

Follow-up visit to Hillside Nursing Home

We visited the home on Wednesday 9 October 2019 to follow up our previous visit to the home in May 2018.

The team were pleased to learn from the Manager (who had only recently taken up her post when the previous visit was undertaken) that an Assistant Manager and an Administrative Assistant were now in place, giving the Manager more support, and that staffing levels generally had improved, with the kitchen and laundry now fully staffed and a gardener/handyman keeping the garden tidy and carrying out day-to-day maintenance.

The Manager told the team of some staffing problems that had caused difficulties but were now resolved. The Manager said that she had received support with this from the home's owners.

Of the 55 beds in the home, all but four were occupied at the time of the visit. The team were able to look at some bedrooms, which were in fair order - floor coverings were being changed from carpets to wood, and curtains and bedding were gradually being replaced. Attention was being given to the décor; cream-coloured doors needed to be repainted but one corridor had been repapered with a red brick design, which was very effective. The Manager told the team that the doors would be attended to as the redecoration programme progressed. Toilets, which were not en suite, had a large red picture of a toilet on doors and the showers, had a large yellow sign. Dining room furniture was being upgraded. Some mattresses had been replaced and air mattresses, new bedrails and flexible beds which could be lowered or raised had been obtained.

Many of the residents are subject to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and the team were pleased to learn that the turn round time for obtaining DoLS through Havering Council had been speed-up.

Links had been established with students from Havering College and the local youth facility, My Place, who visited sometimes. A local supermarket supplied unsold flowers to the home so the Activity Co-ordinator could do flower arranging sessions. At the time of the visit, the hairdresser was in attendance and was

busy. A large board listing all the weekly activities was on display, together with several big boards of photos recording events which had taken place (birthdays etc). The home was supported by a GP practice in Dagenham with weekly clinics. The Manager had managed to secure funding for 6 wheelchairs, which had proved to be a big improvement in allowing residents mobility.

The team congratulated the Manager for having made significant strides in dealing with the many problems she had inherited. The place did not look tired as it previously had, the residents were tidy, the staff looked good and all greeted the team as they met.

The inner courtyard still needed attention: although several raised beds had been planted, one with herbs for the chef, apart from a few green plastic chairs and a table, most of the furniture was old. The big green garden at the front was lovely, and a heavy wooden new table and chairs plus 2 umbrellas were there; but the beds were in need of weeding. There remained an issue that this garden was open to the traffic (North Hill Drive is a busy road) and not safe for residents to use. As the Manager wanted to hold barbecues and have a play area for the children of visitors in the front garden, it would be essential to erect a fence and gates to improve user safety.

The team were surprised to learn of a lack of dental facilities for residents when they are immobile, a situation outside the Manager's control as (in common with other homes nationwide) NHS dentists were reluctant to provide a home calls service. This was an issue highlighted in July 2019 by the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch Havering will be pursuing the question of securing dental care for care home residents across Havering.