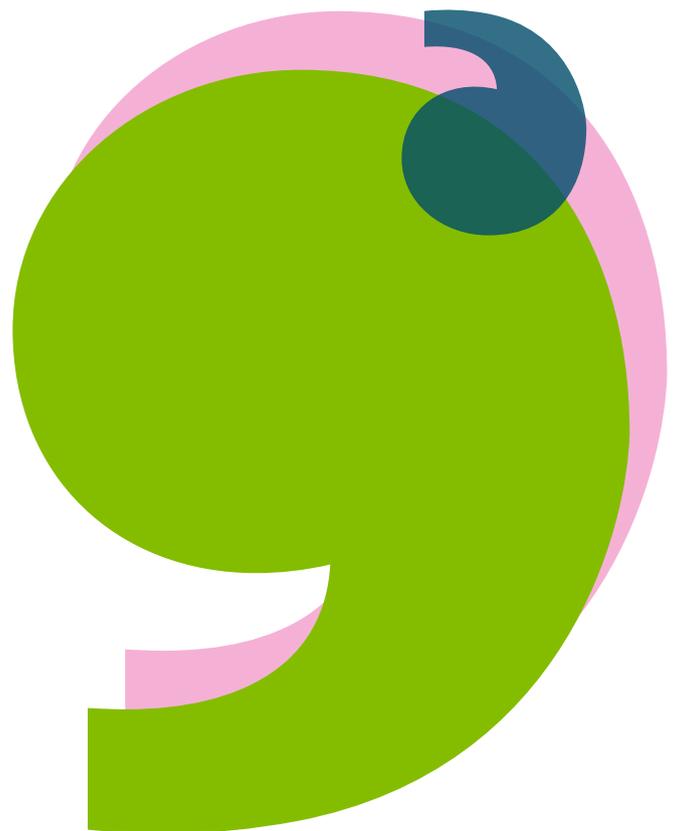




ENTER AND VIEW REPORT: RATHMORE HOUSE



Details of visit:	
Service address	Rathmore House, 31 Eton Avenue, London, NW3 3EL.
Service provider	C&C
Date and time	Saturday 1 October 2016: 2 - 4 pm
Authorised representatives	Victoria Armitage (Healthwatch Camden staff), Cristina Sarb (volunteer), Charlotte Adams (volunteer).
Contact details	020 7922 5300
Service provided	20 bed Residential Home for frail elderly residents with dementia.

1 Purpose of visit

Our visit to Rathmore House was conducted as part of a series of pre-arranged visits to residential care homes across Camden.

National charity, Independent Age, have been carrying out research looking at the things that older people and their families want to know when choosing a care home, as well as consulting care experts for their views on what are the most useful indicators of quality. They have developed a set of [10 Quality Indicators for care homes](#).

Independent Age intend to use these Quality Indicators to call for better reporting of key data by care homes. This will help older people and families make more informed decisions, while also helping the Care Quality Commission (CQC), local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to build up a comprehensive picture of quality in care homes - something that is currently difficult to do.

We used these Quality Indicators to talk to staff, residents and family members in each of the older people's residential care homes in Camden to see how they met the 10 Quality Indicators and to test how easy it was to gather the relevant information during our visits.

We have created a report of each care home. Through this work we aim to:

- **Provide a different type of information**, based on personal testimony, to help fill the gaps in what people can find out from the Care Quality Commission, the local authority and the care homes themselves.
- **Seek out and share best practice** and provide feedback to care home providers based on our observations.
- **Test both the content and practical application of the Independent Age 10 Quality Indicators** with a view to refining them for future wider use.

2 Key findings

- Rathmore House has a Registered Manager in post. We were told that the manager is on site very regularly and she was spoken of positively by staff.
- We heard that staff at Rathmore House have the skills and training to do their jobs well and the workforce is generally stable and has generally enough staff, though there may be shortages at times.
- We heard that Rathmore House is proactive in monitoring and responding to residents changing needs.
- Rathmore House has some links with local community groups but could potentially have more regular contact. We understand that the home is looking to increase links with the local community.
- Rathmore House has a full and varied range of activities on offer, including occupational activities. We were impressed by the use of individual activities plan and the “resident of the day” scheme (which allows the home to focus on attention on a particular resident).
- We heard that Rathmore House has a healthy culture of challenge and feedback and a clear way for residents and relatives to influence service by holding regular residents’ and relatives’ meetings. We were given examples of how relatives had influenced services and heard positive comments from family that the home is open to suggestions. Rathmore House could build on this strength by holding regular surveys of staff, residents and family and by promoting existing methods of feedback such as comments books.
- We understand that residents have a regular access to GPs and dental services.
- We heard that Rathmore House accommodates residents’ cultural and lifestyle needs, and were given several examples of the home proactively taking steps to do so.

