



Virtual Engagement Report
Holderness House
February 2021



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What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services which exist to make sure that people are at the heart of care.

We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved then share their views with those with the power to make change happen. Helping people find the information they need about services in their area is another of our priorities.

In summary, Healthwatch's main aims are to:

- Help people find out about local care.
- Listen to what people think of services.
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care.
- Encourage people running services to involve people in changes to care.

Healthwatch Humber Network

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, Hull, and East Riding have joined together to develop the Healthwatch Humber virtual care home engagement project to understand the experiences of residents, families, friends, and carers in care homes across the Humber region.

What is Virtual Engagement?

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the nature of Healthwatch's activities shifted from physical engagement to online 'virtual' engagement. We did not want to lose the opportunity to engage with care homes in this unprecedented time and wanted to have the voice of the resident heard. This has meant that all engagement with Holderness House occurred via online methods.

The promotional activity Healthwatch undertook to advertise the virtual engagement and to gain questionnaire responses, was done via the homes and Healthwatch's social media platforms. When the engagement took place, all the interviews with staff, residents and the registered manager were completed using online platforms such as Zoom.

Overview/Background

Holderness House is the former home of Thomas Ferens, one of the most famous people in the history of Hull.

Throughout his life, Thomas Ferens donated a large portion of his income to charitable causes (in 1920, he was donating £47,000 out of his annual £50,000 income) in order to reduce impoverishment in Hull.

He was a representative of Hull and a Member of Parliament for 13 years, throughout his career he was known for supporting the Suffragette movement and working hard to promote Women's Rights as well as to highlight the issue of trafficking of women and girls.

Thomas Ferens name is well known throughout Hull. The City's Art Gallery, is named after him. The University of Hull and Holderness House, his former homes, which he bequeathed along with £50,000 to be used as a "rest home for poor gentlewomen in reduced circumstances" upon his death in 1930.

Now, Holderness House is a residential Care Home for ladies. The home is registered to provide care to a total to 33 ladies and currently cares for a total of 25. Following its last CQC inspection in 2018, it was awarded a rating of 'Good'.

The exterior of the home (minus an extension in the 1950's to increase the number of bedrooms and the facilities offered by the home) is unchanged, it also boasts a number of original features such as a large library, a grand staircase and fireplaces from when the home belonged to Thomas Ferens. The home is surrounded by 6.5 acres of land / woodlands and is secured by a mixture of original stone barriers and metal fencing.

The home is a registered charity and is overseen by a Board of Trustees and the Holderness House ladies committee.

Methodology

Healthwatch undertook research prior to inviting Holderness House to participate in the Virtual Engagement.

We looked at a range of care homes throughout Hull to see what COVID-19 information was displayed on their website and whether it displayed how family and friends can contact residents. We also looked online to understand what social media platforms they had and how family and friends were being kept updated on the residents' wellbeing.

We contacted Holderness House to discuss the virtual engagement in October 2020. The care home agreed to participate and we started the engagement on 11th January 2021.

The first week of the virtual engagement was focused on promoting the opportunity to be interviewed by Healthwatch which was extended to staff, residents, family and friends and the following week was when the engagement took place.

We designed promotional materials such as posters and leaflets, sending them to Holderness House along with letters for staff members, residents, family and friends to distribute accordingly.

The week-long engagement commenced from Monday 18th January 2021. In total 12 people completed the survey, this included the Registered Manager, 7 staff members and 4 residents.

Interview with the Manager

We arranged to interview Wendy Jones who is the Registered Manager at Holderness House, she has worked at the home for 32 years and has been the Registered Manager for 24 years.

Visiting

At the start of the pandemic, Holderness House restricted visitors in the home and only allowed staff members and essential professionals to enter. The visiting restriction changed over time in-line with Government guidance.

Holderness House decided to go into lockdown two weeks before the Country went into national lock down in March 2020. Wendy advised that the decision was a joint one that was made in conjunction with the Trustees and herself. Wendy informed us that this decision was not taken lightly and they all believed that this was the best way to support and keep their residents safe. Furthermore, they thought this would prevent the virus coming into the home. Wendy firmly believes that the decision taken was the right thing to do at the time.

Wendy went on to say that the inner conflict that she endured, to ensure that all of the residents and staff member's health and wellbeing was a top priority at all times was a struggle.

