

Date of inspection: 16/1/13

SECTION: 1. A home from home at the Homestead

SECTION: 2. By Clare Medlock, compliance inspector

This was a planned inspection which followed our usual methodology. I checked the information we held about this provider before I went and walked up the road to work that day. I live in the same town as this care home, and have walked past it without really paying much attention before. What I found was a well maintained building set in 'the avenues' of Exmouth.

SECTION: 3. A warm greeting...

I was greeted by a member of staff who smiled and welcomed me to the home. She did not have that shocked look we sometimes see when we introduce ourselves as CQC inspectors. The manager appeared immediately and my day began.

After introductions and explanations, the manager took me on a tour of the home and provided me with a selection of care records to read whilst sitting with people in the lounge.

After reading a selection of care records and listening to what was going on it became apparent that people in the home were genuinely happy with the service they received, and it was a high standard of person centred care.

SECTION: 4. Little touches to make it a bit special...

The comments people made throughout the day showed that staff worked over and above the standard they were expecting when they moved to the home. One of my favourites was "They seem to know who I am and what makes me tick, as a result they seem more like friends".

I had many examples of how staff provided person centred care but was unable to include them initially in the report (for confidentiality reasons). One was that a person wanted to use their computer but was unable due to physical problems. Staff looked at this and with involvement of the family, put in 'Dragon' assisted voice recognition software - this resulted in an improved quality of life for this person. The home was full of little touches to make it that bit special. My favourite was personalised shelves for bed linen, so people could continue to use their own if they wanted.

Staffing at the home was excellent, and feedback about staff was also very good. When asked about the staff people used words such as "kind", "wonderful", "marvellous", and "attentive". One person said: "they are all, without exception, very good."

SECTION: 5. Grace, humility, and professionalism...

I have been to many lovely homes recently where I have seen excellence flourish. In fact I could write something like this about all the services I have visited in the past few months. However, I floated home that day enjoying the fact that such grace, humility and professionalism exuded from a wonderful group of staff.

Lyn Lambeth, the home's manager, told us: "We found the inspection to be very thorough, focusing in the key issues that affect our residents and the care they receive. In particular, it involved assessing the environment, talking to residents and staff about their experiences and reviewing our care systems." She continued: "We try very hard at the Homestead to provide a home from home atmosphere and the inspector appeared to feel this".

SECTION: 6. A well managed, quietly run, person-centred service...

I could not possibly write down all of the wonderful quotes people shared with me, often unprompted. The manager and staff were so professional. It was well organised and showed that they took pride in working at the home. What I judged at the end of the day was that it was a well managed, quietly run, active, person-centred service, where mutual respect was shared between people and the staff.

The provider was pleased that we noticed this, and Lyn said: "Clare also focused on our key systems and our care plans. For example, for one resident she read their care plan from start to finish - afterwards stating that she felt she knew everything there was to know about the gentleman from the plan. For us this was excellent feedback as we put a lot of work into ensuring the best care possible and genuinely emphasise a person-centred approach in what we do".

The home had previously been rated as Excellent. I know we do not currently rate homes – though this is being reviewed in our new strategy - but in my opinion, to maintain that level of excellence over many years is a real achievement.

Lyn added: "Overall, we would like to thank Clare and the CQC for their positive feedback and an inspection that we found to be very thorough, robust and genuinely concentrated on the needs of our residents".

To see the original source, please go to: www.cqc.org.uk/node/747215/

To find out more about the Homestead, please contact our Registered Manager, Clare Titley, who has taken over the great work Lyn was doing. Contact details can be found on our website www.homesteadhomes.co.uk