

## Experts by Experience

Home: Drayton Court

Date: April 2015

### **What is Experts by Experience?**

Several WCS homes have been scrutinised by Age UK Warwickshire volunteers to find out what life was like for people living there. Volunteers explored all aspects of home life, from atmosphere and cleanliness to mealtimes and culture.

As well as using discreet observations, the Age UK also volunteers mingled with people who lived there to find out how they felt about their quality of life. Each volunteer filed a report rating things like cleanliness, staff attitude and atmosphere from poor to excellent, and also commented on how each score was derived. A first round of visits gave 16 'excellents', 16 'goods', and 3 'adequates', however more visits are planned throughout 2015. **Volunteers' names have been redacted, but here are their comments published in full.**

**Note:** All volunteers' comments are black, while their instructions from Age UK are in Magenta.

Sections:

**Home Environment**

**Staff Attitude**

**What was Happening in the Home?**

**Eating and Mealtimes**

**Quality of Life**

# Home Environment

**Score: 5/5**

**Describe your own experience of the quality of the home environment. Please consider things like:**

**How clean the home was, how it was decorated, how homely and comfortable it was, how the home was personalised to the people who live there, how the home smelt and whether the facilities were comfortable, pleasant and easy to find.**

I was warmly welcomed to Drayton Court - the doorbell was answered promptly and I was asked to sign in for health and safety reasons.

Drayton Court was built in the 1960s and so has long corridors with bedrooms leading off and lounges and kitchens at the end of the corridors. This design is not necessarily conducive to a 'homely feel' but this drawback has been overcome by the very skilful use of different decorative styles. The first impression is of an 'Aladdin's cave' with different wallpapers, knick-knacks and displays on the walls. At first this can be quite an assault on the senses but then you realise that by breaking up the long, straight lines of the layout into separate, individual sections or rooms this detracts completely from the uniform nature of the design and makes Drayton Court very homely. There was even a 1940s themed area furnished with bargains from charity shops.

Everywhere was immaculate - the bedrooms, bathrooms, lounges and kitchen were all clean and tidy. I still haven't worked out how the walkways were kept so clear and safe for the residents to walk about when there were so many items of interest everywhere. The lounges looked like sitting rooms that were lived in but yet tidy and safe. I must congratulate Shirley and her team for creating such a relaxed, homely feel when the layout of the building could have resulted in a much more sterile environment.

Each of the bedrooms had a nameplate with the residents name and there were displays outside their doors with details of their background and interesting facts about the neighbourhoods in which they'd lived. Bathrooms and toilets were labelled with graphics to illustrate their function and so were easy to find.

There was no unpleasant smell and the home was clean and fresh.

There were areas outside which the residents could access with supervision and the garden area was going to be upgraded with a grant from a previous resident. The home itself is near to the shops and local facilities.

# Staff Attitude

**Score: 4/5**

**Describe your own experience of the attitude of staff. Please consider things like:**

**How you and others at the home were treated, whether people were listened to, whether people were treated with dignity and respect, whether staff were polite and courteous? Whether they had a rapport with you/and other, how you/people who lived there were addressed (eg what name was used and whether you were asked what you'd like to be called), how you and people at the home were treated, whether people were listened to and whether they were treated with dignity and respect.**

The home was well staffed and the people working there were supportive yet unobtrusive and catered for the needs of the residents extremely well. Several residents commented that the staff were 'nice people' and that 'they look after us'.

The staff obviously knew the residents well and were able to detect when they were feeling out of sorts. I saw one member of staff check on a resident who seemed a bit down. They constantly checked on them, provided drinks and/or reassurance or walked alongside them when they were mobilising. The staff rounded up mobility aides that had been left behind by the residents and encouraged them to use their sticks or Zimmer frames when they had forgotten.

One member of staff who was about to go off shift stayed talking to a resident who was temporarily confined to her bed and was unhappy about not being able to get up.

The staff were polite and caring and gave the residents time and attention – they did not hurry residents when they were being taken to the hairdressers but allowed them time to try and get up from the chair. They would try to mobilise the residents in the first instance but if they were unsteady they would use a wheelchair.

In the main the staff called the residents by their first names but sometimes terms of affection such as 'sweetheart' were used.