"It was very scary, reflecting back on some of it. We were very frightened at what we were having to deal with and quite emotionally draining. It was such a worry for me that there was such a risk to our ladies but also to our staff, obviously they couldn't lockdown and they were coming into work and I had to ensure that there were enough staff and they were supported. It was very difficult and worrying because you've got families contacting you and saying 'don't let my mum get COVID.' there's also the staff who have families to go home to, so you had quite a lot of responsibility to keep everyone safe and you had to do everything humanly possible to keep everyone safe".

"The government were guiding us but even with that, no-one knew at the time what we were dealing with and that was the scariest part. Even with all the information out there, you sometimes doubted yourself and thought 'Are we doing this right or should we be doing something a little bit more'."

When asked how the decision to lockdown was communicated, Wendy advised that she ensured all relatives were informed about the changes via telephone and in writing, and that she also explained in detail why the decision was made. The home had introduced an appointment system that relatives could access to enable them to continue to stay in touch with their loved ones.

Wendy went on to say that when the restrictions were eased they were able to organise visits while still adhering to socially distancing measures.

When asked what the response was from family and friends and residents, Wendy told us:

“A lot of families did understand why we were doing what we did but some were upset and angry that they couldn't see their mum.

The restrictions were hardest on the families I think as it was a quick decision and it wasn't until time went on when we could do socially distanced visits where families had a lifeline.”

During lockdown, Wendy was able to maintain communication between residents and their family and friends by encouraging Telephone calls, WhatsApp video and by introducing window visits.

In summer, they were able to introduce garden visits. They used their wooden gazebo with Perspex screens which were fitted in the archways for protection. The ladies would sit in the inside of the gazebo and their family members would sit on the outside. The ladies could also use their summerhouse and the family members would adhere to the two metres rule. Wendy advised:

“We were able to do this for most of the summer and it was fantastic but some ladies didn't understand why there were a Perspex barrier and struggled with not having physical contact during visits.”

The main barriers the Ladies have faced communication wise was some Wi-Fi issues due to the building being older. However, Wendy advised that the Home have already upgraded their internet package and are currently waiting on a second upgrade to improve the signal.

“We did a family open day when we got the nod from the Government to say we could, we decided to do something like a drive-through open day, all the ladies were sat outside and their family members could visit as long as they maintained their distance; they were provided with refreshments in disposable cups, we had balloons and banners; it was a glorious day”.

“It was lovely to see family members and we had all the chairs exactly two metres apart and it worked fantastically. The family members said that they drove into the grounds and saw all the balloons and it put a smile on our faces. We had some music playing in the background and it was just perfect. I did say we'd do it again but obviously there's been more restrictions put in place since.”

When asked about her concerns around visiting, Wendy told us:

“We don't know who other people are socialising with and someone might be a carrier of COVID and not have symptoms, five ladies have had COVID in the past year but none displayed symptoms so it is a concern to us.”

Wendy explained to us that although necessary, she is aware the restrictions has had an impact on the resident's overall health.

“They're just seeing us and not seeing their families; we're not having any outside entertainment coming into the home so they're not seeing the normal amount of people they would otherwise see. It has had an impact on some more than others, some ladies' dementia is more significant and their understanding isn't the same as ladies who have lesser forms of dementia”.

“We sometimes get asked 'why have you got that mask on?' Residents with a better understanding have felt low at points and we've done our best to pick them back up again even though we're also feeling a little bit like that in our personal lives”.

“We spend time with them to try to engage with them, encourage them to participate in their hobbies and just overall trying to make sure they have something that they can be doing, as normally they would have a singer coming into the home and they'd go on trips. A lot of ladies have missed that and going out for a drive in the countryside.”

Outbreak Management (Including Testing)

Wendy was asked what measures they have in place to manage any outbreaks of COVID-19. Wendy advised that since the pandemic the home have used a lot of PPE to help keep people safe, she also told us:

“All the staff and visitors are all wearing Full PPE, and we are regularly checking the temperatures of all staff and residents, we are all changing our clothes before and after shifts, we have dedicated changing room for staff, regular testing of residents (every 28 days for residents, regular testing for staff and use of lateral flow testing, if needed”.

“We have Sengenix bins placed around the home, sanitising stations on the walls and PPE dispensers outside of all rooms. Any ladies who show any signs are tested along with staff to make sure they're safe.”

Wendy explained that when staff members tested positive, they were told to isolate at home and the ladies were asked to stay in their rooms for the time required. The process was the same every time someone tested positive. Some of the ladies who had severe dementia had 1-2-1 with one of the carers to make sure that she was safe at all times.

As some of the ladies have severe dementia and do not understand about the current restrictions and are unable to adhere to social distancing, they are unable to remain in their rooms. Wendy advised us that in these circumstances the ladies would have a carer with them at all times so they could walk safely throughout the home.

