



## Enter and View Visit

The Firs Nursing Home

251 Staplegrove Road, Taunton, TA2 6AQ

24 March 2015

**Authorised representative(s) undertaking visit:**

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### Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Somerset would like to thank the staff and residents of The Firs Nursing Home for making us feel welcome and offering assistance during the Enter and View visit.

### Purpose of the visit

- To seek the views of those who live in residential services, on the health and social care services that they use, including the residential service that they live in.

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- To find out how those in residential care access the health and social care services they need.
- To Identify and highlight areas of good practice to share with other providers

## Methodology

The home was notified about the Enter & View visit 2 weeks prior to the visit. A letter was written to inform residents and visitors, which the home was asked to display.

On the day of the visit, the Enter & View team were keen to ensure that their presence did not get in the way of the care being given to residents. They had therefore requested to meet with the Manager or senior member of staff on duty to discuss how the visit could be best managed, and be informed of any issues that they needed to be aware of.

The Enter & View team then split up into pairs with one pair talking to residents and staff while the other pair spoke with the Manager, before being free to wander the communal areas in the home and chat to residents and staff. The team then ate lunch in the dining room which offered an opportunity to observe.

The team then gave a brief verbal feedback to the Manager.

The report was then drafted and sent to the Manager for their comments on any recommendations made which were recorded on the attached 'Recommendations Sheet.' The final report is then sent to service commissioners, The CQC and published on our website.

## Summary

The Firs Nursing Home is owned by 'Care West Country'. It can accommodate up to 40 residents and there were 38 residents living here at the time of visit. The Nursing Home is situated on the outskirts of Taunton. The Enter & View team spoke to staff and residents. No visitors were available to talk to at the time of visit. All the

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residents we spoke with were happy with the service they received and several noted that the staff were kind and caring.

Some of the residents said that they wished they could get out and about more often and several residents said that they enjoyed the activities. A number of good practices have been noted. Recommendations have been made to help the service make further improvements but on the whole, these are suggestions for consideration based on good practices noted at other homes.

Staff that we spoke with said they were happy to be working there and received good training.

## Findings

### The Environment

The home is a large period building. There is parking at the front and a garden at the back which residents are encouraged to use in good weather. There are 26 single rooms and 7 shared rooms. 8 rooms have ensuite facilities.

Upon entering the reception area it was observed that the home seemed clean and fresh. There was a noticeboard displaying useful information and it was noticed that a letter informing residents and visitors of our visit was displayed. In the corridor there was a display of Easter goodies some of which were made by the residents and there was a raffle stand to raise money for the resident's fund. There were two lifts, one for residents and one for service. A large dining lounge area was downstairs and two further lounges were upstairs. The E+V team noted that these were in good decorative order.

It was noted that no hearing loop system was installed in the home and no portable hearing loop system was available. Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID) state that on average, 80% of those living in residential homes will have significant hearing loss. The absence of hearing loop systems is likely to disable many residents and could lead to residents experiencing a number of difficulties such as communication and isolation. The Enter & View team would therefore recommend that the home consult with Action on Hearing Loss and take advice on the installation of hearing loop systems. **Tel:** 03332 405659 (See recommendation 1)

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### The Staff

Throughout the visit, members of staff were observed to support residents in a kind, respectful and dignified way. There appeared to be enough staff to support residents. All of the residents spoken to said that the staff were kind and caring. One member of staff told us that they had worked there for 7 years and was happy working there. We were told that they had received a lot of training and that there were still opportunities to do more. The staff member also said that they had recently completed training about diabetes and 'distance learning' training on 'Mental Health Issues' and 'End of Life Care'. Another member of staff commented that staff morale was good and that the manager had an open door policy. Residents told us that the staff were friendly and respectful.

The Manager said that comparatively their staffing levels and maintenance of staff were good. They put this down to good recruitment procedures and training. We were told that someone from the Parkinson's Society recently visited to talk to staff about living with Parkinson's Disease. The Enter and View team also learned that the home has teamed up with a nearby home to utilise training places.

### Involvement.

The Manager informed us that they had provided a placement for a student who was working on her 'Duke of Edinburgh Award' and that they also have some volunteers who visit. One of these was a relative of a former resident who volunteered to sing to the residents and play music.

