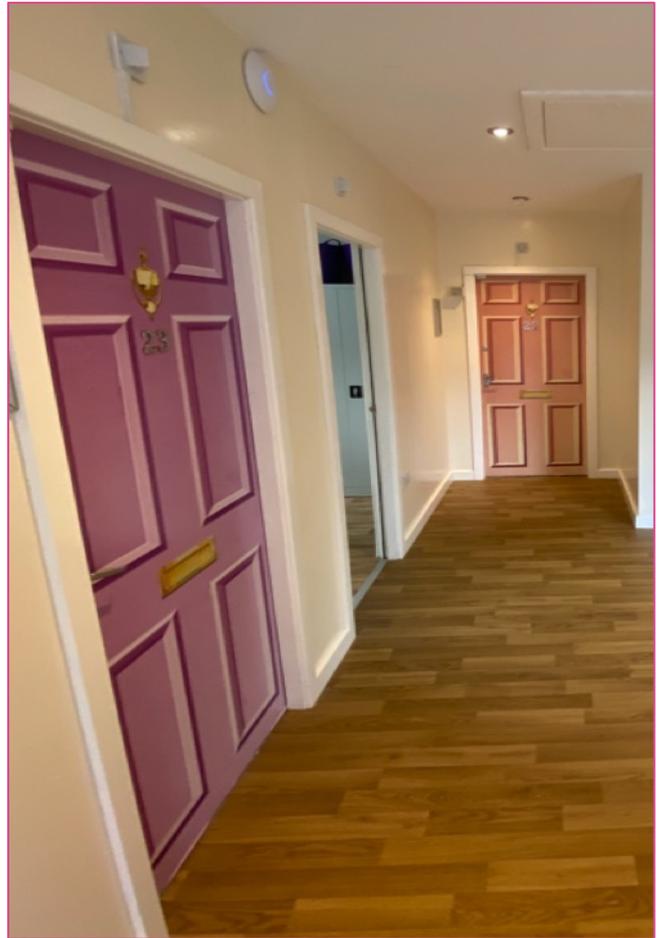
Areas for Improvement

The following areas for improvement have been highlighted from resident, relative and staff feedback. These are not Healthwatch Lancashire recommendations but rather, areas for improvement suggested by residents, relatives and staff.

- Consider providing all staff with clearly visible name badges for the benefit of residents and relatives.
- Build on recent improvements made in communicating with relatives and keeping them informed. For example: Facebook page; regular newsletter; noticeboards with information about activities, events, or visits (including visits from external practitioners: podiatrist, district nurse, dental hygienist, physiotherapist.)
- Ensure all staff feel supported to consistently provide person-centred care.

Pictures taken during the visit





Response from provider

Areas identified for improvement	Action from provider	When by	Comments
Consider providing all staff with clearly visible name badges for the benefit of residents and relatives.	These will be ordered by the head of care Karen Birch	End of MAY 2022	
Build on recent improvements made in communicating with relatives and keeping them informed.	Continue to email families with updates. Staff to ensure they inform families of any changes in the care plan.	On-going	
Ensure all staff feel supported to consistently provide person-centred care.	Continue with staff meetings. Involve staff in changes in the home. Continue with recruitment and allocate staff at busiest times of the day.	On-going	
Completed by	(Name) Rachael Harrison	Date	11/05/22

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