We were told that all staff members have routine testing on Thursday of each week and there has been no issues around testing. Some staff members did have antibody tests but not all, and some staff members had still not received their results. When asked if the home had experienced any issues with testing Wendy told us:

“The only issue around testing was when they were advised if they sent tests in on the weekend, they would receive the results faster; however, the results actually took longer to come back. We were also told that some staff have had anti-body tests but they have not received any results”.

When asked what measures have been put in place to support staff members who tested positive for COVID-19, we were told:

“If staff produce an isolation letter, they will be paid as normal to ease financial concerns.”

All positive test results are recorded in a log. There are processes in place so staff members know which residents have tested positive for the virus so all precautions can be taken. There is a separate process for staff members who test positive essentially, all records are confidential and stored safely.

Wendy went on to say, that they have a COVID-19 Team from the council who contacts the home on a weekly basis. In essence, they provide the home with advice and information and respond to any concerns that the home may have. The home is also responsible for completing a Capacity Tracker on a daily basis. The Public Health Team also contacts people who have tested positive for Coronavirus to offer advice and support. When talking about the contact received by the COVID-19 Team, Wendy told us:

“It was nice to have someone at the end of the phone who would ask 'how are you doing?' and 'is there anything we can do to help?'. We all said the same as the management team, it was just someone from the outside world trying to help and it was most welcome. We still have that support today and it's a bit of a lifeline to be honest.”

Changes in Care and Access to Services

It was evident by the conversations that we had with Wendy that the staff team have tried their best to keep all access to Care services up and running as normal. They have had no issues with district nurses doing their visits as normal. They were sent a care plan at the start of lockdown on how to care for specific conditions so that this would help to avoid more people coming into the home. Wendy told us that the staff were supported to carry out specific tasks and observed trained nurses carrying out the tasks several times to ensure they were confident and able to carry out the task independently.

Wendy told us that there had been some changes to the residents GP's and explained why:

“Before the pandemic we had 9 different GP surgeries for the ladies. I was a big believer that if the ladies wanted to have their own GP whether it be at Bransholme, Holderness road etc. but one of the things that came to mind at the start of the pandemic was that if we had poorly ladies, we'd have several doctors coming into the home.”

“We were given advice from NHS England and Local Authority to consider having 1 GP for a whole of the house which made sense. We had 17 ladies at one practice and we spoke to the other ladies and they were absolutely happy to move over. We even have a named doctor now, if anything good was going to come out of the pandemic, it would be this as I wish we had done it sooner as it's brilliant.”

Wendy also told us that every Thursday there would be a Virtual Tour with the Doctor and she would let the Doctor know via email prior to their online meeting which ladies they would like the doctor to see.

The only issue Wendy had was that all dentists' check-ups were cancelled.

Wellbeing

Wendy has recognised that her staff members have found it more stressful working during the pandemic and went onto say that it has also been emotionally draining for the team. Wendy felt this was mainly due to the staff members missing their own families and worrying about residents rather than the workload.

“It is worrying about taking the virus home or bringing it into work. When we had to tell the family members that their mum had tested positive for COVID, I think that was probably the hardest thing we've ever had to do. The residents were fine and had no symptoms but we would get asked 'how has that happened?' and 'who brought that in?' and I had to hold my hand up and say I truly don't know but all our staff do is go home, go to work and occasionally go to the shops like anyone else. It was difficult as family members have sacrificed a lot for the resident's wellbeing however somehow they still caught COVID and we just didn't have the answers to the questions they were asking.”

When asked about her own personal wellbeing, Wendy told us:

“It's caused me a lot of stress, sleepless nights, tears, and it's probably has made me a stronger person. Looking back now, from where we were in March 2020, we are far stronger and supported now than ever before; if anything positive was to come out of it, it's that we're much more closer as a team as we've supported each other and everyone has gone over above and beyond to get through it together.”

Support

We asked Wendy about the support that she and the home had received since March to date, Wendy told us that the Local Authority provided a lot of support throughout the pandemic and continue to do so.

“The lady and gentleman we spoke to from the Local Authority are always so upbeat, compassionate and caring. Always asking how we were (as staff) rather than just focusing on the home and took the time to listen to us and provide whatever information, advice and support that they could.”

The only criticism Wendy had was in relation to the beginning of the pandemic, she told us about her feelings of loneliness and that no-one knew what to do. At times she and the staff members found it quite difficult but they have all now started to adapt to the new way of working.

