



Elton Hall Enter & View

March 2020

What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch England is the national consumer champion in health and social care. It was set up by the government to ensure that people's views about health and social care services are listened to and fed back to service providers, commissioners and to local and national government with a view to improving services.

Each Local Authority in England has its own local Healthwatch. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees aims to be a strong local consumer champion working with our partners to support:

- People to shape health and social care delivery.
- People to influence the services they receive personally.
- People to hold services to account.

We achieve this by:

- Listening to people, especially the most vulnerable, to help them to understand their experiences and what matters most to them.
- Influencing those who have the power to change services so that they better meet people's needs now and into the future.
- Empowering and informing people to get the most from their health and social care services and encouraging other organisations to do the same.

What is Enter & View?

Under Healthwatch regulations there is a statutory duty on the providers of publically funded health and social care services to allow Healthwatch authorised representatives to enter their premises.

The role of the Healthwatch authorised representative is to conduct visits to such services in order to capture the patient/customer experience and to make recommendations where there are areas for improvement or to capture best practice which can then be shared.

Enter & View is the opportunity for Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees to:

- Enter publically funded health and social care premises to see and hear first-hand experiences about the service.
- Observe how the service is delivered, often by using a themed approach.
- Collect the views of service users at the point of service delivery.
- Collect the views of carers and relatives and those of staff members working in the service.

- Observe the nature and quality of services.
- Report to providers, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the Local Authority, Commissioners, Healthwatch England and other relevant agencies.

Enter & View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but equally they can occur when services have a good reputation, so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

It should be noted that Enter & View is not the only way in which information can be obtained. The use of questionnaires, surveys and themed focus groups are other examples of ways in which Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is able to gather relevant information.

The purpose of this report

At the end of 2018, Healthwatch Stockton on Tees conducted a major piece of research, visiting 28 care homes for older people across Stockton to find out what it was like to live in a care home in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. Following this work a number of recommendations were made to care home managers and providers to help improve the residents, family members and staff experience of the care and service provided.

To view the report and recommendations please follow this link:

http://www.healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk/sites/default/files/final_report_with_appendices.pdf

Due to some communication problems at the time, Elton Hall was not one of the services visited. However we are aware that since this time, management and staff at Elton Hall, along with staff from several other services, have been working alongside staff from Stockton Borough Council's Adult Social Care Team to see what they could do to further improve the quality of the service being provided.

We were invited to carry out an Enter & View visit to Elton Hall by the care home manager to see for ourselves what has been achieved and to seek the views of residents, relatives of residents and staff members about the difference this has made to those people using the service.

Methodology

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees contacted the manager of Elton Hall to arrange a suitable date for this Enter & View visit. This was arranged for Tuesday 3rd March 2020. Prior to this a number of relative surveys, along with a supply of Freepost envelopes, were hand delivered to the home in order that these could be shared with relatives and friends of residents, giving them an opportunity to give their views on the service should they be unable to meet with us on the day of the visit. A number of posters were also left at the home in order to make residents, relatives and staff aware of our forthcoming visit. An online link to the survey was also provided on the poster. (Appendix 1)

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees staff and volunteers visited the home on the 3rd March 2020 to conduct the Enter & View and to speak to staff, residents and relatives, gathering feedback via surveys, one to one discussions and from observations made on the day of the visit.

Resident Feedback

During this visit we spoke to 14 residents, 10 of whom confirmed that they knew or would recognise the care home manager, whilst four said that they would not.

When asked ‘What do you think of the manager?’ the following responses were received:

- “Very friendly and approachable”
- “She’s very nice”
- “Fab”
- “She’s good and she listens to what you have to say”
- “Very competent”
- “She has helped me through a lot and I can talk through my problems with her”
- “Very nice, approachable. She walks around.”
- “I see her out and about”
- “She walks around and checks things. She smiles a lot.”

Residents were then asked ‘What do you think of the staff here?’ Without exception residents spoke very positively about the staff at Elton Hall, offering the following comments:

- “Champion - friendly, and we know each other”
- “Alright”
- “I have no complaints about any of them”
- “Very friendly”
- “All very nice, I can speak to any of them”
- “Very well led and any problems I have get sorted out”
- “They are excellent, very helpful”
- “Staff understand me and listen to me”
- “They are very good, helpful and efficient”

When residents were asked ‘Do staff have time to stop and have a chat with you?’ the majority of those who responded said that they did, although sometimes it would depend upon what else they had to do. Comments received included:

- “Yes they do”
- “Sometimes - it depends how busy they are”
- “Yes, when available. I can always talk over any little problems I may have with a member of staff.”
- “Yes they do”
- “Yes - always have a quick word”
- “Barely, they are too busy”

Residents were then asked ‘Do the staff have time to care for you properly taking into account your likes and dislikes?’ Again most respondents felt that they did

have sufficient time but this was not always the case. Comments received included:

- “Most of the time”
- “Yes, it’s not a problem”
- “No, I don’t think they know me half the time”
- “Yes, I think so”
- “Yes, they know what I like. Sometimes I get upset and staff know how to calm me down. I always get good care from staff.”
- “Yes they do”

The majority of residents told us that there was generally sufficient activity and stimulation for them in the home. They were asked ‘What sort of things are there for you to do or join in with in the home?’ The following responses were given:

- “We make Christmas cards and things for Easter. We have games and singing and dancing.”
- “I like to read and to go out in the garden”
- “I don’t like group activity but could ask to do specific things”
- “We have bingo and Mr Motivator comes to do exercises”
- “Various things, crafts, jigsaws, card games, dominoes. I made bird feeders for the garden with the activities co-ordinator.”
- “We play games and I feed birds in the garden”
- “Staff encourage you to join in with things”
- “We have keep fit and a singer comes in quite regularly”

Residents were then asked ‘Is it easy to join in the activities? Are you helped by staff if necessary?’ The following responses were received:

- “At all times”

- “Yes, it’s easy enough to join in if you want to”
- “Yes, definitely”
- “Yes, the activity people are brilliant. I’ve just made a relaxation bottle to help me sleep better.”
- “Yes, the staff help me”
- “Yes, the staff set up the garden so I could plant some flowers”

The next question asked residents ‘Do staff ever help you to go outside of the home on trips or to local services?’ Most respondents said they there was access to activities outside of the home, whilst three residents felt this could be limited or they chose not to go. Responses received included:

- “Those that can take care of themselves go on trips. We went to Redcar”
- “We have been on trips. Local café’s, Hartburn tearooms and to Seaton and Redcar for fish and chips.”
- “Ocasionaly we all go out together”
- “Yes, I go to the seaside, or to tea rooms. I have been for a pub lunch”
- “No - not very often”
- “Yes, we go to the seaside, I like that”
- “I choose not to go out on trips”

The home has a large, south facing garden, which several residents told us they enjoyed spending time in during the summer months. Some told us that they liked to go outside to feed the birds. They told us:

- “When it’s warm they open the doors and we sit out there all the time”
- “Yes, when the weather is good we sit outside with ice cream and lollies”
- “I don’t bother going in the garden but I could if I wanted to”

The next question asked residents ‘What do you think of the food here?’ Again, most, though not all, residents spoke quite positively about the food served to them at the home. They were also asked ‘Is there enough choice of what you eat and where you eat?’ with the following comments being received:

- “The food is very nice with a good selection. I can sit anywhere I want.”
- “We all enjoy our food”
- “It’s very good”
- “Generally it’s OK. I would soon complain if it wasn’t.”
- “It’s OK”
- “It’s very nice and there is a good choice”
- “I love it! There is a lot of choice and we can have a full cooked breakfast if we want it.”
- “I like the food - but not the mushy peas. We get plenty to eat.”
- “The food’s OK, we get two choices at every meal”
- “Food is OK but there is barely enough choice”
- “There is a good choice”

The next question asked residents ‘If you needed to see a doctor, a nurse, or other health care professionals such as a dentist or optician, is this arranged for you?’ All those spoken to felt that should they need to see a medical professional this would be arranged for them without any delay. One residents told us that he was quite regulary taken to both the doctors and the the hospital and he was always accompanied by a staff member.

