



healthwatch
East Riding
of Yorkshire

Virtual Care Home Engagement Project



Report The Limes

April 2021

Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire
The Strand, Hull CVS, 75 Beverley Road, Hull, HU3 1XL
Tel (01482) 665684
enquiries@healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk
www.healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk

healthwatch
East Riding
of Yorkshire

Contents

Introduction.....

Methodology.....

Manager section.....

Staff section.....

Relatives' section.....

Residents' section.....

Conclusion.....

Recommendations.....

Acknowledgements.....

Distribution.....

Overview/Background

The Limes is a care home that is registered to take care of individuals with Dementia, mental health conditions, physical disability, substance misuse, sensory impairment, and old age. The Limes also has the specialist care categories as Alzheimer's, Bipolar, challenging behaviour, strokes, and visual impairment.

The Limes Residential Home is one of Burlington Care's largest homes with 97 bedrooms in total, with a majority on the ground floor. This includes rooms with en-suite facilities.

The Limes is located near to the centre of Driffield town centre, offering many local shops and amenities.

The Limes was reviewed by the Care Quality Commission in February 2021, and was given a 'Good' rating.

Methodology

We began engagement with The Limes on the week commencing the 26th of April 2021. This involved advertising Healthwatch's weeklong visit on the home's provider, Burlington Care, Facebook's page making relatives/friends aware that we would be visiting and informing them of the survey so they would have their opportunity to give us their views.

Around the same time, we informed The Limes that we would be conducting a virtual engagement with them in two weeks' time. This consisted of a letter for the manager explaining the days and times of the engagement, posters and flyers to distribute to staff and residents, advertising the purpose of our visit, and paper questionnaires that could be completed by staff and residents if they chose to. They were also given Healthwatch's freepost address to send material to.

Staff were then able to contact our volunteer coordinator to book an appointment to discuss their experiences at a mutually convenient time during the weeklong engagement.

Interview with the Manager

The manager of The Limes is Doreen Robinson, who has managed this home for the last eight years. Doreen has been a care home manager for 21 years, spending ten of those working with Burlington Care Ltd.

The Limes

The Limes care home has spaces for 97 residents, with all but two of these rooms having ensuite facilities. The home also has seven bathrooms and ten toilets available. The Limes currently has 84 residents to 52 members of staff (59 including three bank members of staff). On the normal day shift the home will have 21 members of care staff, and nine on the average over-night shift. Doreen explained that any staff absences are normally covered using their own staff but occasionally as a last resort the home will use agency care staff. In total the home employs 121 members of staff, including two handymen who deal with maintenance and repairs.

All the residents' food is cooked and prepared on the premises and The Limes has a food hygiene rating of '5'. It is in the pre-admission assessments where the preferences and dietary requirements of the residents are provided. These assessments are in the form of a telephone review with the hospital (if applicable) and communication with a family member. Medical history is also looked at as well as involvement of a dietician. Doreen stated that the food and drink options are clearly displayed for residents to look at, both on the dementia unit (in the form of words and pictures) and residential unit and this is updated every day by the cooks. The residents' weight and fluid intake are monitored when staff fill in their daily charts.

Access to healthcare

Doreen explained that residents have their hearing and sight checks yearly, and foot care every six to eight weeks. This information is monitored in the residents' health notes. Doreen stated that the home also has access to numerous other healthcare services, such as wheelchair services, incontinence assessments, mental health services, hospital transport, dentistry, dieticians, falls team, speech and language, and so forth.

Although Doreen stated that the home has not experienced any issues with many of those healthcare services, the home did experience some issues with their GP surgery. Doreen explained that The Limes found that, although their GP practice are highly supportive over the phone, it has been difficult to get GP to interact with their residents in person as the GP only comes out if absolutely necessary. This has meant that the home's staff have undertaken extra responsibilities, such as changing residents' dressings for a minor injury or blood monitoring, as demonstrated by the district nurse.

“The 1st lockdown was tougher as we didn't know what was going on. Now if you ring the GP because someone has a sniffle or cough it's always suspected COVID and that makes things so much harder.”

The Limes have also had some difficulties with the hospital discharge process, in particularly the hospital attempting to discharge a resident back into the home late into the night.