At the end of the interview, we asked Wendy what if anything had she learnt since the start of the pandemic, Wendy told us:

“Never to take anything for granted, take each day as it comes, you don’t know what you are going to be faced with and there is always another hurdle after that. We have gotten stronger and more positive thinking as we spent a lot of time at the beginning of the year in the unknown and worrying whereas now, we know what to do and what is expected of us and we focus more on what we are doing. That is what is going to lead us through the end of this pandemic.”

Observations

following the interview with the Registered Manager; we had a virtual tour of Holderness House.

The inside of the building is large and spacious, the entrance hallway contains a framed photograph of Thomas Ferens and original features such as a large sideboard and clock. It is clear that these are valued significantly by the home as the condition of both are immaculate despite their age.

The entrance hallway is an L shape, with the corner leading to a quiet area with six chairs spaced apart where staff and residents can sit; it contains a water cooler and a table. There is a grand staircase which is in good condition and a commemorative box halfway which contains papers honouring Thomas Ferens for all the work he did for the city of Hull.

The lounge room is large and spacious, with floor to ceiling windows on the far end; these windows look out onto the land surrounding the home. The room contains a grand piano which one resident (who is able to play to a high-grade) uses whilst other residents sit and listen. The room contains a large television, a dozen chairs and a sofa. At the time of the observation taking place, there were a number of residents seated in the room with a staff member in full PPE interacting with them.

The Registered Manager informed us that in this room activities such as bingo, family fortunes, 10-pin bowling, arts and crafts and flower arranging take place. These activities continued during lockdown, we were told that activities such as bowling was more difficult as the ball and pins would need to be cleaned on each roll and when the ladies arranged flowers, they could place them in their rooms or choose where they would be placed throughout the building.

The home contains an original library which is large, it has floor to ceiling bookcases and books originally owned by Thomas Ferens. The Registered Manager told us that the residents are free to enter the room at any time they desire and pick any book to read. There is also an original fireplace with a large mirror above in this room both of which looked well-kept and a table in the centre of the room, which has a Perspex barrier end-to-end and has been used for indoors visits, when restrictions allowed.

The Registered Manager informed us that when indoor visits take place, family members would come through the door which leads from the library to the garden and would sit on one side and the resident would be brought in from a separate entrance and be seated opposite; to ensure that everything possible is done to reduce the risk of transmission.

There is a spacious L shaped dining room which contains eight tables spaced far apart and photos on each of the walls. The room has a number of windows and captures a lot of light, has wooden flooring, the décor looked to be well-maintained. Each table is set out with plastic table cloth and placements. The registered manager informed us that the moment only two residents are able to sit at a table to reduce risk of transmission.

On the floor above the dining room is a sun lounge, corridor with floor to ceiling windows and four seats with views of the grounds surrounding the home. We were told that in the summer time the ladies love to sit and look out as it's a very warm area and when all of the trees have come back it's a very beautiful sight.

Below the sun lounge is a wooden gazebo, built during the pandemic to safely enable outdoor visits. The gazebo is large in size and has arches which can be fitted with Perspex barriers, the residents sit on the inside with their family members / friends sat on the outside.

We were shown one of the bedrooms, each bedroom has a single bed and can be personalised however the resident's desire. Each bedroom has an ensuite bathroom, containing a toilet and sink. Some of the rooms also contain their own shower. The bedrooms in the home have views of the garden and from the extension built in the 1950's, there is views of the main property as well as the garden.

Contained in the extension is also a small salon with a singular sink and chair where residents are pampered by a qualified hairdresser. We found throughout the home there is signage regarding to the use of sanitiser and PPE as well as sanitising stations placed on the walls throughout.

What did staff members say?

During the Virtual Engagement, we received feedback from a total of 7 staff members. Their experiences while working at Holderness House ranged from 5 years to over 10 years. There was one staff member who has worked at Holderness House for 21 years.

Overall, we found staff members enjoyed working at Holderness House and they felt their work was rewarding as they were making a difference to the lives of their residents.

“We work as a team and are always there to help each other out. The ladies are our priority and we always try and make sure they are happy.”

“I work with a lovely team of people offering help and support.”

Good Family atmosphere, everyone cares.”

“I feel that I have made a difference to our resident’s lives.”

“There is something different every day.”

Visiting

All staff members confirmed they were aware of visitation restrictions when lockdown began in March 2020. Initially, the only visitors allowed into the home were professionals.