Residents were then asked ‘Do staff listen to what you have to say about the care home you are living in?’ Again, all residents responded positively to this question, telling us that the staff would listen to them and take their views into account. One resident told us:

- “Yes, definitely”

The final question asked residents ‘would you like to change anything about the care home you are living in?’ The majority again told us that they would not like to change anything, and the following comments were received:

- “No, I’m very happy here”
- “I would like my family to visit more often and to bring the children as it’s lovely to see the little ones”
- “I can’t think of anything I’d want to change. It’s going well, the way it should be.”
- “Nothing I can think of. I’m very happy here, I’ve been in three other homes and this is the best.”
- “This to me is like living in a 5-star hotel”
- “No I’m happy. I’ve been here three years.”
- “Too many showers. I’d rather just sit peacefully and not get a shower every day.”

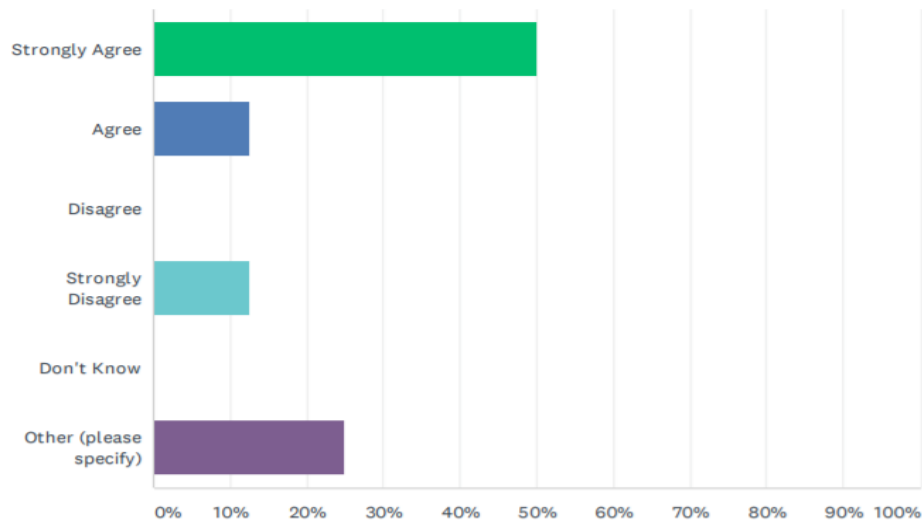
Relatives Feedback

During the course of the Enter & View we received feedback from eight relatives or friends of residents. Some was received directly from speaking to people on the day of the visit, whilst we also received some surveys back in the post and via the online link provided. Most of the feedback received was positive although there were two relatives who responded with concerns about certain aspects of the service being provided.

We asked ‘Is the care home managed well, and is the Manager available to talk to about any issues you may have?’

Q2 The home is managed well, and the Care Home Manager is available to talk about any issues I may have:

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



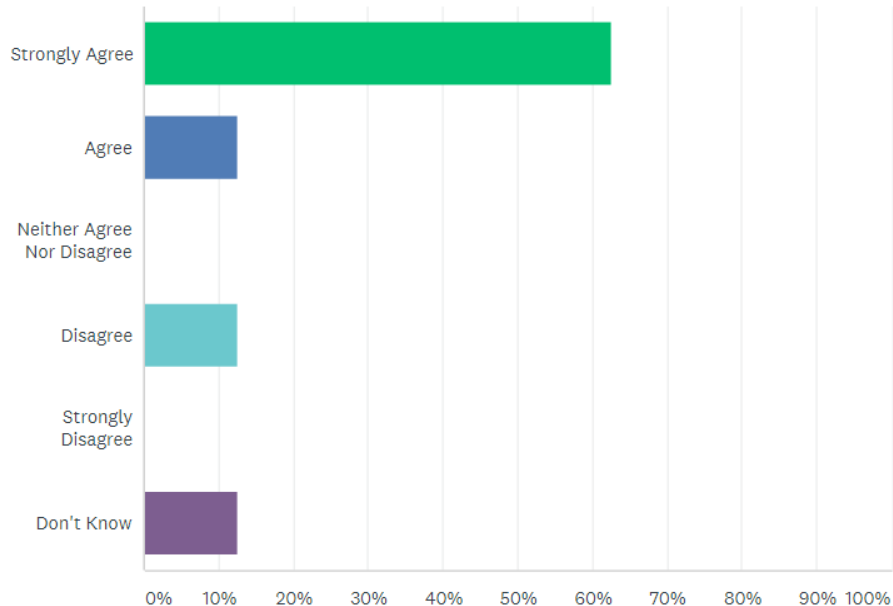
Most of those who responded to the question either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ but one relative said they ‘strongly disagree’ whilst another was unsure. The following response were received:

- “My mum is looked after exceptionally well and the care staff are 100% amazing”
- “It is a clean, well run, home. Staff are friendly and supportive, nothing is too much trouble for them”
- “Management are checking on my Dad and family every day. You can go to her with any issues”
- “All staff are very friendly”
- “The Care Home manager is approachable and friendly and always answers any questions we might have. However there are areas which could be managed better, such as, my relative never seems to be wearing his own clothes when we go to visit him despite the fact that we have paid considerable amounts of money out of our own pocket to ensure he is dressed correctly”

The next question asked do ‘the care home staff have the necessary skills to carry out their role?’ Again there was some divergence of opinion. Although most who responded said that they ‘strongly agreed’.

The care home staff have the necessary skills to carry out their role:

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



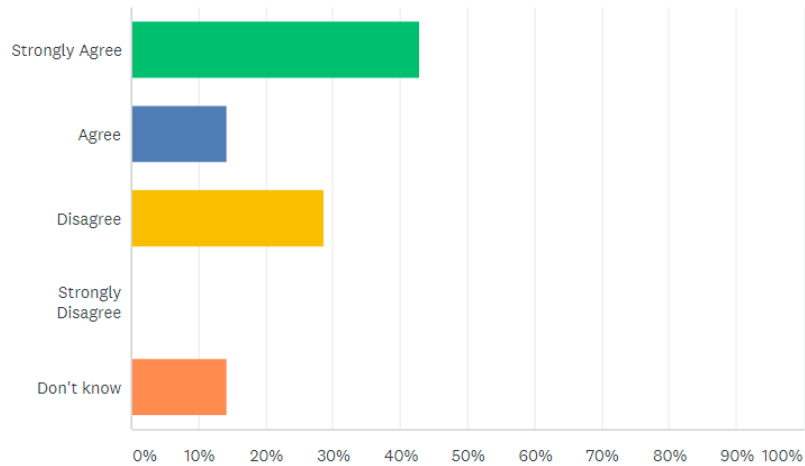
Comments received included:

- “The staff are lovely and always happy to help. My dad receives end of life care and they are very supportive.”
- “Mum has dementia and is very prone to falls. The care and attention is exemplary.”
- “Sometimes there are staff in the dementia unit that are not trained”
- “A lot of staff don’t seem to have the necessary skills”

We then asked ‘do the care home staff have the necessary time to carry out their role and meet the needs of residents?’ This question received very mixed responses, with some relatives telling us that they ‘strongly agree’ and others having very different views.

The care home staff have the necessary time to carry out their role and meet the needs of residents?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



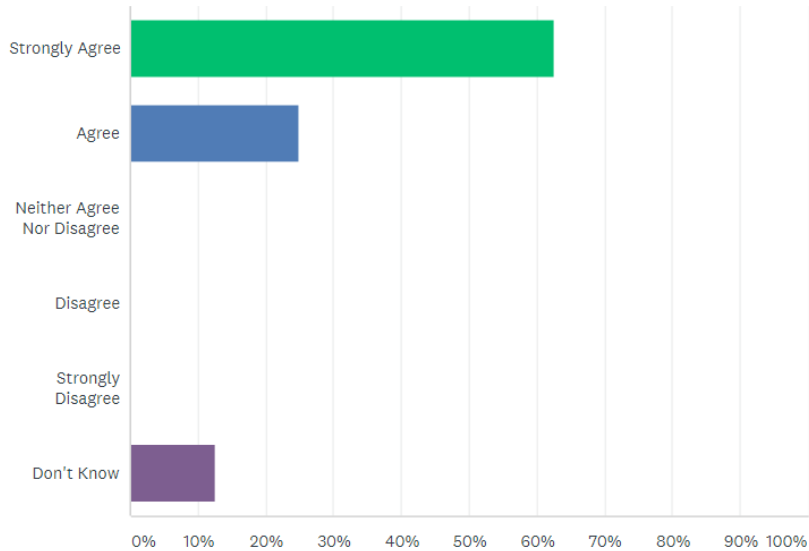
The following responses were received in response to this question:

- “Yes, they do meet the needs of residents”
- “The standard of care is very high and is carried out efficiently”
- “The staff go above and beyond their duty. Mum is safe, feels cared for, the facilities and unit are excellent. Mum really likes all the carers.”
- “Staff shortage happens a lot more than it should”
- “There appears to have been a reduction in the number of staff on duty in the last few months, creating a situation where those who are remaining are rushed off their feet. Our relative is often in a state where he is unshaven after at least two or three days, because staff haven't had the time to see to him that day.”

