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This matter is being dealt with by Jacqui Old – Tel: 6437317

Peter Kenrick
Chair
Healthwatch North Tyneside
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6 June 2016

Dear Peter

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to comment and respond to the draft report on activity provision in residential and nursing care homes in the Borough.

As you know the Enter and View Volunteers have been supporting the Council with its approach to Quality Monitoring assessments of residential and nursing care homes in the Borough for some years now. Their input is both valuable and complimentary to the formal monitoring activity undertaken by the Commissioning team and I would like to offer my thanks to the volunteers for this work and the production of their report.

In general my overall view is that this is a well written report which is supported by relevant examples of good practice guidance from NICE, CQC and other organisations. I do however think that it may have been helpful to include within the summary a statement of what Healthwatch hopes the report will be used for e.g. to share good practice; to highlight areas that need improvement; and to help people to understand what happens in this area within care homes in North Tyneside. In addition some examples of the good work that is taking place, as well as the areas for improvement would help to provide some balance and reflect that whilst improvements are needed there is none-the less some positive work happening already.

Whilst the report contains a lot of qualitative information, it would be useful to have some quantitative information too. This would provide those reading it with a sense of the range of scores in those areas where homes were performing better, as well as those where improvements are needed.

In terms of factual accuracy I have the following comments:

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There are 30 care homes in the Borough, although I appreciate that the figure quoted in the report reflects that a visit was undertaken to Cleveland Park, which has subsequently closed. I also understand that that 2 visits and reports for Princes Court were produced, with a separate one being undertaken for the health beds in that home. The reports/comments have now been combined and therefore the working in the report will need to reflect this.

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There appears to be two identical actions:

Encouraging participation in planned activities

Improvement is needed in care homes taking a structured approach to identifying those who are at risk of social isolation and taking proactive action to prevent any impact in resident's wellbeing.

Provision of meaningful activities for those confined to their room

Improvement is needed in care homes taking a structured approach to identifying those who are at risk of social isolation and taking proactive action to prevent any impact in resident's wellbeing.

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A comment is made about care homes which are "operating below *minimum standards*, did not use information gathered to tailor and provide meaningful activity". It is not clear which *minimum standards* this comment relates to. Should this read *minimum expectations* (as defined in the Healthwatch tool)?

Turning to the recommendations, it was pleasing to note that within the report there were many areas of good practice that the Enter and View visitors were able to highlight and it is re-assuring to see that some homes appear to be making good progress. However as acknowledged we need to ensure that this good practice is shared and that we are able to improve the overall performance of all homes in this particular area.

In respect of the four recommendations, the report is timely in that we are currently in the process of updating our care home specification and we have the opportunity to incorporate the spirit of the recommendations into the revised document.

Clearly the findings in the report demonstrate there is not one single, one-size-fits-all approach that will deliver the improvements required and that some of those homes that are performing better are taking differing approaches but still achieving the same positive outcomes for people living in the home. As a result I am therefore reluctant to be prescriptive e.g. in terms of specifying how improvements should be made e.g. ensuring that each home should have a dedicated Activities Co-ordinator, ring-fenced budget etc. I

will however ensure that the new service specification reflects the need for care homes to take a 'whole home approach' to providing activities and that on an individual level activities are person centred and are built into, and monitored as part of the care planning process taking into account potential barriers to participation and how these can be overcome.

I am also proposing that the Commissioning Team review and strengthen the 'pointers' that are incorporated within the quality monitoring process to ensure that we are able to monitor and keep track of progress in this area.

Finally I have asked that the team use one of the forthcoming provider forums to explore this area further and that we use the session to highlight areas of good practice.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JA Old'.

Jacqui Old
Director of Adult Social Services