The type of visits varied depending on the latest Government guidance. Throughout the different stages of lockdown, Holderness House allowed friends and family to visit their loved ones by allowing window visits, they used their library as a designated indoor visitation room and had outdoor visits using their summerhouse and gazebo during the summertime.

The exception to visitation rules was when a resident was at End of Life where they were allowed to have a relative enter the home regardless of current restrictions.

We were told that garden visits were facilitated by appointment only, staff members were present in the garden for the duration of the visits to ensure social distancing measures were adhered to.

Staff members told us that they were happy with the restrictions for visitors. Some of their thoughts are presented below:

“I like them to be honest (visitation rules) it’s not nice but it keeps everyone safe as you don’t know who is and who isn’t sticking to the rules and it reduces the possibility of things like COVID being brought into the home. It just makes it safer. It is sad but safety is what we need at the moment, it won’t last forever but for now it works and it keeps the ladies safe.”

“Whatever keeps everyone safe and protected.”

“I feel sad for our residents as some of them have expressed how they miss their families but understand how venerable they are.”

Outbreak Management (Including Testing)

Holderness House implemented several changes to protect staff members and residents as much as possible. We were told that staff members have to use the temperature check machine at the front door prior to entering the home, followed by increased handwashing / sanitising routines with extra sanitiser stations being placed around the building.

All staff members received training on correct PPE usage and additional training on how to change dressings to save professionals having to enter the home. However, they felt that right at the start of the pandemic there was a lack of supplies which was down to the supplier. Nevertheless, this issue was resolved fairly quickly.

“I like how strict it is, we have PPE outside each room, we have warnings everywhere, ‘all staff must change their PPE, washdown, use gel every time, and anyone not seen following these rules will be dealt with’. I like that, it makes me feel safe as that’s what stops it spreading. Plus, they created a new changing room so when we start and finish our shifts we change out of our regular clothes and the room is sanitised each day as well which is good and stops things coming into the home and leaving the home as well. There is plenty of PPE in storage and it’s constantly monitored by staff so if they see any dispenser is running low then they will grab a couple of boxes and restock it.”

All visits to the home were initially stopped in accordance with Government guidance (including non-essential professionals), activities with residents were socially distanced and only two residents were able to be seated at each table during mealtimes.

All staff members are tested on a weekly basis with two staff members were having an antibody test.

“We’ve had no issues with testing apart from one test coming back inconclusive so the test was done again.”

All staff members were happy to take the tests and there were no concerns raised.

We asked what the process was for staff members who tested positive and we were told, all staff members that test positive for the virus must self-isolate for at least 10 days and if they provided proof they could also receive their regular pay. Staff members must also inform their friends and family who they have been in contact with and vice-versa so all necessary precautions could be taken.

It was evident from the conversations that we had that all staff were very supportive of one another.

“Support was always available from staff and management team.”

“Full pay whilst in isolation, management would call and check to see how you are.”

“Staff would bring items if needed, ring to check up and make sure you are okay. Sent messages to each other.”

Changes in Care and Access to Services

Throughout the pandemic, the majority of staff members thought their job role had changed to some degree. They were more responsible for things such as making sure PPE was being used correctly and making sure that all the new safety measures were in place such as regular cleaning, daily sanitising and constant use of hand wash and hand sanitising. They also highlighted how much the residents activities had to change due to the restrictions.

“Activities have changed, when the home is in lockdown everyone is in their own rooms. It's basically just going from room to room trying to make everyone happy, the activities have changed and I think residents can be in low moods when they're having to stay in their own rooms. Obviously, it's for their own safety and you're explaining this but it is a bit different. Caring is the same really; you follow the same rules as you always have.”

“It was more difficult doing any aspects of care when wearing full PPE, difficult for our residents too when we wear masks, things took longer, didn't feel I could spend enough time with individual residents.”

“A lot had changed, the residents used to be able to play games in big groups and be able to touch things. Now residents can't be close to each other, can't have as many people doing activities together. Still doing games but it's more difficult. There's no entertainment anymore. Can't do the different activities we used to do in the summer anymore.”

The staff members also told us that sometimes it was difficult for their residents to understand them when they were wearing masks and at times they felt that they could not spend enough quality time with individual residents due to work pressures.

The staff members also told us that they had experienced issues obtaining PPE.

“Gloves sometimes were short but we always managed to have what we needed.”

“Activities have changed, when the home is in lockdown everyone is in their own rooms. It’s basically just going from room to room trying to make everyone happy, the activities have changed and I think residents can be in low moods when they’re having to stay in their own rooms. Obviously, it’s for their own safety and you are explaining this but it is a bit different. Caring is the same really; you follow the same rules as you always have.”