Care

Doreen stated that various staff training is identified and provided and this currently is in the form of online training for all staff but previously this was provided face to face.

The home still offers respite care. However they must first ensure that the client has a negative COVID test and then they must isolate for 14 days. Previously to the pandemic The Limes did offer day care, however this has had to come to a stop.

Residents do have end of life plans in place, and these are reviewed/ revised monthly or whenever changes occur. Doreen stated that all residents and relatives are involved in this process.

Doreen explained that The Limes keeps the residents' family and friends informed of their loved ones' care and activities through regular phone calls, Skype calls and during visits. Both the relatives' and the residents' meetings are held every three months.

Activities

Doreen explained that many of the activities the home would put in place for their residents have had to unfortunately stop due to the pandemic. For instance, Doreen stated that previous to COVID, the residents would take part in weekly bus trips and would regularly go to church and the market. To help compensate for this, Doreen stated that the staff arrange one to one time with the residents to try and avoid feelings of loneliness and isolation, and the home has regular visits from clergy members to cater for religious and cultural needs.

We asked Doreen what facilities The Limes has which the residents have access to, and Doreen stated that the residents are able to use the telephone and the home has Wi-Fi amenities which facilitates the use of computers/ laptops and online videotelephony software such as Zoom, Teams, Skype and Face-time. The Limes also put in a new phone system so there is a better connection for residents using mobiles and if the residents want to arrange a video call with their family or friend then they can arrange this with The Limes Activity Coordinator.

Additionally, The Limes produces a newsletter every three months which contains up to date information on the home and updates on the residents for their family members. Staff meetings are held every 3 times a month, and these meetings have the team leader, care staff, domestic staff, kitchen staff and night staff attend.

COVID

Doreen stated that the home is being kept up to date with current COVID guidance and is following the guidelines as stated on the GOV.UK website and with assistance from the East Riding of Yorkshire Council COVID Team. Doreen said that the home has been adequately supplied with PPE and all other COVID related essentials.

All of The Limes' residents have had the full two doses of the vaccine and Doreen explained that the vaccination process went smoothly with organisation. Out of the 121 staff Doreen stated that all but ten staff are fully vaccinated but for those who are not Doreen explained that there has been a risk assessment put in place.

“Through COVID it has been difficult, and sometimes it has felt like we are on our own. My staff team, from carers to team leader and admin, have all pulled together to make it work, we support each other. It is always nice to be asked and to know if help is needed it is there.”

We asked Doreen what the current visitation rules are within the home and how it has been both managing and implementing them. Doreen explained that the new procedure is for family/friends of residents to book their visiting slot in advance. Visiting now takes place within a designated visiting room, which is a bedroom near the entrance. Visitors are supposed to arrive half an hour before their appointment so they can have a lateral flow test and have their temperature taken and fill out a questionnaire. It then takes a one and a half hour deep clean between visits meaning that the home can only facilitate around 4-5 visits per day. The home also had two visiting pods made with a plexiglass screen fitted, which are still in place for those who cannot have 'face to face' visits.

Support

When asked if Doreen felt supported within her role of manager, she stated that she sometimes did: the home has had some tough times and Doreen supports the staff as much as she can and says that she does have the support of her management team. However, Doreen said that she is often not asked how she is and finds it hard to switch off and stop worrying.

Doreen stated that although COVID has been good for team bonding and the team to work closely together, Doreen said that she at times felt isolated and found it difficult to communicate with other managers and support groups with this all being done using a computer. Doreen said the team has supported each other and worked overtime, and despite two COVID outbreaks are managing well, with the second outbreak stopping quickly due to lessons learnt in the first outbreak.

Doreen explained that although she has had no irregular difficulties with staff absences during covid, there has been some difficulties with staff recruitment and retention especially after the beginning of the pandemic. Doreen explained that despite frequent advertisement of job opportunities, people are frightened to work in care due to negative media coverage making recruitment difficult, and because of this fear people are not coming into the home to see the reality of how the home is successfully managing infection control. Doreen said the home encourages relatives to post reviews of the home so that the public can see the positive reality.

Doreen stated that The Limes works with other organisations to support care provision within The Limes, and these organisations are the local authority, the safeguarding team, multi-disciplinary teams, and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG).