The Enter and View team asked if residents were encouraged to use their skills and interests and we learned that the home had a vegetable plot which residents could get involved with. A previous resident had also been enabled to use his DIY skills to carry out some maintenance tasks.

The home involved the local community by having a fete/coffee morning annually to raise money for the Residents' Fund. In the interests of sharing good practice examples from other homes we would invite the home to consider other opportunities for involving the local community as listed on the recommendations sheet (see recommendation 2)

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The home involved residents and family by having open visiting hours and having an annual 'Residents' and Family Meeting'. The Manager informed us that these are well attended and all residents receive a copy of minutes. Once again in the interests of sharing good practice we would invite the home to consider other good practices related to resident and family meetings. (See recommendation 3)

The home has a suggestion box for residents to post comments and suggestions anonymously if they wish.

The Homes website states that the mobile library also visits the home.

### Activities

It was noted that there was a notice board in the lounge displaying an activities time table and that there was at least one activity on every week day. These included Music and craft/art, gardening, quizzes and a reading of the local paper. There are also occasional trips out organised. We have included a list of activities and good practice shared by other homes which we recommend The Firs share with their activities staff and perhaps at resident and family meetings to inspire ideas. (Please see recommendation 4 and Appendix 1)

One volunteer was visiting on the day of our visit and provided a session on musical memories. He sang to backing music and interacted with residents about the music and memories. A group of residents appeared to be enjoying the interaction.

A visit from the donkey sanctuary was also planned for the afternoon.

## How do the residents of The Firs access health and social care services?

### Hospital appointments and admissions

Discharge from hospital and communications with hospitals is something that has been raised as an issue by other homes visited by Healthwatch Somerset and the Enter and View team asked the Manager if they had any issues relating to hospitals. The Manager said that the residents mainly use Musgrove Park Hospital and that some residents came to the home from Williton Community Hospital. The Manager said that there had been problems in the past with residents being discharged from

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hospital at busy times or late at night but that she now ensured she spoke to ward staff and stated that they will not accept residents from hospital after 8pm at night. So far this had worked. The home also ensures that a pre admission assessment is completed prior to residents moving in.

The Enter & View team learned that at times hospital staff were reluctant to share vital information with the home in fear that it may breach confidentiality. The Manager pointed out that she is a Registered Nurse and noted that, in the interests of providing joined up medical care for the residents, it is essential that this information be shared. It is recommended that the home speaks to the Patient Engagement Manager Martine Price, email: [martine.Price@tst.nhs.uk](mailto:martine.Price@tst.nhs.uk) and requests that the concern is passed to the Director of Nursing. (See recommendation 5)

The Manager mentioned that residents have their medication in 'blister packs and that these are destroyed when residents go into hospital by hospital staff according to procedures there. Consequently these then need to be re-ordered which causes problems as records show that a double order has been requested by the home or pharmacy. As above it is recommended this issue be raised with the Patient Engagement Manager. (See recommendation 6)

The Manager informed us that there has been a problem with Vascular Services in that their nurses don't carry out domiciliary visits or accept patients who require assistance to move on to the bed. This means that the home has to rely on the skills of the district nurse who fortunately they have a good relationship with. Healthwatch Somerset will record this as an issue to look into but would also urge the home to speak to the Director of Nursing at Musgrove Hospital about this issue.

### Faith and Religion

Clergy from different Christian faiths Visit the home regularly. At present there is not anyone living from other faiths living at The Firs but staff told us they would support a resident to visit their chosen place of worship if possible.

### Dental Services

Dental services will visit the home and although the initial assessment is free, the Manager informed us that Dental treatment can be expensive and the cost is met by the resident. There is perhaps an issue here for Healthwatch Somerset to look into.

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### GPs

Local GPs visit the home and residents have a named GP.

### Transport

Three residents spoken to said that they would like to be able to get out and about more often. One resident said that they would like to go out more on organised trips. A trip to a local Supermarket had been arranged which was thoroughly enjoyed. The resident noted that trips must be difficult to arrange due to physical and mobility needs of some of the residents which may include wheelchair transport.