Wellbeing

We asked staff members about their own wellbeing and what concerns they had throughout the pandemic. The main responses that we received related to safety, this was in relation to their own families and the wellbeing of the residents.

“My main concern was transmission. My hands were bleeding at first when I was washing them that much. Too much to be honest. I would touch a handrail and I would be scrubbing it and scrubbing it. It was quite scary. I am better with it now, when you are providing care, you go into one room, come out and change your PPE, wash your hands but I am not as obsessed with it now as I used to be. I follow the rules and do it when I need to rather than constantly. I do this at home as well.”

Staff were asked if they felt that their views were listened to and they all responded positively to this question saying they all felt listened to.

“Yes, we can approach management at any time.”

“Yes, they would do everything they can to protect us.”

We asked staff about their overall experience of working in a Care Home during the pandemic, we were told:

“It’s hard work, but also enjoyable and rewarding. I enjoy working with the caring staff and the team leaders. We are also very proud of the fact we have had no deaths and very low cases of COVID due to the cleanliness of the house and team work.”

“It’s been such a strange experience, worrying, sad, not sure what to expect or what has happened when you next come on shift. Concerned for your own

family, for your colleagues and of course the residents that we care for but then feeling relief that lots of those have come through it and I keep having a negative COVID result. Looking forward to the vaccine and to hopefully some normality for us all.”

When we asked if there was anything else which could have improved their experience, staff told us:

“No, I think at the beginning we were informed of all the guidance and what we needed to do. I don't think there was anything which wasn't done.”

“Don't think they could have done more. Got a bonus at the start and at Christmas to say thanks which was nice.”

What did residents say?

During the Virtual Engagement, we received feedback from a total of 3 residents. The length of time the residents had lived at Holderness House ranged from one year to 3 years.

Changes to Care

We asked residents how they felt about living at Holderness House and if there had been any changes to the care that they receive. We were told by one resident:

“Wonderful. The care is terrific, it’s exactly what I needed at this point. It’s very comfortable, it’s like living in a first class hotel. The care has not changed, I feel safe and taken care of. I can push the button in my room and get a quick response from the care staff.”

We found that the majority of residents thought that their care had changed to some degree and this was mainly due to the visitation restrictions.

“The main thing I have noticed changed is that you can’t see your relatives but apart from that everything is fine”

“Quite a bit, can’t get out to the garden, staff are really busy so only see a couple of people a day to speak to.”

“We can’t have family and friends coming to visit all the time.”

“My care has not changed; I feel safe and taken care of. I can push a button in my room and get a quick response from staff.”

All of the residents interviewed thought that they were able to make their own decisions and that their views were listened to. When asked if they had a named carer, two of the residents told us they still had a named carer that they had prior to the pandemic, and one told us they had a variation of carers.

“I have a combination of who is on duty. There is one person who is responsible for you.”

“Not many decisions needed to be made regarding my care during the pandemic. I do not have a named carer.” -

This resident was not aware that she has a named keyworker and she believed she did not have that information in her room.

When we asked if they felt safe under the current restrictions, all the residents said that they did feel safe in their home.

“Yes absolutely. All the staff are obeying the regulations.”

It was confirmed that the staff members had informed the residents about the changes to their care, details about the restrictions and they have continued to keep them up to date.

“My care has not changed and there has not been much to explain beyond the restrictions and going out or seeing family. Any supplies brought into the home are in quarantine for 3 days. I can’t think of anything I have had to object or request.”

All of the residents apart from one that we interviewed were aware of the COVID-19 complaints procedure and they told us they also knew who to approach if they had a complaint. The residents confirmed that they were able to express their views and concerns throughout the pandemic and that the staff members listened attentively to what they were saying.

“I can’t go out- been in isolation for over 20 days- all currently in isolation as a resident had COVID. I have been in isolation before because I had a hospital appointment. I am in pain all the time with my legs and can’t get about as well. I feel like my views are listened to some of the time. I am also not sure of the COVID-19 Complaint’s Procedure.”

Access to Services and Testing

It was unclear by the conversations that we had with the residents as to whether access to care services had been affected by the pandemic. One of the residents told us they had changed their GP due to the pandemic and the other two told us they remained with the same GP.

“I changed my GP to one that is nearer the care home.”

“I was at one surgery before, now I have a group of doctors who look after the home. I don’t like it but have to accept it in the times we are dealing with.”

Unfortunately, none of the residents that we interviewed were able to tell us about their experience of a virtual GP appointment that were introduced during the pandemic.