We asked Doreen about what quality assurance systems the home has in place. She explained that there are monthly audits as a company where they are told what to audit and when by Burlington Care. Doreen does a weekly and monthly check for medication and they also audit dependency of residents to ensure correct staffing levels. Doreen said the home likes to keep their staffing levels above regulations to ensure they are covered.

Tour of The Limes with Evie Watson, Activities Coordinator.

Main Residential Unit

The staff have a donning and doffing area and a separate staff room with a fridge and microwave and a big notice board with notices on.

All the hallways are beautifully decorated with plenty of pictures. There is a flower board on one wall and hanging baskets. There are plenty of PPE stations around the home on the walls in the corridors. There are hand rails in contrasting colours.

They have a board with large typed notices of members of staff who champion different things so that residents know who to speak to about things such as person-centred care, etc.

There is a hat stand with different hats that residents can try on and wear. There is also a fruit and vegetable stall with different plastic fruits and vegetables and weighing scales.

The home also have a General Store shop. This is staffed a couple of hours a day by an activities coordinator. Residents can buy items such as shaving foam, toothbrushes, greeting cards, packs of tights etc. The home are also planning to sell penny mixes of sweets. They are waiting for COVID restrictions to lift before they can open the shop up again.

There is a Beauty salon with a little window to see inside. It is set out just like a real hairdressers with sink, hairdryers and capes to put on. They also do nails there. Evie said she did a pamper session the other day and it was very well received.

In another area there is large dolls house that residents can open up and play with.

We were shown a bedroom that is a good size and has a door that opens into a small well-maintained courtyard. The bedroom is furnished with a bed, chair, wardrobe and desk but there is plenty of room for the resident's own furniture and pictures, etc. There is an ensuite with a toilet and sink. There is a buzzer system on the wall and we were told this is in all bedrooms.

There is a lovely large dining area with well spaced out tables. They just have 2 residents to a table at the moment to keep everyone distanced. There is a key coded door to the kitchen with a shutter hatch for serving residents.

The visiting room is right next to the entrance door with chairs which are nicely spaced. There are also 2 visiting pods which are still in use if people do not want to visit face to face yet or cannot get a face to face appointment. They can only do 4 or 5 in a day in the visiting room as the room is deep cleaned between every visit.

They have a few relatives that still prefer to Skype, some live some distance away. Evie thinks the residents enjoy Skype as they sometimes say how lovely it is to see their relatives during Skype meetings. Skype meetings used to be very much in demand so had to be restricted to one per week as the residents needed supporting. Now relatives are able to visit this has lessened the demand for Skype calls.

The Limes have several courtyards some of which are quite large. They are all well maintained with plants in pots. Some residents are able to come out on their own but others need support to access them. There is one with a fish water fountain, another with bird tables and feeders. They sometimes have ice cream in the courtyard and there is a pigeon nesting in one which fascinates some of the residents. We saw another courtyard with artificial turf and herbs in raised borders. Residents do gardening tasks like planting seeds in pots. Evie said they were planting sunflowers, tomatoes and lettuce this week.

We were told there is also a courtyard with a small putting green.

There is a large lounge where they had "The king and I" playing. Evie said they put different old films on every day in here but the residents also watch TV in this room. This is also the activities lounge with a large table to play games on. Evie said they were going to start a knitting club.

As the activities board cannot go up at the moment due to COVID, Evie talks to the residents after breakfast and tells them what activities are on that day and asks residents what they would like to do.

The Limes have a separate Dementia Unit.

The walls are beautifully decorated and covered in art with some artificial hanging baskets. There is also an artificial bird in a birdcage that tweets. They have this on sometimes for background noise.

There is a small sensory lounge with multi coloured mood lighting and a small waterfall for sensory noise.

There is also a fiddle board on one of the corridor walls with door knockers, switches, key chains, etc for residents to fiddle with.

We were told that there was an Activity Board on the wall but it was taken down due to Covid. They also have a wedding room with pictures of the royal family getting married and some of the residents have put pictures of own their weddings up.

There are stairs up to the next floor where the bedrooms are. There is no door or gate at the bottom of the stairs but there is a door at the top of the stairs which has 2 handles, one goes up and the other down to make it difficult for residents with dementia to open it. There are carpets upstairs and a lift.