Next we asked ‘do staff involve residents, and where required, their family and friends, in discussions about their care needs and how these may change over time?’ Responses to this question were more positive with five relatives telling us that they ‘strongly agree’, feeling that relatives and residents were kept informed and involved. However one relative told us they had not had a meeting with staff for over a year.

Staff involve residents and, where required, their family and friends, in discussions about their care needs and how these may change over time.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



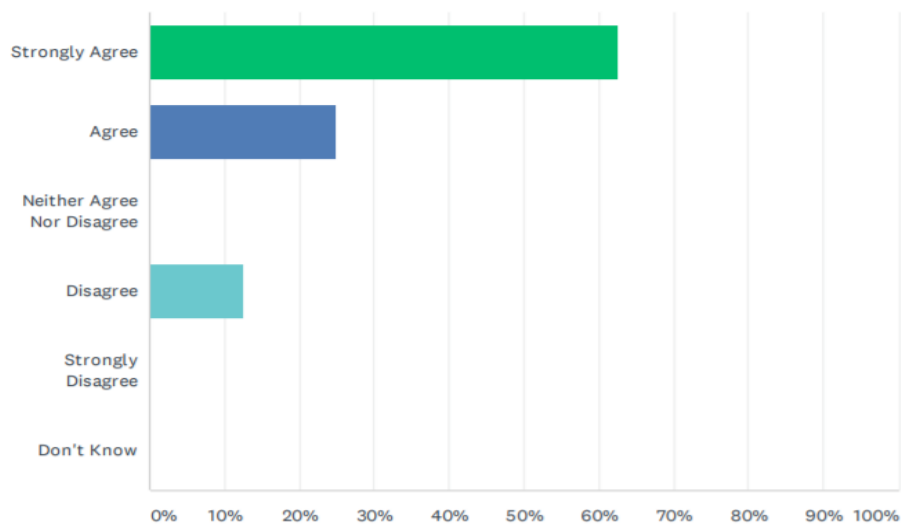
We received the following responses:

- “We could not have wished for a nicer home”
- “We do have "case meetings" with a member of staff but it is well over a year now since the last one which is too long as far as we are concerned.”

The next question asked ‘do residents receive adequate daily stimulation, including 1-1 stimulation tailored to meet the needs of individual residents, and is there is a varied programme of events for residents to enjoy?’

Q6 Residents receive adequate daily stimulation, including 1-1 stimulation tailored to meet the needs of individual residents, and there is a varied programme of activities for residents to enjoy.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



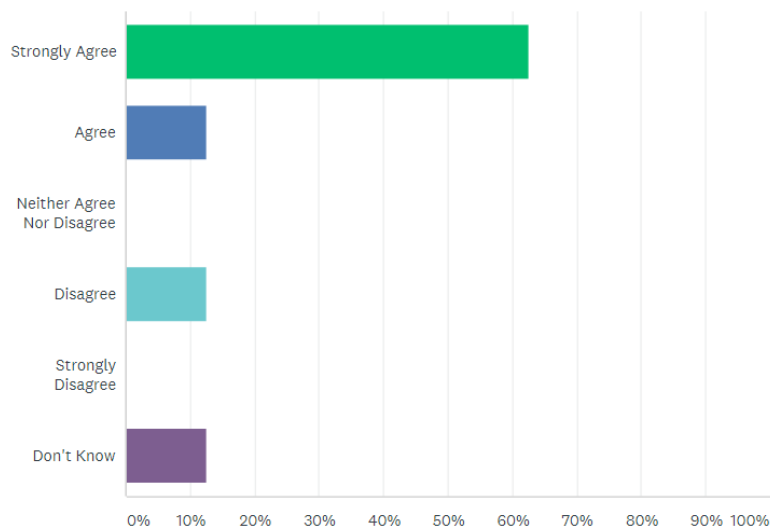
Once again, a majority of those who responded to the question did so positively, with five saying that they 'strongly agree', whilst one said that this was not always the case on the dementia unit. Comments received included:

- “There are regular events to stimulate residents”
- “The activities are outstanding in the home”
- “Something on every day for residents to enjoy”
- “Again, fantastic”
- “Only when certain staff are on shift, some don't bother”
- “Although there are plenty of activities in the residential area, this is not always the case for the dementia unit”
- “There appears to be plenty of activities that the residents can partake in, and guest entertainers are brought in regularly, but it is difficult to say there is any long term continuity in who is organising this”

We then asked ‘are staff able to support residents to get involved in activities or events outside of the care home environment where possible?’

Staff are able to support the residents to get involved in community activities outside of the care home environment where possible.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



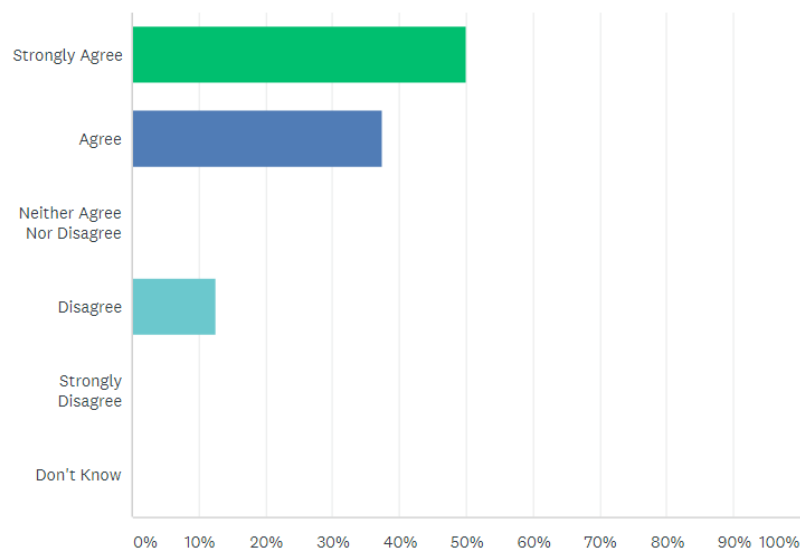
The following responses were received in respect of this question:

- “They take them out where they can shop or have meals. It’s really good for residents”
- Mum is not able to get out now as she has a high falls risk but the facility is there for those who can”
- “Days out are arranged regularly”
- “They have a mini bus that they take residents out in. Everyone gets asked to go and they sometimes include family and friends.”
- “It seems to be the same people who get taken out all of the time which is unfair on the others”

The next question asked ‘is there always a choice of meals available and is the food of an acceptable quality?’

There is always a choice of meals available and the food is of an acceptable quality.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Most relatives either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that the meals were of sufficient quality and that a choice of meals was offered to residents, although one relative did have a concern. The following comments were received in response to this question:

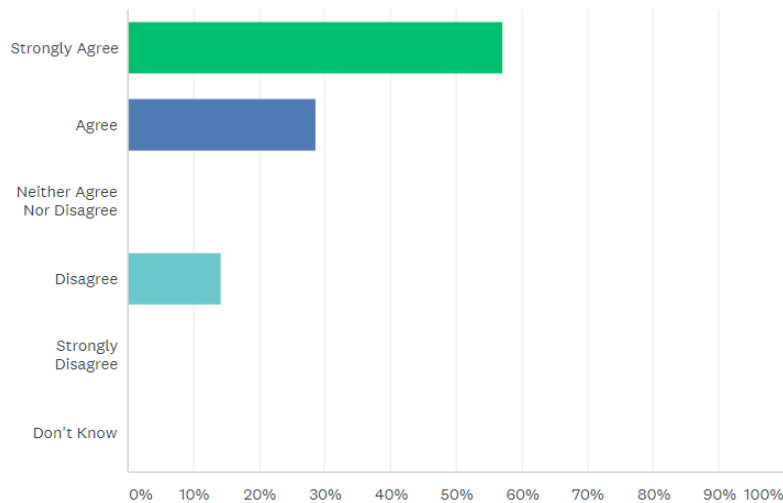
- “Good quality food and good portions”

- “Excellent meals”
- “Always the same types of food. I have seen donuts being left out for supper on more than one occasion with several residents having diabetes.”