The home does not have a mini bus and the Manager said that taxis are expensive especially considering there have been so many road works and detours in Taunton of late. The Enter and View team would recommend that the home contacts 'You can do' T: 01278 664 180 and Aster Living T: 0333 400 8299 active living groups who are often able to take residents out or transport them to Active living groups. Or finds out more by visiting <http://www.somersetactiveliving.org.uk/welcome/>

It is also recommended the home looks into talking to other organisations about the sharing of minibuses such as rethink, local schools and scout groups. (See Recommendation 6)

### Physiotherapy

Is available at the home for no extra charge

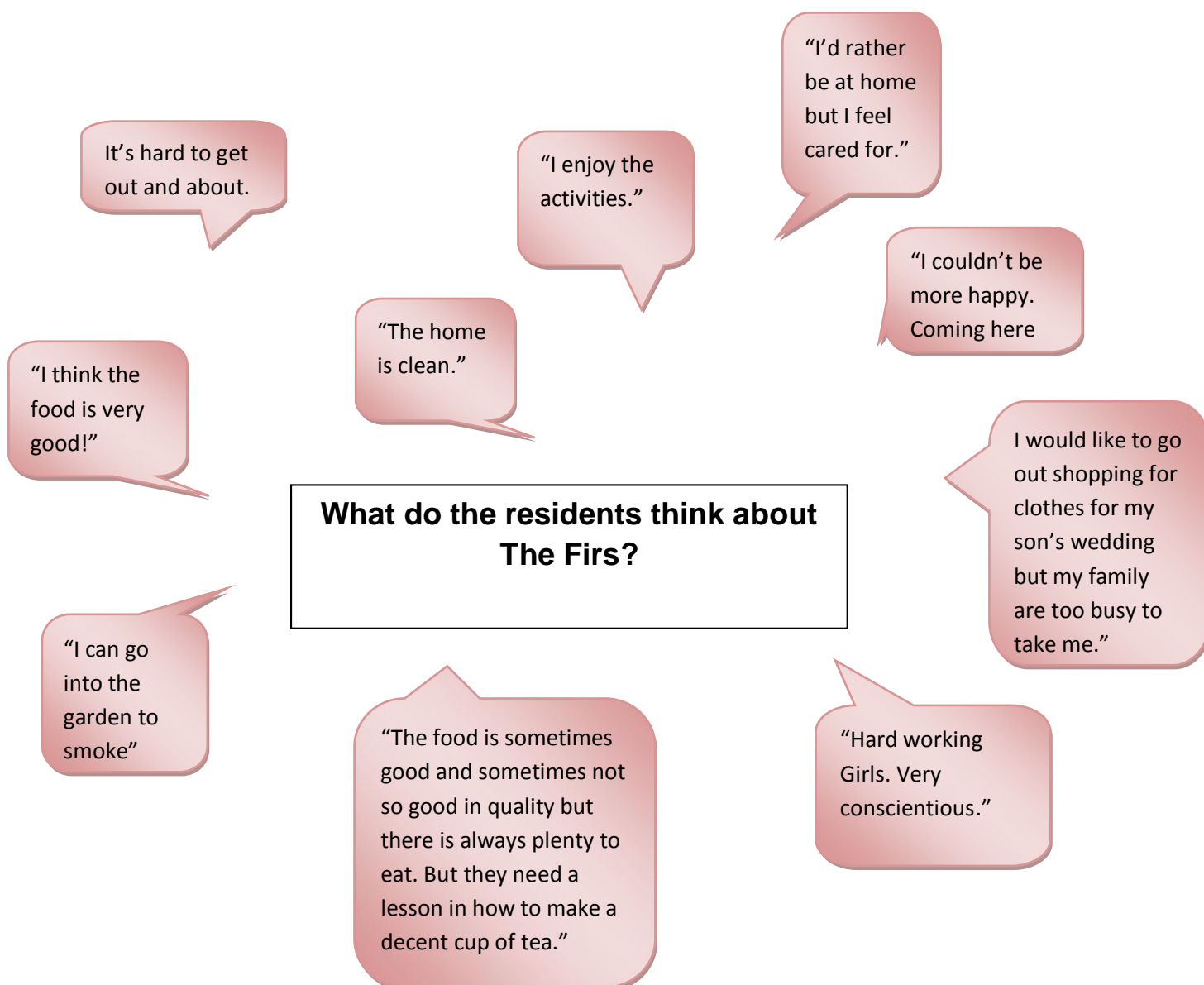
### Chiropody

Is available at the home for no extra charge

### Stroke Rehabilitation

Can visit the home and provide services such as speech therapy.