The corridors are painted different colours to help residents identify where their room is. The home also have different designs on the room doors of something that a particular resident is interested in, for example they have a farmer who has a tractor on his door. Again, this helps residents identify their room.

There is also a small area where married couples can sit together on a sofa and watch TV together or talk.

We were also told that because quite a few residents worked in farming or liked country pursuits, they have pictures of animals on the walls, like horses looking over stable doors and also soft animal pictures lower down on the wall so residents can touch them. Unfortunately, they have also had to be removed for the time being due to COVID.

What did staff say

Working at The Limes

The longest serving staff member we talked to had worked at The Limes for 20 years, and the most recent staff member had been there 2 years. Most staff members had been there around 4-8 years.

All the staff we spoke to felt that there are enough members of staff on duty at the workplace both day and night, and most staff felt that absences are well managed to the best of the home's ability.

Additionally, staff stated that the induction they had when the first started at the home was adequate and prepared them well for their role. All staff felt adequately trained, having done a variation of courses both within the home and through outside agencies. Some staff answered that if any additional training was available, they would happily attend, in particularly in Stoma and Catheter care. Staff agreed that their training is regularly reviewed and updated by the management, and regularly discussed at supervisions and appraisals.

Staff answered that adequate fall prevention measures are in place within the home, having things such as sensor mats in place.

Staff explained that they felt confident in raising a concern and knew who to go to and the process involved. All staff also answered that they feel that their concerns are acted upon once raised with management.

COVID

All of the staff we spoke to claimed that they had been offered the COVID Vaccine and many answered that they had received both. All staff answered that they felt the home had a sufficient supply of PPE and other COVID related supplies. All answered that they felt up to date with the current visitation guidance and felt that they had enough information regarding this, stating that there is a folder about this that staff can consult if necessary. Most staff claimed that implementing visiting has so far been fairly smooth and handled well, however some stated that they had found implementing the new visiting guidance stressful and hard work as it can be very busy, and the visiting pod must be thoroughly disinfected in between visits.

Care

Staff mostly answered that they felt that they had enough time to support residents effectively, however some claimed that it would be nice to have more time to talk with them and have one to one time, but this is not always possible due to workload. Similarly, most staff stated that they are able to provide enough support for residents at mealtimes, however some staff members answered that this was not always possible due to being busy.

All staff said that they felt that they knew the personal preferences of their residents, including personal histories and likes and dislikes, and explained that much of this is written within the residents' care plans also. Staff also explained that they all knew of the residents' end of life preferences and have discussions with next of kin about such. All staff we spoke to also answered that they believe that all residents within The Limes are treated with kindness and compassion, and believe that they provide person centered care at the home, responding to the wants and needs of the residents in the best way possible

We asked staff what the most enjoyable aspect of their role is, and they answered that caring and supporting residents, helping those with dementia, making a difference, learning about residents lives and helping put a smile on the residents faces when doing activities and spending time with them, gave staff the greatest satisfaction.

“Caring for the residents and seeing them happy”

“Supporting the residents with their day to day needs and supporting those who suffer from dementia”

“Working with dementia and supporting the residents with all their needs”

“To put a smile on the residents face by doing activities with them”

“Spending time with the residents and being able to make a difference in their day”

“Making a difference, keeping residents safe”

“Knowing I have done my job to my best ability”

Activities

Staff explained that it is senior carer staff and team leaders who arrange residents' healthcare appointments. All staff answered that they felt confident with the use of technology, such as Zoom calls and other IT equipment, to help support residents.

There are two activities coordinators in post. Activity coordinators decides which activities are provided to the residents at The Limes, working together with the residents using their suggestions to help organise the activities. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and restrictions, the residents have not been able to take part in their usual outside activities, such as their weekly bus trips and days out. We asked staff if residents have been able to get out in the garden much, and staff said that there are enclosed areas that the residents can use if they want to, however this is weather dependant and most prefer to stay inside due to the cold.

Staff answered that residents receive a varied diet and menu choice, there are options for them to choose from and these choices are reviewed regularly. Staff stated that residents' individual tastes/preferences are offered.