We then asked ‘is there regular access to healthcare professionals, (nurses, doctors, dentists, opticians, chiropodists etc.) as required?’ Again, the same pattern emerged, with seven people who responded to the question telling us that they either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’, with one person saying that they ‘disagree’ - adding a comment that “the chiropodist doesn’t come very regularly. Doctors are rarely called.”

There is regular access to healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, dentists, opticians, chiropodists etc.) as required

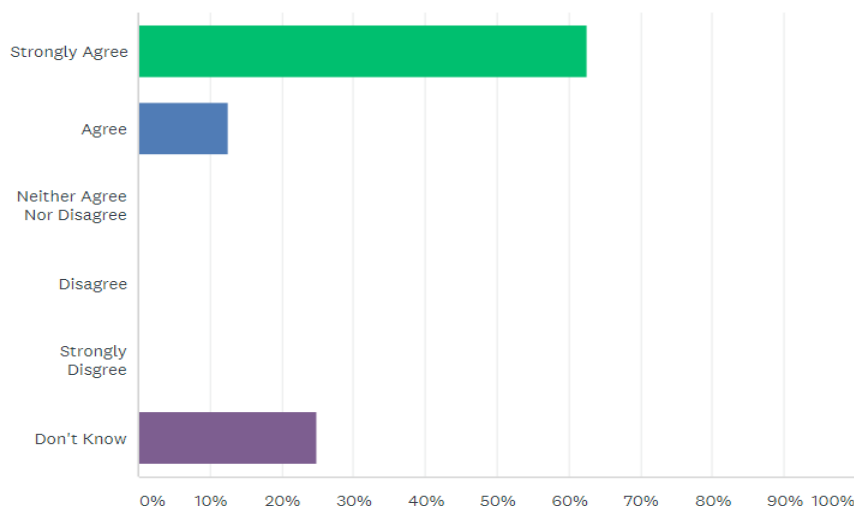
Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



We went on to ask ‘do care home staff listen to residents and relatives and take action based upon feedback received?’

Care staff listen to residents and relatives and take action based upon feedback received.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

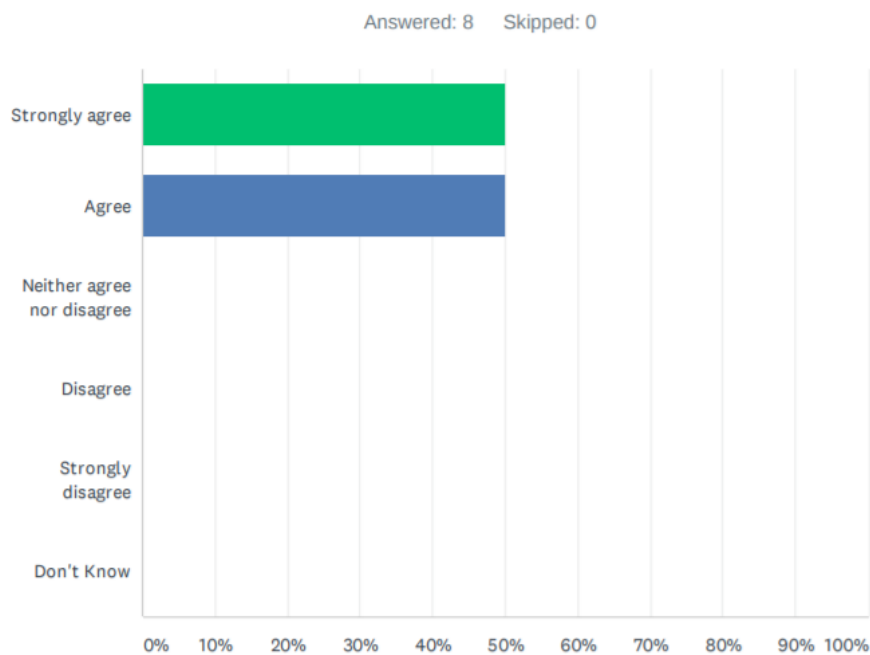


The following comments were received:

- “Very attentive to both residents and relatives. Cannot fault it.”
- “All staff and management are professional, friendly and very empathetic.”

We also asked ‘is there a clear and understandable complaints procedure which I have been made aware of?’

Q11 There is a clear and understandable complaints procedure which I have been made aware of.



Everyone who answered this question told us that there was a complaints procedure in place and that they were aware of it. Two relatives told us that they knew about it but had never had to use it as they had no complaints. However one relative told us:

- “The manager always says she will sort complaints out however nothing ever seems to happen”

Finally we asked relatives/friends if there was anything else they wanted to tell us about their care home experience. Whilst most people were highly satisfied with most aspects of care being provided at Elton Hall, there were two people who

responded who were much more critical, raising a number of issues, some of which have already been commented upon with the answers given to specific questions. The following responses were received:

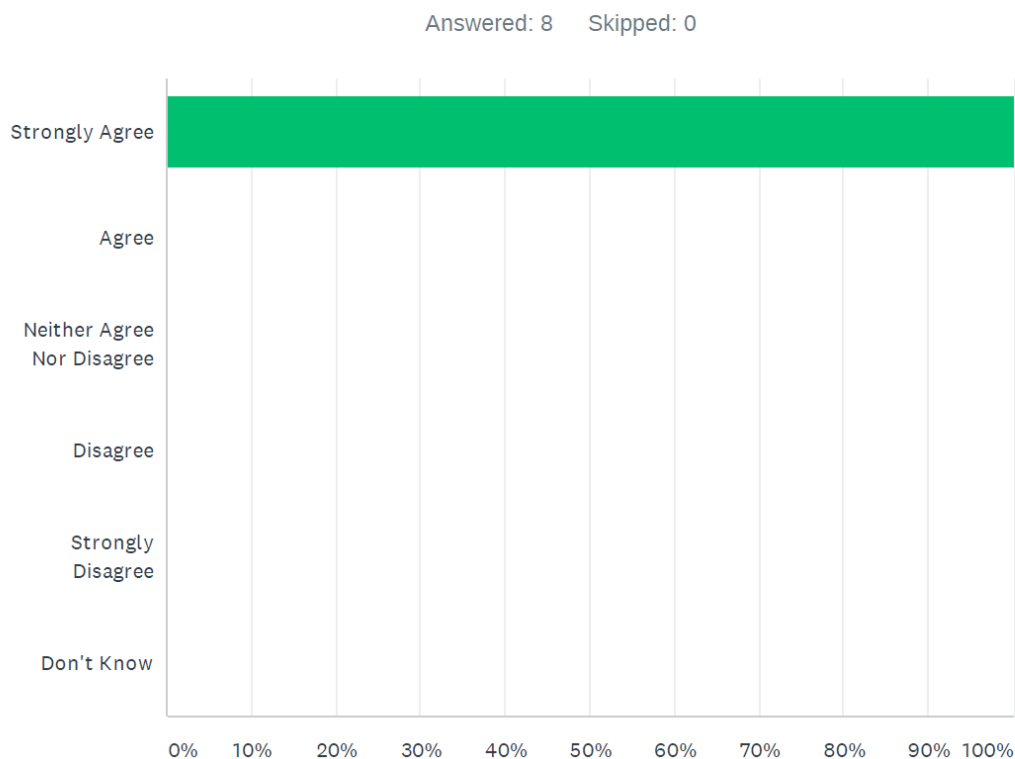
- “First rate home. All staff are understanding. Nothing is a trouble to them. Staff get on well with each other and work well as a team. There is plenty to keep residents occupied and they are looked after to the highest level. Hope when it is my turn to need a home it is as good as this one.”
- “Mum was initially in another care home. It was by contrast very disappointing. The manager was aggressive and rude and Mum had no stimulation and stayed in her room all day/night. Nobody sat in the communal lounge and Mum was filthy only getting one shower while she was there. By contrast Elton Hall is vibrant, stimulating and Mum is VERY happy. Myself and the rest of the family are delighted with Elton Hall.”
- “There are a number of concerns that we have regarding our relative, which I have touched on in this questioner. One of the biggest concerns, is not wearing their own clothes. There can be nothing more degrading to the individual and indeed the relative, than a person wearing someone else’s clothes because the correct ones have not been returned to them after washing. Further, it is a basic that a person should be washed and shaved every day and this doesn't always happen. Whilst the staff who work at Elton Hall are all undoubtedly nice people and try very hard there is an underlining feeling when visiting that the place is being run on a 'shoestring', and this has only been the case in the last few months. Having said all of that the most important thing to us is the happiness of our relative, and he is perfectly happy with the staff and his care.”
- “The same staff that have no skills when it comes to the job are still employed making the place unsafe. I have seen residents walking into the kitchen which has a numbered lock on the door designed for the purpose to keep residents out. Some residents know more about other residents care than they should. Some staff are absolutely wonderful, could not ask for better. However, there is more staff who are quite bad so it clouds the great jobs that the good staff do. The heating system is awful, some radiators don't even turn on, some don't turn off making the bedrooms unbearably hot. The staff turnover is the worst I have seen, a lot of good staff leaving and being replaced with bad. Sadly, I believe this home has went downhill in the past year by a long shot. It needs a manager that is going to do something about complaints, make good changes and make the home a better place. Sadly, this is not what it being received.”