“All medical appointments during lockdown have been in person and have occurred mostly at the home, but sometimes at the GP surgery.”

The residents interviewed told us about their personal experiences of visiting the hospital.

“It was very efficient; I was accompanied by a member of staff from the care home. I did not have to wait for long. I was pleasantly surprised with how good the NHS has been.”

“Had two scans at the hospital, it was fine, not many people around, doctor seemed okay.”

When asked about testing, all the residents stated that they have been tested for COVID-19 and we were told, none of the residents interviewed had had an antibody test.

Residents were able to articulate the measures that would be taken if they tested positive for COVID-19. They were aware that they would have to isolate in their individual rooms. Meals would be brought to their rooms. Their rooms would be cleaned on a regular basis and their bedding would also be changed more frequently. The residents were confident that there would be a lot of support made available from the staff members, if they tested positive for COVID-19.

“If you test positive the home puts you into lockdown and you need to be in isolation.”

We asked the residents, if they were aware of any of their friends and families had been tested for COVID-19 and what the process was, if they tested positive for COVID-19. The residents interviewed were unsure on both accounts.

Communication and Visiting

When speaking to residents about how they kept in contact with friends and family, they told us they had telephones in their personal rooms and they were able to maintain regular contact.

“I speak to my son and daughter over the phone in my room. They arrange the home visit with me in the garden during the summertime and there was a partition between us.”

“Telephones in the room and my son has got me an iPad so I can talk to him and the grandchildren. We do have the option for distanced visits outside, and distanced visits in the library and there is also a shed that can be used.”

We also asked the residents how they are feeling about the restrictions and not being able to see their friends and families in person.

“Things have changed and when I have had visitors we have had to stay apart. I can't hug my children. It upsets me to be honest.”

“Pre covid I would see my son and his partner and their daughter more often. We could play music in my room. The plastic barrier in the library is not quite the same for intimacy with family although they are given privacy by the staff.”

“Finding it upsetting and struggling with it, difficult not speaking and seeing people is really hard, feeling really down, not seen my daughter.”

Wellbeing and Activities

They were asked about their mental and overall wellbeing over this period, this is what we have been told:

“I could not wish for better care; I’m really pleased with everything that has been done for me.”

“I get very bored; I like using my laptop to see the outside world.”

“I take antidepressants at the moment. I used to knit and keep busy but finding it difficult now and feeling really low.”

We found that most of the residents felt their overall wellbeing had been fine and they did not feel isolated throughout the pandemic, some were upset with the restrictions but understood the home is doing what they can to help.

“I feel intellectually lonely due to limited exposure to people that I can talk to.”

“No, there is always someone here and you can hear people all the time.”

“Yes, sometimes I feel lonely especially when you can’t sleep properly. It’s been difficult but staff are great and come in regularly.”

We were told by residents that there had been changes to activities due to COVID-19, the home still provides activities such as bingo, quizzes, exercise routines but trips outdoors and having performers entering the home has been stopped. We were told by residents:

“I’ve been able to do quizzes, exercise routines etc, I like going shopping but can’t do that at the moment.”

“You’re not allowed to go outside and do the trips we used to do. No more singers coming into the home or entertainment, can’t do the buffets and BBQs like we used to do. My legs are bad so can’t get around much, have still gone to bingo every now and again.”

We asked the ladies how they felt about their future and whether they felt positive about it, all the residents seemed to feel positive as the vaccine roll outs are happening right now and they all already had their first dose of vaccine.

“Yes, I was vaccinated this week.”

“I don’t have any concerns about the future.”

We also asked residents whether there was anything which could be put in place by the home to improve their overall experience, we were told overwhelmingly that there was not, with residents saying:

“The home can’t put anything in place at the moment because they can’t have visitors or travel anywhere. Everyone in the home goes out of their way to be helpful and friendly.”

“Nothing. We are in an excellent place. Just wish I could see my family.”

Conclusion

From our observations and the information we received from the Registered Manager, the staff and residents, it's clear that there has been significant due care and attention given to safeguard the home against COVID-19.

It was also evident from our conversation with Wendy, that she took her responsibilities seriously, she was constantly questioning and analysing her decisions to ensure that the residents and staff members' safety was of paramount importance at all times.

The home did experience some issues with some supplies at the beginning of the pandemic but this has since been resolved. They have ensured that supplies on the floor are regularly checked and maintained by staff. There was clear signage throughout the home regarding health and safety requirements and sanitising stations placed along most walls.