Support

All the staff we spoke to explained that they feel fully supported within their role and have all the guidance necessary to do their job well, stating that there is a good support system in place and the senior staff and management team are there to give advice and support. The staff said that the management team are approachable and helpful, and the staff feel that they can discuss any concerns with them and there is always someone you can talk to. All the staff we spoke to said that they feel that The Limes is well managed. Staff said that the manager is helpful, supportive and puts the needs of the residents first.

"I feel the manager is extremely supportive and is always happy to help and offer guidance"

"The manager always tried her best to support each individual and ensures that the residents' needs come first."

We asked the staff if there was anything they would like to change about their current setting what would that be. Most staff answered that there is nothing that they would change about The Limes, however some staff members said that they would like to be able to spend more quality time with the residents, and others said that they wish there was less paperwork involved in their role.

"We have worked through COVID and it has been hard, but we have all worked together."

"I am an 'old fashioned' carer and believe care comes first. Unfortunately, due to current times, paperwork and documenting can take over."

What did relatives say?

From the family and friends that we spoke to, their loved one had been in The Limes for a variation of times, the longest has been there for 10 years, the most recent for 6 months.

All the family and friends that we spoke to stated that staff are polite and approachable. They also explained that from what they have observed during visits, interactions between residents and staff are both positive and friendly. All family and friends answered that staff are available when either themselves or the residents need them.

"All staff approachable. Dementia unit staff very professional and helpful."

“We always find them polite and very friendly”

“My mum and dad love the banter with staff”

Most family and friends answered that they had been involved with their friend/relative’s care plan, stating that they are always made sure they are happy with decisions made and are kept updated and informed. The home contacts family and friends mostly using the telephone, by email or face to face (when available).

We asked family and friends if their loved ones speak positively about the home and their carers. Most said that they do, appearing content, positive and happy. Many family and friends explained that even if their loved one cannot express this, for instance due to dementia, residents are smiley, happy and appear to be settled in well. However, some did say that their loved ones are unable to communicate and have these kind of conversations. All family and friends said that they are happy with the care their loved ones are receiving.

Activities

We asked family and friends what activities their loved ones enjoy and many said that pre covid their loved ones enjoyed going outside and taking part in trips. Music, baking, quizzes, painting and playing games were also popular answers. However, many answered that they are unsure, either because their loved ones are unable to join in with activities or because many of the usual activities have had to stop due to COVID. We asked if the staff encourage their loved ones to join in with activities, and many answered that yes they were encouraged to participate, though many were unsure of this.

Care

All the family and friends we spoke to that had seen the home said that they are happy with the cleanliness of The Limes, stating it is very clean.

Most family and friends said that their loved one’s room reflects them as a person, with their rooms containing things like family photos and some of their own items of furniture. Some family and friends had not yet seen their loved one’s room or answered that they did not believe they had been able to make their room their own due to COVID. All family and friends said that they are happy with the cleanliness of their loved one’s room, however one did mention that the duvet cover feels rather thin.

“Yes, the staff were amazing at decorating my Dad’s bedroom and so much care and thought was put into it.”

Most family and friends of residents had been invited to attend meetings regarding their loved ones care, though some did mention that this has had to be paused due to the pandemic but if they are worried about anything then it can be discussed with staff or the management team. Some family and friends did answer that they have not been invited for meetings.

All family and friends knew who to speak to in case they had a complaint about their loved ones care, and explained that staff, seniors and management are always willing to listen and act if necessary.

“We are very happy with The Limes and all staff at these very hard times, my parents look very well and we know they are very well cared for.”

“I am almost 89 myself and The Limes take a great deal of the worry from me. I am very satisfied with the care they receive.”

COVID

Most family and friends of residents are now able to visit their loved one in person. They explained that this is facilitated through booking an appointment and that two people are now able to go into the home and visit. Some loved ones mentioned that they have struggled to obtain a slot due to high demand and had a few weeks wait. The process for visiting is that the family/friend has to take a lateral flow test before their visiting slot, wait until the result of the test then wear PPE (masks, apron and gloves) upon entering the home. The loved one's temperature is also taken and the home gives the loved ones a questionnaire to fill in before the visit can take place. Visiting takes place in a designated room.

“From Monday I will be able to see them once a week.”

“Only if there is an available slot. I have missed a few visits because of this and because I work I am limited.”