Staff Feedback

Discussion took place with eight staff members, some of whom had worked at Elton Hall for a number of years. A lot of positive responses were received in relation to most of the questions asked and there was a high degree of staff satisfaction with the service provided to residents.

Firstly we asked ‘do you receive good support from the care home manager?’ All staff spoken to told us that they ‘strongly agreed’ they were well supported.

Q2 You receive good support from the care home manager?



Specific comments received included:

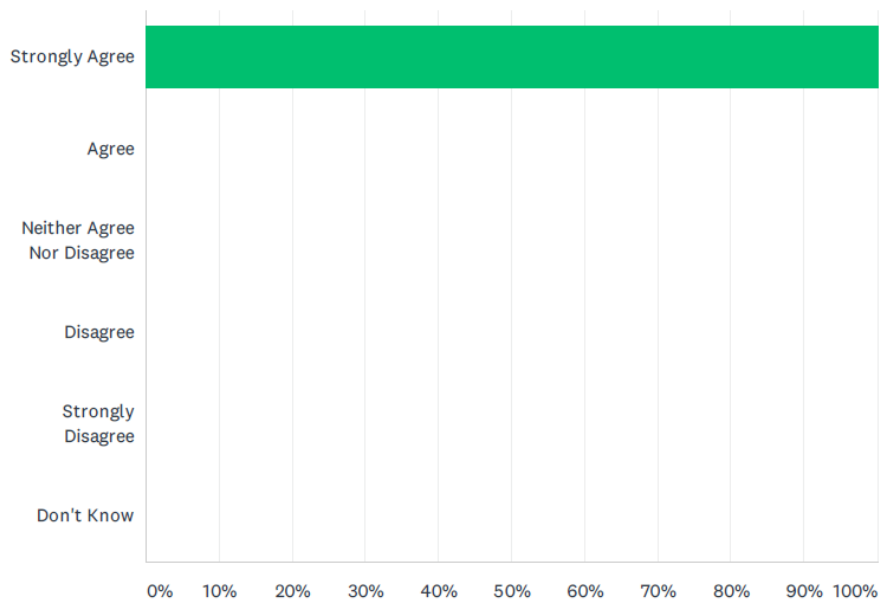
- “The management here at Elton Hall have always been extremely supportive”
- “The manager and deputy have supported me personally at work giving me specific support to help me carry out my role more efficiently”
- “Very good support. The manager has an open door policy.”

- “You can go to them with any problems and they are there for you”

The next question asked ‘are you able to talk to the manager when you want to ask a question or raise an issue?’

Q3 You are able to talk to the manager when you want to ask a question or raise an issue?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



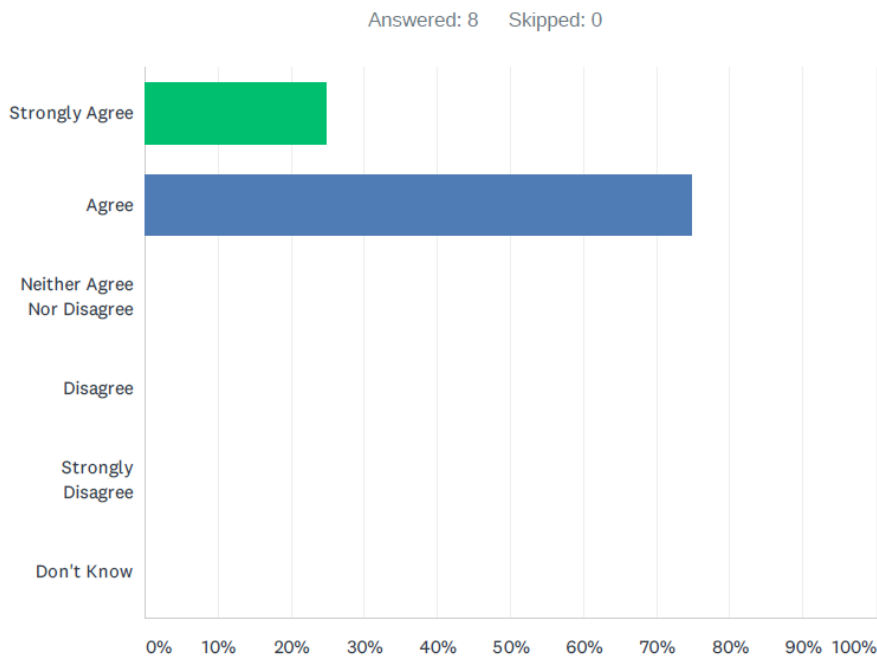
Here again, all responses were extremely positive with the following responses being given:

- “We are able to ask the manager anything”
- “She is always available - day and night if needed”
- “The manager has an open door policy and will always make the time if we need to speak to her”
- “She will try to help out with any personal issues if they arise”

We then asked ‘do you feel that you have enough time to care for residents and to meet their needs appropriately?’

All who we spoke to said they ‘agree’ that they generally did have sufficient time, although some days could be more difficult than others and the staff were often very busy... Some specific comments that were received included:

Q4 Do you feel you have enough time to care for residents and meet their needs appropriately?



- “If we are fully staffed it works well. If someone calls in sick they will ring around to try and get cover and 9 times out of 10 they manage to do so.”
- “Yes, generally, although occasionally non-care staff might be asked to help out with things like the tea trolley”
- “Most of the time, although an extra pair of hands would be helpful occasionally”
- “Some days are better than others. I think it’s about how effectively you manage time.”
- “We always make time although sometimes it can be really busy”
- “Sometimes, as it can be very busy work in the home”
- “Some days you can be busy all day. I like to be 'on the floor' but there can be a lot of paperwork, especially when we get a new resident. We will take extra shifts when people are on holiday or off sick.”

We asked ‘have you been adequately trained to do your job and are you encouraged to continue to develop your skills and in what ways?’

Staff told us that they received all required mandatory training, and other in-house training as required. Some staff have recently been working with Stockton Borough Council on ways to make improvements for residents living with dementia. One of the activities co-ordinators told us about attending meetings with staff who carry out similar roles at other care homes, and the benefits of sharing information and resources. Some specific comments included:

