

**Supported Living Provider:**

**Supported Living Address:**

**Date and Time of Visit:**

**Authorised Representatives:**

**Comfort Care Services (UK) Ltd**

**Stocklake, Aylesbury HP20 1AT**

**06.11.19 – 4.05 pm**

**Alison Holloway, Katie Everitt**

### Summary of findings



- Residents were very positive about staff
- Residents told us they are encouraged to be independent, but help is provided when requested

### The Visit

Primrose Lodge currently provides residential housing for up to 15 people across two purpose built large adjoining homes. We talked to 8 residents and 3 members of staff. We observed a further 3 residents and 3 staff. People who reside at Primrose Lodge may live with a mental illness, a learning disability, substance/alcohol misuse, or other complex needs.

### How people are treated



Staff were polite and encouraged residents to talk to us in the communal lounges. We saw one use eye contact, as well as words, to check that one person was still comfortable sitting with us. This staff member knew residents' names and appeared to have a good relationship with them. Overall though, staff left residents to their own devices. Different residents told us "staff are very good", "staff are flawless"; "I've kept out of hospital for (x) years because of the support they give me". "They're very good at their job." "They try to make you as included as possible." We were told that staff were consistent, and two staff, we spoke to, had worked at Primrose Lodge for 2 years. Some residents also said, "we're all friends here". "No one really disturbs you." One resident was very impressed that the owners give everyone a present at Christmas.

### Personal Choice



Staff told us residents get up when they want. Residents said they eat "when we want, what we want". We saw one resident eating ice cream, and staff eating, but no other residents were eating during our visit. One resident had made themselves a cup of coffee, and several went in and out of the back garden to smoke. Staff said that residents could cook in the kitchens with or without support whenever they wanted to. Residents said they can eat Sunday roast together, and yesterday they shared a carrot cake given to a resident by their relative.

A resident told us that staff encourage them to go out to a day centre and get involved in different things. Many went on their one-to-one time to the local supermarkets. One resident had been out to have their haircut earlier in the day. Some said they could only go out though when there was a member of staff available. Others said there were usually enough staff around at any time of day and night. Some said they felt anxious if they didn't go out with a staff member they trusted. A staff

member said they believed that everyone was registered to vote. They said people preferred to go to the polling station with a staff member rather than using a postal vote.

### Just like Being at Home



Several residents told us how often they visit family, many of whom were local. "Family can mix with staff and it's all friendly." One resident was going to their sister's later that evening. Residents can also move between houses to see friends and partners. However, a resident did say that all visitors had to leave by 10pm. They also said that visitors couldn't eat meals with residents in the home. Residents get an option to get a take away every other Friday .

We found both houses clean and tidy with ornaments in lounges and a small noticeboard on a corridor wall. A downstairs toilet also had pictures as well as words on the toilet door. However, we did find the houses too hot. A resident also told us that the quiet room was far too hot yesterday when they had attended a meeting in there. One resident showed us their ensuite room. This was clean and tidy, and they said they helped clean it. They said they had more help with things like cooking. Their room was personalised with photos. Another resident said that staff encouraged them to be independent. However, another said the amount of tobacco they could smoke was limited by staff each day.

### Privacy



Everyone we spoke to said staff knocked on bedroom doors before entering. When something needed to be discussed in private, staff talk with residents in the quiet room. However, one resident said they felt exposed when curtains were left open because the home is on a main road. They said, "You can always hear the main road" and they felt that people passing by looked in through the windows. "I already have to live with the mental health label." They wanted trees to screen the home from the pavement and road.

### Quality of Life



Residents said they had no problems getting to a GP or a dentist. They would walk to the practices in town. Staff would also help them make appointments and remind them to go. One resident told us they go to a day centre 4 days a week. Others talked about a trip to Bournemouth. Several said they would like more group trips. Some said they didn't have anything to do all day. Both lounges had the TV on, and we saw no other games or newspapers etc around. One resident did say he played cards though. Another said he went swimming and played golf and tennis. He would also like a croquet set. They did mention playing football in the garden and going for walks. However, these did seem sporadic. "I'm happy in general"

We were told that they celebrated Halloween and the home would be decorated for Christmas. However, they said nothing happened at Christmas.

