



Authorised Representatives: Healthwatch Wandsworth Enter & View team members

HW Contact details: Ambra Caruso, Healthwatch Wandsworth, Ambra@wandcareall.org.uk

Theme of inspection: Common themes and learning points arising from Enter & View team visits to Extra Care Housing Schemes for Older People

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Wandsworth would like to thank the residents and staff at Chestnut House, Ensham House, Mary Court and Prince of Wales Drive extra care facilities for their contribution to the extra care project.

Disclaimer

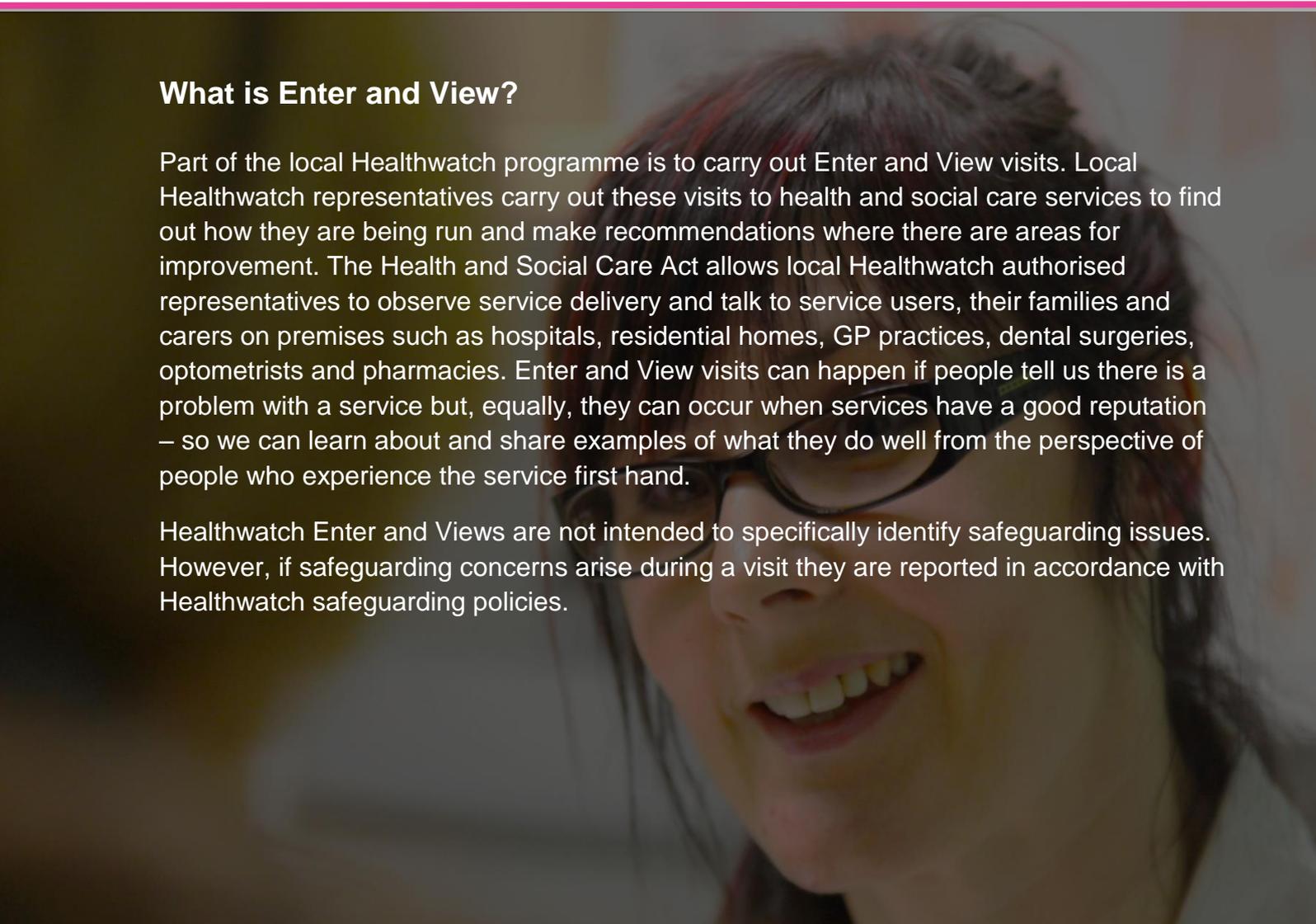
Please note that this report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and 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.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies.