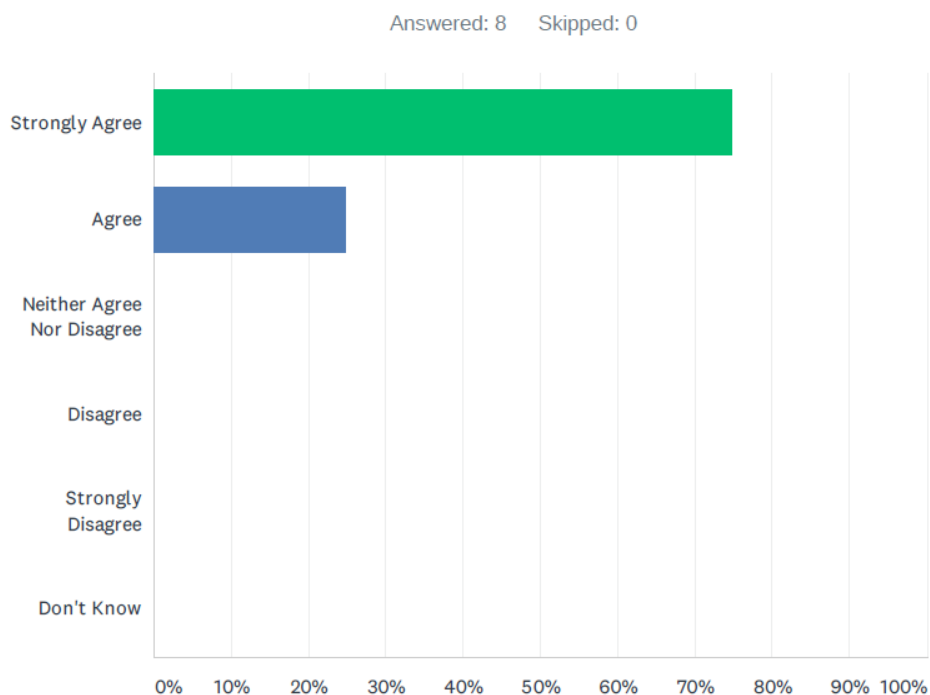
- “We do on-line training and also have some delivered in-house. Occasionally we will go to outside providers for training. We recently had some training about good oral hygiene.”
- “All our mandatory training is kept up to date. I have had training in the management of challenging behaviour using de-escalation techniques. We also had some GEMS training about how we should look to approach people living with dementia. How to adapt this to different individuals respecting their personal space. We also got some training on using the ‘hand to hold’ technique where we can help people to be a little more independent. This was cascaded back to us by staff who attended specific training.”
- “I have received all the training I need to do my job and am always doing refresher training. The manager is happy to support any additional training requests I make.”
- “We are always being offered training to do”
- “We carry out staff inductions while we are waiting for DBS clearance to come through. We have had dementia awareness training. We have also had GEM training which was cascaded back to us by staff who attended a council event. Staff completed oral hygiene training at North Tees.”
- “We went to some sessions organised by Stockton Borough Council, where we met other activities staff. We were able to share ideas and tips. This has been really useful and we have heard about different resources available”
- “Although I am not care staff I often have contact with residents across the home including on the Linden Unit (Mental Health). Sometimes they can be quite challenging and perhaps all staff could do with some training on how to deal with some behaviours, not just care staff.”

Staff were then asked ‘what do you enjoy about your job?’ Lots of very positive responses were received including:

- “I love the residents”
- “I enjoy making a difference to the lives of others”
- “Caring”
- “I love my job helping the residents”
- “Everything. It can be very rewarding and I get satisfaction from knowing I have been able to help people.”
- “I love caring. I have done dementia care for a long time now.”

We then asked staff ‘do residents receive adequate daily stimulation, including 1-1 stimulation, that is personalised to meet the needs of individual residents, and there is a varied programme of events for residents to enjoy?’

Q7 Residents receive adequate daily stimulation, including 1-1 stimulation, that is personalised to meet the needs of individual residents, and there is a varied programme of events for residents to enjoy?

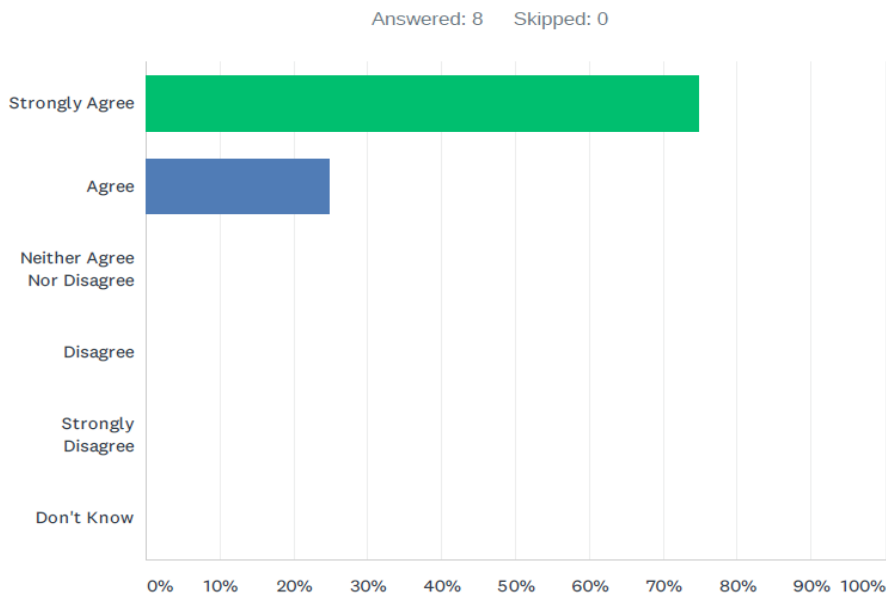


Although all staff either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ there were some suggestions that more could sometimes be provided for residents living in the dementia unit.

Specific comments received here included:

- “The home always has activities planned. Each day is never the same.”
- “Perhaps more 1-1 time in the dementia unit would be beneficial. Entertainment is sometimes split so they spend some time on the ground floor and then go upstairs. Occasionally we will bring residents together.”
- “We can’t give 1-1 support daily but we know who has not been joining in things. We have two residents on the ground floor who won’t go to the lounge but we call in for a chat or to read the paper with them. Some craft activities can be done individually.”
- “Yes, we have good activities staff who do a lot of work with residents”
- “We have some activities on every day. Staff will do 1-1 chats to make sure people are not isolated. We have entertainers who come quite often and we make sure they go to all areas of the home.”
- “We have two activity co-ordinators. We have movie days, cake decoration, bowls, Mr Motivator, crafts. We get entertainers in. For those who don’t join in we will sit with them and have a chat, reassure them.”
- “In the Linden Unit (mental health) it is more relaxed. There is a lot of 1-1 work in there.”

Q8 Staff are able to support the residents to get involved in activities or events outside the home, including onto the garden, where possible.



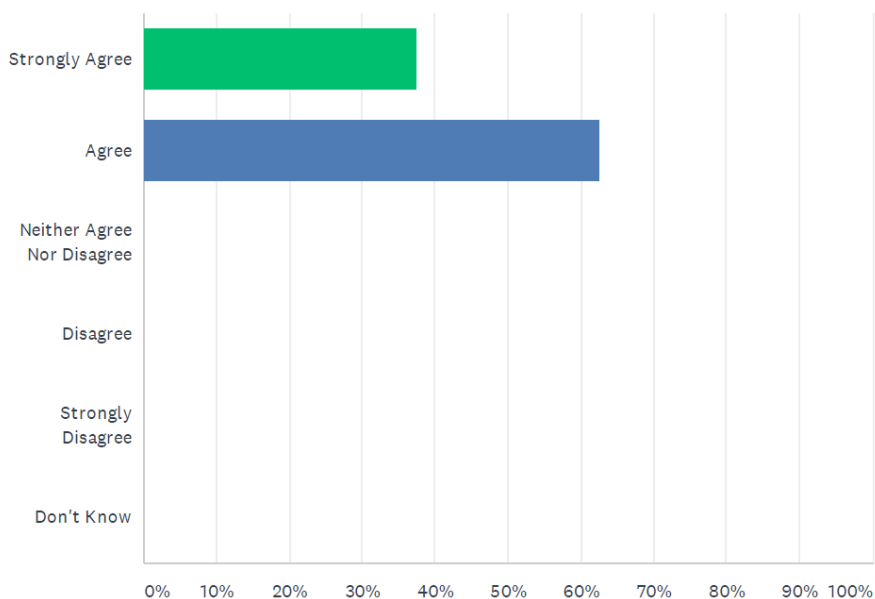
Staff members told us that they ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that residents are given opportunities to enjoy activities outside of the home. In the Linden Unit (MH) we were told that residents often went to events in the community both with staff members and independently. Comments by staff included:

- “Some residents are taken out in the home’s mini bus to the one o’clock club’ every week. (This is a venue where they are provided with a meal and some entertainment). We go to a coffee shop at Preston Park, and have had trips to the seaside. One resident has asked to go strawberry picking this year.”
- “We have our own mini bus and all residents have opportunities to go out in in”
- “The home has strong relationships within the community. Residents are able to access the garden and often go to clubs such as the Dementia hub. They also get taken to the annual tea dance at Preston Park.”
- “We go out to local tea rooms and have trips to the coast for fish and chips. Residents often like to sit out in the garden.”

Next we asked ‘is there always a choice of meals available for the residents and is the food of an acceptable quality?’