## Recommendations

### We recommend that Primrose Lodge

- keeps the houses at a reasonable temperature reflecting outside weather conditions
- ensures times when visitors can arrive and leave, and what they might do on the premises, e.g. eat with relatives, are reasonable and reflect the wishes of individuals as well as the needs of all
- continues to encourage residents to become more independent and self-motivated
- closes curtains in communal areas when it goes dark, and looks to plant a few more trees along the front perimeter, to give the home a little more privacy from the main road
- introduces some more regular physical activity in the home; e.g., gardening, Zumba, dancing

## Service Provider Response

Thank you for your time, we hope you have found your visit useful and we appreciate your feedback. Please see our feedback below in response to your recommendations.

- keeps the houses at a reasonable temperature reflecting outside weather conditions

There is a thermostat located in the East side corridor of the premises, we recommend that this is kept at 21 degrees to ensure an ambient temperature. Following your visit staff have been instructed to check the thermostat twice per shift to ensure it has not been turned too high or too low. Notwithstanding the above there are both fans and heaters available for service users, staff and visitors to use should they be required.

- ensures times when visitors can arrive and leave, and what they might do on the premises, e.g. eat with relatives, are reasonable and reflect the wishes of individuals as well as the needs of all

Service users have been informed at their latest house meeting (these are conducted quarterly) to ensure they understand that they can engage with their visitors as they wish. Visitors are welcomed to eat with the service users however this is dependent on service user wishes and adherence of guests to the house rules which is published on the noticeboard and contained within service user tenancy agreement. Unfortunately we cannot permit overnight guests and visitors, all service users are advised prior to moving in and prior to signing their tenancy agreements.

- continues to encourage residents to become more independent and self-motivated

All service users are supported to become as independent as possible as detailed in their support plan and risk assessment documents. Comfort Care Services are heavily outcome focused and support service users through the journey of change towards independence (progress is measured using service user progress reports [daily, weekly & quarterly] in conjunction with the service users themselves). Support is provided to develop daily living skills and support offered is in line with service user need. This can be evidenced by how many service users have stepped down into lower needs services.

- closes curtains in communal areas when it goes dark, and looks to plant a few more trees along the front perimeter, to give the home a little more privacy from the main road



All staff have been instructed to close all communal area curtains at dusk. Further to the road widening on Stocklake recently our perimeter trees had to be removed to facilitate the work. However we have raised concerns regarding the privacy of service users and as result we have installed privacy fencing which permits a view of the road when inside the perimeter but from the road, inside cannot be viewed (fences have slanted slating for maximisation of privacy). Notwithstanding this we have fed this back to the landlord and have requested the planning of trees along the front of the fence. Net curtains are provided on every bedroom window prior to commencement of tenancy and service users are supported to maintain these.

- introduces some more regular physical activity in the home; e.g., gardening, Zumba, dancing

A program of activities is available on the noticeboard for service users. Service users are also encouraged to attend community activities i.e. Zumba, swimming, golf etc during service user 1 to 1 support. We offer horticulture sessions during spring and summer and have a glass dome located in the grounds to facilitate this.

---

### **Acknowledgements**

Healthwatch Bucks would like to thank the residents, visitors and staff at Primrose Lodge for their contribution to the 'Enter and View' style visit as part of the Dignity in Care project.

---

### **Disclaimer**

Please note that this report, on dignity in care, relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all residents and staff, only an account of what was seen and heard at the time.

---

### **Methodology**

This was an unscheduled 'Enter and View' style visit in that the care home were given up to 2 weeks' notice of our intention to visit but not the time and date. Authorised representatives noted what they observed and were told.

---