“I am allowed to visit inside, but as I don't want to risk passing COVID into the home, I visit her in a pod.”

What did residents say?

From the resident we spoke to, most residents have lived at The Limes for 1-2 years, and the longest staying resident has lived there four years.

We asked what the residents liked about living at The Limes and they said that they liked living there because it felt like home to them, they enjoyed the company of the other residents and the friendly faces of the staff.

“I can walk around as I like no one bothers me. They leave me alone and I can talk to people if I want to. Staff let me get on with my life.”

“They treat me as a friend. I have a comfortable bed and a very nice room and if I want anything I generally get it unless it's something ridiculous.”

“Friendly staff and everybody's friendly. Different to what you thought, I never thought I would be in one of these. I feel safe here.”

We also asked the residents what they do not like about living in The Limes. They answered that they miss the independence they previously enjoyed when living at home, when they could go out when they wanted, and residents also said that they missed their families.

Activities

We asked what hobbies and interests the residents had before coming to live at The Limes, and the answers included dancing, singing, gardening, socialising, doing puzzles. A lot of these the residents still are able to do within the home, such as reading, singing, arts and crafts. However, residents explain that they miss being able to go out like they used and visit places and other hobbies like horse riding and golf.

“We can’t go out due to restrictions but pre-COVID we used to do bus trips, go to Wetherspoons on the dinner time. I like going out for meals. When I was at home, I used to go out regularly for meals.”

We asked the residents what sort of things they get up to within the home, and they explained that they take part in things like singing, dancing, painting, and chair exercises. There is also an activities table which has a projector and plays different songs and projects puzzles. Residents can also have more one to one time and get their nails painted and have their hair done. The home also does organised games for the residents like darts. We asked the residents which of these activities is their favourite, and they said singing songs, doing the armchair exercises, playing games and dancing.

All residents we spoke to get involved with these activities to a certain extent, though some said that they don’t always join in as they also like to have some time on their own.

We asked residents how they are notified of which activities are happening and when, and most residents explained that the Activities Coordinator usually lets them know, though one resident said that they did not know until the day itself what the activity is going to be.

We also asked the residents if the home puts on any entertainment or themed evenings, and residents answered that previously to COVID they did have a singer come in and bands to play music that the residents can join in with. However due to the pandemic this has had to cease, which some residents saying has got them down and they are looking forward to when this can resume.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID pandemic, residents have not been able to go outside much over the past few months or have their usual regular bus trips. Some residents explained that when the weather is sunny, the home has a little courtyard that they can go sit in. Many residents explained that they are missing being able to go out when they wanted to and missed visiting friends and family.

“There is a bus trip once a month to the seaside. Before COVID. Hopefully, we can do this again.”

“I would love to; I would drop everything and go now if anyone went with me.”

“Only the dentist was my last trip out in October. That’s my entertainment when I go to the hospital.”

Care

We asked the residents about their mealtimes and what the food is like at the home. They explained that they get served a cooked meal at dinner time and something offered to them on an evening, such as sandwiches or beans on toast. All the residents said that they thoroughly enjoyed the food

that The Limes serves, with many saying that they “could not fault it”, and that there is choice available, so you always have a second option if you do not like what they are offering. The same applies for the drink options within the home, with residents explaining that there are various options available, such as tea, coffee (also available decaffeinated), fruit juice, soda drinks, and other soft drinks. There is a drinks trolley that goes around frequently, or the residents can ask and a staff member will bring them one. Extra snacks and drinks are also available whenever the residents want them.

None of the residents that we spoke to have any special dietary requirements or preferences.

Every resident that we spoke to explained that they felt safe and secure within the home, and that there is always someone around to help them if necessary. All the residents like their room and can have their own things around them, such as photos, and some have their own television. The residents said that their bed is comfy and some also have special beds to suit their personal needs. All the residents said their room felt fresh and clean, with staff cleaning their rooms every day. Each resident has a view from their window, with some saying they has a nice view of the garden and patio outside and the birds.

All the residents said that they had a buzzer which they can use to call the staff whenever they need assistance, and most residents said that the staff come quickly and respond well.

The residents praised the staff and said that they are all very friendly. All the residents we spoke to knew who their named carer is. Residents also said that they knew who they could speak to in the case that they had a question or were unhappy about something, with most saying that they would speak to one of the carers.