The home had a Warwickshire College student on placement supervising craft activities in one of the dining areas.

# What was happening in the home?

**Score: 4/5**

**Describe your own experience of what was happening in the home. Please consider things like:**

**What people were doing – whether it seemed to be their choice, whether people were doing what they might have been doing living independently, whether people's interests and hobbies were being supported, the organised activities you observed, how were people encouraged to join in activities and could people choose not to join in.**

There were timetables on the noticeboards detailing the activities available in the home ranging from walks to the shops to a visit by the hairdresser. There also 'OOMPH' sessions run by a social enterprise which were a combination of music and activity and were apparently enjoyed by all.

There was an Activities Co-ordinator working in the home who was enthusiastic and was planning to set up a number of clubs including photography and gardening. She also had a computer available which had music and games programs. She was also keen on involving residents in cooking and baking as she believed the smell of the food cooking would enhance their appetite rather than the food appearing fully prepared from the home kitchen.

There were hairdressing sessions available and the manager was planning a beauty bar on the top floor as one of the female residents who had never had her nails painted before had very much enjoyed the experience.

There were a group of gentlemen playing dominoes during my visit and one of the staff played table tennis with one of residents. There were craft activities in one of the dining areas where one lady was very proud of her colouring work.

Residents could sit outside in the sun or go for a walk round the garden with a member of staff if they were less mobile. Alternatively they could rest in their bedrooms or the lounges.

The radios in the communal areas were tuned to big band music or old time favourites and when one of the residents started singing the lady next to her was obviously enjoying it as her face lit up with appreciation where previously she had looked a little morose.

One of the more able ladies said she was well cared for in the home but missed not being able to nip to the shops although I believe she was taken out whenever possible.

# Eating and mealtimes

Score: 4/5

**Describe your own experience of the meals and eating. Please consider things like:**

**The comfort and atmosphere at the mealtime(s) you participated in, the quality and quantity of food offered and the way it was presented, whether people got choice about their food and could they serve themselves, how staff supported people during the mealtime, whether people could choose when and where to eat, whether people could help themselves to drinks and snacks whenever they wished? Whether there was a variety and were they visible to people and the comfort and atmosphere at the mealtime(s) you participated in.**

I was not present for any actual mealtimes but was able to look at the menus which were freely available in the corridors. They outlined the breakfast options which included a cooked breakfast, a three course lunch and then a cooked or sandwich supper. When I spoke to the residents at least 4 commented on the good food and seemed satisfied with the choice. The manager had mentioned that they were thinking of reviewing the 3 course lunch as this came quite quickly on the heels of a cooked breakfast and may be proving too much for some residents.

The dining areas were intimate and cosy.

I was offered frequent cups of tea and enjoyed a drink and a cake outside with one of the residents.

There were snacks freely available around the home and residents were offered hot drinks on a regular basis from a trolley.

# Quality of Life

**Score: 4/5**

**Describe your own experience of quality of life for people. Please consider things like:**

**The general appearance of people (clothes, hair, teeth, glasses), whether people's personal appearance choices and preferences were supported (eg men wearing their tie, women wearing makeup or jewellery), whether call bells were intrusive? Were they answered in good time, whether significant events and anniversaries were observed, whether the staff know people who lived there (their interests, preferences, life histories, family) and whether people were enjoying themselves in the home? Was there an atmosphere of calm, laughter, fun?**

One of the residents gave a ringing endorsement of the home by saying that she had visited the newest home in the group but wouldn't go anywhere else than Drayton Court.

Shirley and her team have managed to provide an environment that is anything but institutionalised - full of memorabilia and personalised items but yet neat and safe. They have successfully transformed the linear layout by the use of different wallpapers and designs.

The quality of the staff shines through and is demonstrated by the low turnover of staff with no difficulty in recruiting when required.

All of the residents looked well cared for and I noticed particularly that they all had safe and secure footwear to prevent slips and trips.

The staff were caring and supportive and there was a calm and relaxed atmosphere.

## Other comments

I would like to thank Shirley and the residents of Drayton Court for inviting me into their home and allowing me to spend time with them. The highlight of the visit was to witness the quality of the team working there and the caring and respectful way they supported the residents.