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## Conclusions

Residents we spoke with seemed happy with the care they received. Staff were observed to treat residents with dignity and respect and the staff we spoke with seemed happy working at the Firs.

The environment appeared to meet the needs of the residents and the lack of ensuite facilities in some rooms was not raised as an issue. Improvements to the

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environment can be made by consulting with 'Action on Hearing Loss' as recommended.

Some residents said they would like to be able to get out and about to go shopping or visit friends but were unable to do so as they had no family available to support them. The Enter and View team have made some suggestions in this report which, to some degree, may help to address this.

The Firs tried to involve residents and their families as well as the local community in different ways and the recommendation's section of this report lists the good practice examples found at other visits that may assist the Firs to further develop this involvement .

With regard to accessing health services, residents appeared to have good access to other services although the Manager identified some issues with hospital services and it is hoped our suggested recommendations will go some way towards addressing these.

Overall the Enter and View team was impressed with the service offered at the Firs Nursing Home and grateful to the Manager for sharing the issues they experience in liaising with health services which has helped to inform Healthwatch Somerset of issues that exist for health and social care services in Somerset.

## Disclaimer

- This report relates only to a specific visit (a point in time)
- This report is not representative of all service users (only those who contributed within the restricted time available)



## Appendix 1

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## Residential/ Nursing homes for older persons –Consolidated Activities List Identified from Enter and View Visits.

A broad range of activities in residential services for older persons is important as it can provide residents with choices about meaningful ways in which to spend their time. It is especially so, when residents are no longer able to gain access to outside activities. Some homes have noted that engaging residents in activities is difficult and have struggled to find meaningful activities to offer. We have compiled this activities list from the Somerset LINK Enter and View visits.

### Quizzes.

Visits from local falconry/ bird sanctuary.

Musical Entertainers visit twice a month.

Visitors and staff bringing in pets to visit.

Monthly in-house church service.

Visits from the owl sanctuary.

Visits from the Donkey Sanctuary

### Bingo.

Comedian visits.

Arts and crafts.

Annual carol service.

Hand bell ringing

Nintendo Wii exercise.

Garden walks.

### Art class.

One to one manicure.

Knitting circle.

Drumming for the brain.

Reminiscence. (Group & 1 to 1)

Old fashioned sweet shop visit to the home.

Indian Head massage

### DIY club

Flower arranging

### Film club

Flexercise.

Singing.

Songs of praise.

Chiropody.

Clothes Direct visit to the home.

Cooking.

Assisted gardening

Model making

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**Barbeques**

One to one time to chat with key worker

Crochet

Garden Games

and movement.

Armchair exercise

Pets at home service  
group

Swimming

Reading of local paper.

**Guide Dogs**

Life Story books

Gardening (indoor &amp; outdoors).

Spare room made into own bar Dough modelling Music

Dancing.

News &amp; current affairs discussion

Crossword

X box bowling

**Trips out to:**

Garden centre

Theatre

Just for a drive

Shopping and Christmas shopping

Library

Local castle or national trust historic building.

Cinema

Local school nativity

Pub lunch

Fish and chips out

Christmas lights

Seaside.

Coffee shop

Taunton Flower show

**General good practice identified - Activities**

- Display an activities timetable on the notice-board and provide a copy to each resident.
- Include an activities list on the home's web site.

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- Offer of regular individual activities on a one to one basis. This can include assistance with a hobby, writing a life story book or just time to chat or reminisce.
- Encourage and support residents to organise their own activities.
- Invite nearby homes to partake in events and activities such as garden parties, quizzes, visiting entertainers and tea dances.
- Discuss activities at resident meetings.
- Offer a mixture of individual and group activities.
- Give gentle encouragement to participate in activities while ensuring noone feels guilty for choosing to opt out.
- Employ an activities co-ordinator or give staff a specific role and time to plan activities with residents.
- Arrange fund-raising activities such as car boot sales which contribute to the 'Residents Fund' which can then be used to pay for trips out and additional activities or equipment.
- Allocate time for staff to arrange individual activities for residents or spend one to one time with a resident.
- Space permitting, invite local clubs such as WI and local film club to meet at the home ensuring residents can join in if they wish.
- Make enquiries to the local Rotary Club, Stroke Club, Scouts Association etc. to see if they can support with arranging transport to community events or rent their minibus.
- Seek volunteers to help run activities.

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