Q9 There is always a choice of meals available for the residents and the food is of an acceptable quality.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



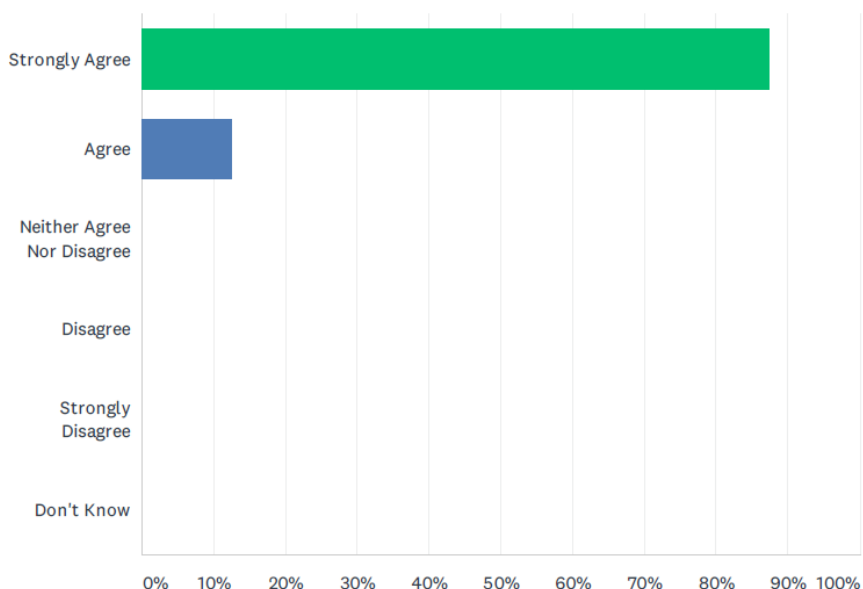
Again staff answered this question positively, providing the following responses:

- “the meals within the home are very good and there is a good choice available”
- “The menu is on the board and on individual tables. Choices are provided and residents can always ask for alternatives and these will be provided.”
- “We have some Asian staff and they prepared some Indian food for international day. There is always a choice of two main courses. We do things a bit differently in the Linden Unit (MH) as we have younger residents and sometimes they will get take away meals.”
- “Lovely food”
- “Good choice and quality. We ask family members what residents like and don’t like when they come to the home.”
- “Residents get a choice from the daily menu and suitable alternatives are available if they do not want what is on the menu”
- “We have had resident meetings to ask what people would like to eat”

We then asked ‘do residents have regular access to healthcare professionals such as GP’s, dentists, opticians, chiropodists, as well social care professionals?’

Q10 Residents have regular access to healthcare professionals such as GP’s, dentists, opticians, chiropoidists as well as social care professionals?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

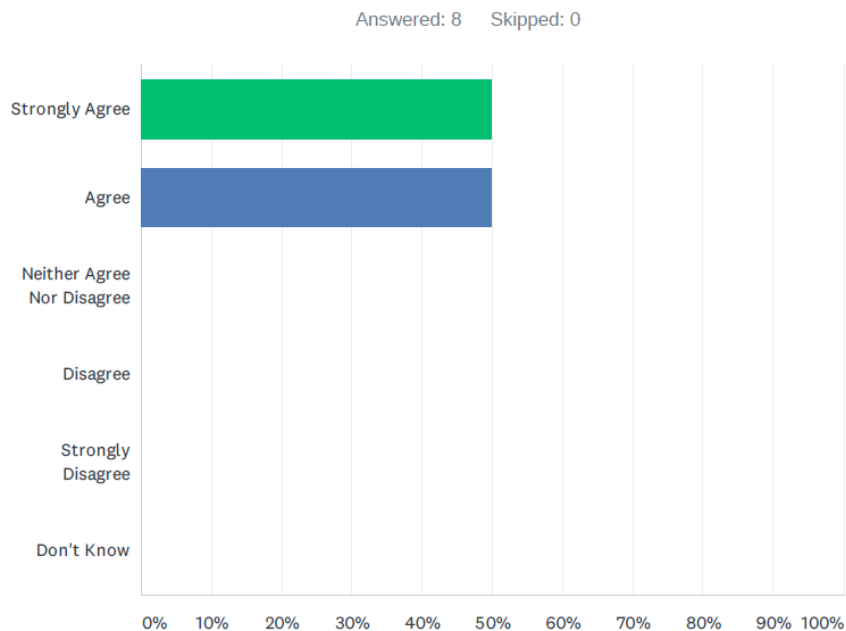


Seven of the eight staff spoken to ‘strongly agree’ with one telling us “they are only a phone call away.” Some other comments included:

- “If we need the doctor, dentist or optician the senior on duty will make arrangements for them to come out. The chiroprapist makes routine visits.”
- “The home has a regular dentist, chiroprapist and optician who visit the home and residents have their own designated GP”

We asked ‘are the views of residents and relatives actively sought and, where appropriate, acted upon?’

Q11 The views of residents and relatives are actively sought and, where appropriate, acted upon?



Comments received included:

- “We hold regular resident and family meetings to get their views”
- “We have surveys, and resident/relative meetings but they are not well attended”
- “We complete ‘getting to know you’ exercises when people are admitted this helps us better understand residents likes and dislikes. We have been thinking about doing life story books.”

- “In conversation. We speak to the residents and relatives. Sometimes you can get the view of residents by just looking at their facial features. We hold unit relatives meetings about every six weeks but they are not well attended. Relatives will just come and speak with the senior if there is an issue.”
- “We have an annual care review where relatives, social workers, and advocated if required, are invited to attend.”

Staff were then asked ‘do you feel the views of staff are taken into account with regard to how the home is run?’

We were told:

- “There are regular staff meetings. We definitely get listened to. We work the floor so we know how it runs”
- “Yes, we have staff meetings and staff are able to share their views”
- “Staff have regular meetings with management and I think my views are taken into account”

Finally we asked ‘do you have any other feedback you would like to share about the care home?’ These were the responses we received:

- “We have an on-going programme of re-furbishment. I love working here and there is good continuity of care.”
- “All the staff team are friendly. There are no problems at all with it.”
- “I think we all work well as a team. It feels like we are part of one big family”
- “We work well as a team on the unit. We try to keep continuity of staff where possible, some residents don’t react well to changes.”
- “The home is a lovely place to work and I enjoy coming on every shift. It can be hard and stressful at times but also very rewarding.”

Observations

During the latter half of 2018, staff and volunteers from Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees undertook a significant piece of work, carrying out visits to 28 care homes across the Borough. We wanted to find out what it was like to live in a care home for older people. Due to some communication difficulties at the time, Elton Hall was excluded from this work. However we are aware that staff from Elton Hall, and a number of other care services, have been working alongside staff from Stockton Borough Council, looking at ways they can make improvements to the service they provide. This included looking at ways to make services more 'dementia friendly.' The Manager at Elton Hall invited us to carry out this Enter & View visit to Elton Hall so we could see for ourselves what had been achieved.

Our visit had been well publicised, and posters informing people of our visit were seen around the home. We were given a tour of the premises before speaking to residents, staff members and any relatives who may have been available. The home is broken up into three units. The unit on the ground floor is for residents requiring general residential care. On the first floor there is a small mental health unit primarily for younger adults, the Linden Unit, and a separate unit for people living with dementia, known as the Hollies Unit. At the time of the visit this unit, which can accommodate 24 residents, only had 13 residents in situ. The Linden Unit was not the main focus of this visit although some comments about the service provided there were recorded.



Elton Hall is a large stately home, located in the village of Elton, just to the North of Stockton. The communal rooms on the ground floor are large and imposing with lots of original features, including a beautiful wood panelled dining room and two comfortable lounges, one designated as a quieter

lounge. A passage leads along to the bedroom area which is looking a little tired and worn in places but provided bedrooms of different sizes and shapes all having been personalised to meet the needs of individual residents.



Upstairs, past a large galleried landing, is the smaller Linden Unit followed further along by a secure and self-contained dementia unit, Hollies. This featured a large, open plan, communal area, with a small kitchen, a dining area and a lounge. Bedrooms were located to either side.

The home has a very large south facing garden, with double doors to it from the ground floor lounges and the dining room. It has a patio area for use by residents in the warmer months, along with a ramp down to the extensive grounds with numerous pathways that residents can be supported to walk around.