It was clear during our interactions with everyone in the home that the care provided prior to and during COVID is very person centred, with the term family used often by staff members and one resident frequently comparing the home to a grand hotel. The residents we spoke to were in high-spirits overall, the only issue hindering their wellbeing was due to the restrictions imposed which limited social interactions and the activities available; although they understood the reasons why these changes have taken place.

When speaking with residents, they seemed comfortable in airing any concerns and the aspect of speaking to management seemed very informal, with one resident saying casually, **"I would just go speak to Wendy"**.

We found that the home consulted with residents and their families regarding their health care needs and the home was given permission to change to a single GP practice. This has been significant and has been highly praised by the home.

The Registered Manager also praised the COVID-19 Team for the support offered to them as during their phone calls they cared not just for the wellbeing of the residents but also the staff and manager.

Prior to the Virtual Engagement taking place, the home was already aware of Wi-Fi connectivity issues and had taken action to improve this. At the time of the engagement taking place, they were arranging to further improve the connectivity as there were points in the building where the connection is poor.

The home facilitated visitation where restrictions allowed, adhering guidelines and ensuring to keep family members and friends informed of changes to visitation and how to book an appointment. They built a gazebo close to the property so outdoor visits can take place safely and with permission was able to facilitate a "drive-

through visiting day” during the summer where residents were sat outside and family members could visit and speak to them (socially distanced) throughout the day.

It was obvious from our interactions with staff and the Registered Manager that there has significant concern over their own and resident’s wellbeing throughout the last year and this has taken an emotional toll. There was an outbreak of COVID-19 however this passed without any loss of life.

Recommendations

During our observation we were shown the grand staircase and were told that the residents are no longer physically able to climb the stairs. At the bottom of the stair was a rope which is there to act as a barrier. We would recommend that if possible that a more heavy-duty barrier is put in place as a rope does not feel secure enough to stop someone if they attempted to climb the stairs.

Registered Managers Response:

“Your recommendation has made me review the main hallway with the stair case and to replace the rope with something more substantial, I am now looking at all the opportunities for this.”

Prior to our engagement, we looked online to see what presence the home had and found that there was little in terms of social media. It may be beneficial for the home and family members / friends for there to be a Holderness House Facebook, Twitter and / or Instagram account as updates and pictures could be posted on there for residents loved ones to see.

Registered Managers Response:

“We have noted about your update on social media, as we do feel it’s a way forward to communicate with family and friends, we have been keeping in contact through facetimeing throughout the pandemic.”

As the main issue regarding the resident’s wellbeing and isolation was due to the visitation restrictions, we would recommend when possible (as per Government guidance) that lateral flow testing (LFT) is conducted to enable residents to have face-to-face visits with family. We would also suggest speaking to residents to see if there’s any specific activities or hobbies they may want to try to detract from the lack of outdoor activities (due to restrictions).

Registered Managers Response:

“We are now undertaking LFT on all our visits along with full PPE temperatures and all paper for them to sign, under the government guild lines at the moment we have two nominated family members for each lady we view as the

government lift restrictions, we feel that all our visits are going very well and the residents are enjoying seeing their families.”

We were going to suggest updating the website as previously there was little information regarding COVID restrictions however we’ve since found that the website has been completely redesigned and is much more appealing and informative.

Registered Managers Response:

“Our website has been updated now and will have further photographs within the next coming weeks as the lounge has now been redecorated and we are taking new photographs of the garden and our new gazebo as the weather is now changing, we have also prepared a maintenance and decoration action plan for all the further decorating.”

During a discussion with one resident who was supported by a staff member, we were informed that they did not know who their named carer was, with the staff member suggesting there should be a board in their room with their named carer written on. The resident insisted they did not have such a board so we would recommend every resident’s room to be checked to make sure this information is available to them.

We also found that some residents did not know of the COVID-19 Procedure, we would recommend that this is reiterated to residents so they are aware.

Registered Managers Response:

“We have reviewed all our residents’ rooms regarding named keyworker to ensure each room as a staff member photograph for their keyworker. As for the COVID-19 procedure I will produce a basic step guild for each resident to make them aware, we do feel we have kept them fully informed with all of this information but taking this on board I now feel maybe a written basic information for the residents to read in their own rooms to support them would be great.”

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull would like to thank Holderness House, Wendy the Registered Manager, all the staff members and residents who participated in this Virtual Engagement and our volunteers for helping us to make this a success.

Distribution

This report has been distributed to the following:

- Healthwatch England
- Hull Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Hull City Council
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Holderness House
- Healthwatch bodies within the Humber Network