Access to healthcare

Residents explained that they usually access healthcare appointments through the care home staff, by telling staff that they are unwell and then the staff will contact the GP or other healthcare professional and arrange the appointment for them. Sometimes healthcare staff like district nurses or doctors come into the home to see the residents, but residents have also had virtual appointments throughout the pandemic with most residents having a mixture of virtual and in person appointments. All the residents were happy with the appointments they have had.

Residents also have a chiropodist come to look after their feet. There was a period where the chiropodist was unable to come to the home due to COVID, but they are now able to see residents again. Residents explain that if they want to book an appointment with them they just have to ask one of the staff.

We asked residents about whether their hearing and/or hearing aids are checked regularly and if they have been checked recently. Many residents said that it has been checked recently, however some did say that it had not and would like this to be arranged. We also asked residents about eye tests and glasses checks, and residents said that although they mostly care for this themselves, they staff do also help to manage this and arrange appointments.

“No one sees me about this. I would like to see someone about my hearing.”

“Yes I have a hearing aid. It was checked about two years ago. I am now using my old one. My sister thinks I need another check. It’s a four-year wait.”

COVID

We asked residents if their family or friends have been able to come and see them with the lifting of visiting restrictions. Residents answered that they are now able to see one or two visitors who have to book a visiting slot. These visits are able to place within the allocated visiting room. These visits are half an hour per slot. Residents are still able to have regular communication with their loved ones using platforms like Zoom/ Facetime and phone calls, with some residents having these calls every day.

“I get one or two visitors. My brother and his wife occasionally. My brother came in last week. He has to book to come and visit as it is very popular. We have a visiting pod. A special room- not allowed to touch at the moment.”

“They have got me an iPad and I have spoken over the iPad. I speak to my sister every day on there or sometimes twice.”

Conclusion

We concluded that the home is being kept up to date with current COVID guidance and is following the guidelines as stated on the GOV.UK website and with assistance from the East Riding of Yorkshire Council COVID Team. The home has been adequately supplied with PPE and all other COVID related essentials, and is managing well with the current situation and under the ever changing guidance.

Doreen explained that although the home has had some tough times over the last year, she has felt supported by her staffing team and the homes management team. Doreen stated that COVID has been good for team bonding and the team to work closely together, however, at times she has felt isolated and found it difficult to communicate with other managers and support groups.

The staff team stated that they feel fully supported within their role and have all the guidance necessary to do their job well, stating that there is a good support system in place and the senior staff and management team are there to give advice and support. All the staff we spoke to said that they feel that The Limes is well managed. Staff said that Doreen is helpful, supportive and puts the needs of the residents first.

Every resident that we spoke to explained that they felt safe and secure within the home, and that there is always someone around to help them if necessary. The residents praised the staff and said that they are all very friendly and caring, and all were happy with the care they are receiving.

All the loved ones of residents that we spoke to stated that staff are polite and approachable and all family and friends answered that staff are available when either themselves or the residents need them. All family and friends were satisfied with the care their loved one is receiving at The Limes.

Recommendations

1. Some loved ones of residents suggested they would prefer more notice of a care review so that arrangements can be put in place in order for them to attend and participate.
2. Some loved ones mentioned the difficulties in obtaining a visitation slot. Perhaps this is something which could be looked at or reviewed.
3. Regarding the difficulties hiring new staff, a possible solution could be to advertise their good practice on their social media and on their banner, to show the reality is much safer than portrayed in the media.
4. A look at introducing yearly hearing tests for all residents. Hearing aids should be checked yearly by an Audiologist.
5. We recommend looking into the installation of a door or gate at the bottom of flights of stairs in the dementia unit.
6. Staff dealing with stomas and catheter care be provided with necessary training.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire would like to thank The Limes, Doreen the registered manager, Evie the activity Co-ordinator and all the staff at the home for their help and involvement with the enter and view. We would also like to thank all the residents and relatives for their engagement. Thank you to our volunteers who helped us facilitate the project.

Distribution

This report has been distributed to the following:

- Healthwatch England
- the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- East Riding Clinical Commissioning Group
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- the Healthwatch Humber network