Although the home was found to be generally clean and tidy, in some parts it was looking tired and some of the furnishings were rather dated. An unpleasant odour was noticed near the entrance to one corridor near the bedrooms on the Hollies Unit. However, it was very obvious that a programme of ongoing maintenance and upgrading was taking place to provide a more comfortable environment.

There were a number of 'dementia friendly' features observed in the Hollies Unit, including colourful walls and interactive features designed to provide some stimulation for residents. Some of these had been decorated with the help of residents themselves. Signage around the unit was found to be appropriate for the residents living there.

We observed staff/resident interactions to be very positive, and we saw a number of residents in the Hollies Unit engaging in some craft activities with the two activity co-ordinators. There were lots of smiles and laughter and the atmosphere was quite relaxed. However, on the ground floor we did not see any evidence of residents engaging in any form of activity or stimulation at the time of the visit. However we did observe about eight residents (male and female), sitting waiting to see the hairdresser in the dedicated hairdressing salon.

We saw posters around the home advertising a forthcoming 'Mother's Day Afternoon Tea' to which relatives were invited to attend. There were also plans in place to celebrate St. Patrick's day, with a selection of Irish food and drink. We also saw photographs of other events that had taken place recently such as Valentine's Day celebrations.

Staff appeared very respectful of resident's space and individual needs and made efforts to engage with them in a way that would meet their communication and emotional needs. They appeared to have a good understanding of their residents needs and had built up some good relationships with them.

There is a small 'tuck shop' located on the ground floor. This is looked after by one of the residents and from which sweets and small toiletry items can be purchased.

Staff and volunteers from Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees were kindly invited to take lunch with residents on the ground floor in the beautiful wood panelled dining room. Tables were spread out across the room, with plenty of space for all to be seated. Tables were well set out with some nice, homely, features. A choice of meals was provided and this was both hot and well presented. Other residents were overheard speaking positively about the meal being taken. Staff were noted to be supporting residents who may need assistance appropriately, and one resident who caused a spillage was dealt with in a comforting and supportive manner. The dining room in the Hollies Unit, whilst not set in such grand surroundings, was nonetheless a comfortable environment and again, tables were set appropriately with homely features.

Conclusions

Generally speaking this was a positive visit, with high levels of satisfaction with the service being expressed by residents, staff members and the majority of relatives/friends who responded. However, there were two relatives who responded to us directly via a link to the survey, who were less than satisfied with some aspects of the service. Unfortunately we were not able to speak to them to clarify some of their comments. These comments sometimes seemed to be at odds with what we observed on the day, and what we were told by others.

This is a very old building, which, due to its age and size will require a lot of investment to bring about the grandeur it once enjoyed. However there are some lovely features, notably the large communal lounges and dining room on the ground floor. Other areas of the home are currently being subjected to an ongoing programme of maintenance and improvement. It was found to be clean and comfortable and, importantly, there was a nice welcoming feel to the place. Staff, several of whom have worked at Elton Hall for a number of years, were very friendly and it was evident that they have established some good relationships with their residents. They were observed to be kind, considerate and respectful at all times.

There were two activity co-ordinators on duty at the time of the visit, although we were told that three are employed. Although they were both active in the Hollies Unit engaging in a fun craft activity with residents, those on the ground floor were seen to be sitting in the lounges watching TV or sleeping, with little to keep them occupied. A good programme of activities is planned and we were told that 1-1 support and stimulation is provided although we did not see evidence of this on the day. We are aware that the home has its own mini bus and this enables residents to go out and enjoy activities in the community. One such trip is a weekly visit to the 'one o'clock club' at Middleton St George Cricket Club. In February several residents enjoyed a trip to the coast where they had a fish and chip lunch.

Discussion with staff confirmed that they received relevant and ongoing training and it is pleasing to note that they have recently been working closely with Stockton Borough Council to see what improvements they can bring to the home for the benefit of residents living there. Staff have recently undertaken GEMS training, a dementia state classification programme. This focuses more on the skills and abilities a person living with dementia still has, and not those they have lost. By identifying what GEM state they are at staff are more able to provide the right amount of care and support to help the person achieve their full potential. One method is to use the 'hand under hand' technique when a person is eating or brushing their teeth, to enable them to become more independent. This is at its early stages in the home, but it was reported by staff that they can already see some of the benefits of this approach.

Activity staff have also been engaging with staff from the Local Authority, and similar staff from other care homes across the Borough, and have been able to share ideas and techniques and learn about other resources that may be available to them and to their residents.

We were also told that certain staff have been appointed as 'champions' - taking a lead in such things as oral health, mental capacity and dementia. This has helped to ensure best practice in these matters was considered and they were able to provide additional support to other staff in these areas.

Staff generally felt that they had sufficient time to meet the needs of residents appropriately, although, as ever, there were times when they could be stretched and extremely busy. Two relatives told us they had some concerns about staffing levels and this was backed up by some residents who said that staff did not get a lot of opportunity to just stop for a chat.

Food at Elton Hall would appear to be of a good quality and comments overheard at the dining table suggest residents are, in general, highly satisfied with the meals provided for them. Snacks and drinks are available throughout the day.

Although we were told that resident and relative meetings take place we were also told that they were not well attended.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that more 1-1 support and stimulation is provided to residents who do not enjoy, or are not able to participate in, group activities. This could include the production of life history books which could include members of a residents family bringing in old photo's etc. and

helping to put these together. Books could then be updated regularly with information about what residents have been doing.

2. Staffing levels should be kept under review to ensure needs, including both physical and emotional needs of residents are being met.
3. Suitable training should be provided for all staff engaged with residents in the Linden Unit.

Providers Response

The following response has been received in response to this report and to the recommendations made:

Recommendations

- We have 2 Activities coordinators, total number of hours is 40 per week over 7days. They are very actively involved with residents from each unit, including those who don't wish to go out, those who stay in who do not wish to participate, and those who stay in their rooms who prefer their own company. To be able to give each resident increased 1-1 we have approached Stockton Council to fund the cost of extra 1-1 of which has been declined. However 2 people are in receipt of 1-1 support totalling 6 hours per week
- All staff at Elton Hall have a Personal Development Plan, the training we facilitate is mandatory throughout the work force regardless of what unit the individual works/ or role, staff are skilled matched and continuity of care is maintained on each unit. With regards to the Linden Unit all staff are trained in dementia, challenging behaviour/ de-escalating and mental health, learning disabilities and MAPA. This training is purchased by the company as there is no funding available from the local authority other than awareness
- Staffing levels fluctuate to meet the needs of the residents, they are reviewed daily to ensure the needs of the individuals physical and emotional needs are met, and when occupancy varies this is also taken in to consideration also we take into consideration the area square footage / outlay of the building

Hollies Unit

1 Senior care, 2 care assistants (Ratio 4.66) for 13 residents

The Firs Unit

1 Team Leader, 4 Care Assistants (Ratio 4.6) for 23 residents

The Linden Unit

1 Senior Care, 2 Care Assistants (Ratio 3) for 9 residents

As you can see above and I can evidence the staffing levels are greater than that of nursing care

In addition we would like to add the following comments:

We are very sorry to hear that two people felt that an alleged complaint was not resolved/ followed through thoroughly , however the home have never received such a complaint to act upon. I as the Registered Manager Alison Small strive to ensure the care home is run to a very high standard, the care delivered is second to none , residents are well cared for of which is highlighted in resident surveys, family surveys, staff surveys , PAMNS and Care Quality Commission reports

I have an open door policy where any resident, staff member or relative can visit me and discuss any issues they may be experiencing, please be reassured if there were any, they would be acted upon immediately

We have employed new staff who prior to working with the residents, have an extensive training plan for the first 12 weeks of mandatory training, also bespoke training to the needs of our residents. After that period they have further induction shadowing with a "BUDDY" who is an existing member of the workforce, moving forward they work towards a qualification if not already achieved

Finally we would like to thank those who have participated in the Healthwatch report, this is very much appreciated. Thank you also for the commendation to our wonderful staff and myself

What is it like to live in Elton Hall?

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is a strong independent consumer champion. We are here to make sure your views on local health and social care services are heard.

We want to hear the views of residents, staff, and those who have friends or relatives who live in Elton Hall

We will be visiting the home between
09.30am and 2.00pm on
Tuesday 3rd March 2020

We would be pleased to talk to you then
**Alternatively please complete the
questionnaire available from the home OR
complete the survey online at**

<http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PY2NDYV>

All responses will be completely anonymous



healthwatch
Stockton-on-Tees