Purpose of our visits to Extra Care schemes

A current strategic priority for the use of our Enter and View powers is to visit extra care housing schemes. We feel that tenants in these schemes may get less chance to express their views than the users of other health and social care services.

The full visit reports can be found at www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk/resources/enter-&-view-reports.

Strategic drivers

The concept of Extra Care for older people is a relatively new one in Wandsworth but not elsewhere. In principle, it aims to combine the advantages of independent living in a person's own home with the provision of co-ordinated care to cover a wide range of essential care needs.

Evaluating the success of how an Extra Care scheme meets the needs of its tenants can prove complicated. Extra Care can be assessed at different levels – for the quality of personal care to the individuals, as with any other domiciliary care services in the community; for the quality of additional support provided for vulnerable people living together in a sheltered environment; and for the wider quality of living independently, retaining more choice and control.

In general, the tenants we met and talked to on our visits were happy to have been given the choice of living in an Extra Care scheme, which they valued for offering both independence and privacy. People who had previously lived in residential care homes generally preferred the experience of extra care schemes, while those who had struggled to cope in their own homes were relieved not to have that burden.

Observations

The tenants we spoke to across the three schemes were generally satisfied with the quality of care, shopping and meals, additional support, activities, access to healthcare and the physical environment.

Examples of things that seemed to work well for these tenants included:

- Flexibility in the support offered to enable people who want to stay as independent as possible.
- Having their own flat with their own furniture, especially if there was a balcony.
- Having carers to assist with personal care, particularly when the carers were known and liked by the tenant.
- Being able to eat meals they wanted to eat, with suitable help with shopping and/or meal preparation

- Regular organised visits from health care professionals such as opticians and chiropodists.
- Having a choice of communal activities, but not being pressurised into taking part. A recognition that lots of tenants are happy in their own company.

However, there was some confusion for residents, relatives, staff and managers about the role of staff and the provision of services. Most tenants recognised that care staff were busy, and so might be reluctant to articulate their need for further help, resulting in some mismatch between individual expectations and services received. This raised the possibility that staff's respect for the autonomy of tenants and their wish for independence might result in some vulnerable people not receiving all the attention they needed.

Common Themes

We identified some common themes that those providing or commissioning extra care schemes might want to consider:

- There needs to be clear information and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of the Care Manager and those of social services. For example, it is unclear where the responsibility lies for extra support. Extra support appears to be falling between the roles and responsibilities of social services and the scheme's Care Manager.
- It is not clear that all the schemes yet have suitable registration with CQC, but progress seems to be being made on this.
- The needs of tenants may change over time. There was some concern that people with higher needs were not being supported sufficiently and that there were not enough staff to achieve this. We also heard complaints of alarms not being responded to quickly enough, especially outside of office hours.
- Some schemes had difficulty organising appropriate GP access, especially if the tenant had to register with a new GP.
- Communication is vital. Many tenants are not used to speaking up for themselves and voicing their wishes. Many expressed issues or concerns to the Enter and View team that they had not raised with staff. Provision for some form of key-working, particularly for more vulnerable people, could help here.
- Thought should be given to formal arrangements for collecting feedback. Good documentation is needed, especially around clarification of responsibilities and expectations.
- Good relationships and communication with tenants' relatives is important. The role of friends and family in tenants' lives is invaluable, but it is important to realise that not all tenants will have this sort of informal support. Visitors should be made to feel welcome.
- Change in management can cause issues for tenants and relatives and needs to be

communicated well.

- When changes need to be made to care plans there is sometimes delay or confusion, as social services need to be involved. A system of key-working might help in the early identification of changing needs.
- Activities do not always need to be collective, and should be tailored to tenants' interests and gender. In particular tenants need to be supported to go outside the facility.
- Prompt maintenance of the rooms – even small things like changing a light bulb - is important for the wellbeing of tenants.
- Some tenants might benefit from more practical help in their rooms and with activities other than shopping – for example posting letters. In particular, help should be provided for people with mobility problems – even when these are temporary.
- Care Managers and staff would benefit from access to support and advice from professionals and resources outside the scheme, including training.