3 Results of visit

General comments

We visited Rathmore House on a Saturday when there was a party in progress to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the organisation's establishment. Staff were dressed in fancy dress appropriate to the theme of the party: a fair ground. A number of residents' relatives were present at the party or manning stalls such as "hook-a-duck" stall. Friends of staff were also present as well as some children who interacted with the activities. The atmosphere was upbeat and lively. A number of residents were sat in the sitting room but were brought out to the garden by staff to enjoy the entertainment as the weather allowed. Healthwatch Camden's Authorised representatives spent approximately two hours at the home.

A good care home should...

- 1. Have a registered manager in post. The registered manager is the most important staff member in a care home - and the one responsible for ensuring quality standards, and residents' needs, are met. They should be visible within the care home, provide good leadership to staff, have experience of working in care homes and qualifications to help them do their job.*

At Rathmore House.....

The Registered **Manager** had been in post for eight months and the Deputy Manager for 20 years. The Registered Manager had significant previous experience of managing care homes. The manager and deputy told us that they were present on site for five days a week, usually between Monday and Friday.

Staff we spoke to said that the manager provided frequent training and was motivational.

Family members we spoke to said that they knew who the manager was. Three out of four family members said that the manager was very easy to find if they wanted to speak to her. One commented that as they usually visit at the weekends, they didn't see the manager very often as she generally works Monday to Friday.

Three residents were asked if they knew the manager and saw her around the home. One resident said that they didn't see the manager much, while another resident commented that they knew the manager well and saw her a lot. A third resident wasn't able to identify the manager but put this down to the effects of their health condition.

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, fully. Most people we spoke to said that they knew the manager well and that she was easy to locate. Staff said that management provided good leadership.

Have a stable workforce. *Care homes with knowledgeable, experienced staff who get to know residents can make the difference between an institution and a home. Where turnover of staff is very high, these qualities can be lost. It may also be a sign that staff are not happy working in the home.*

At Rathmore House.....

The management told us that many staff been working at the service for ten years or more, but that there is a higher turnover of care staff. We were told that when care staff do stay on in the service, they generally want to progress their careers to different roles.

The two staff members we spoke to had been working at the service for several months and 18 months. They thought that staff turnover rates were not too high and commented that several staff members had been working at the home for

years. However, they also noted that the home had had several new starters in the past few months.

The **family** members we spoke to said that they knew the staff and there wasn't much turnover. One person commented that many staff members had been in the service for years.

One family member said that they hadn't been visiting the service long enough to judge.

Two **residents** were asked if they knew the staff well. One commented that they did know the staff well, while the other person commented that they knew some staff well, while others were new to the home.

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, but... People we spoke to agreed that staff turnover is not high, though it was mentioned that care staff do leave more frequently than might be optimal.

2. **With the skills to do their jobs.** *Well informed, skilled staff who are valued and developed as employees are vital to a smooth running care home. All care homes should have a clear, comprehensive training scheme to ensure staff have the knowledge they need.*

At Rathmore House.....

The **management** told us that all staff had ten mandatory training sessions and provided a list of those trainings.

Staff told us that training was available every three weeks and mentioned specific training they had done on manual handling and dementia care which are repeated every six months.

Family members told us that they thought staff training levels were good with one person stating that it was “really great”. One family member commented that some of the newer staff members did need extra training, but that they had received this and the previous issues she had noted had been resolved. “At first (my relative) wasn’t always dressed properly, for example she had no socks on - but that’s stopped now.”

We asked three residents if they thought the staff knew how to care for people living in the home and they all commented that felt well cared for, with two residents saying that they felt “very well” looked after.

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age’s indicator?



Yes, fully. Everyone we spoke to agreed that staff have the skills and training to do their jobs well.

3. **Have enough staff on duty during the day and night.** *Many homes have a lower proportion of staff on during the night, but if the ratio falls too low - at any time of day - response times can be too slow.*

At Rathmore House.....

The management told us that there was always five staff (to 20 residents) on duty, but that this could be more as appeared to be the case on the day of our visit.

One **staff** member told us that there were usually five staff during the day and three staff at night and noted that on Sundays there were sometimes only three staff working. Another staff member told us that there were usually five staff in the day and four at night.

One **family** member told us they thought that there were enough staff on duty. Another family member told us that there were enough during the day time but that they didn't know about the situation at night times. A third told us that they thought there were generally enough staff but some days had reduced staffing levels. They commented that it might be good to have additional staff but that this was probably unrealistic.

We asked two **residents** if the staff were quick to respond if they needed help. Both residents agreed that they were with one commenting that staff were "very attentive".

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, but... Most people we spoke to agreed that there were enough staff but there was some confusion about numbers and some small concerns about staffing levels.

- 4. Be clear about how they will be able to meet your needs both now and in the future.** *Many of us will develop more care needs as we get older - particularly if we have a condition like dementia. It is vital that homes can spot changes to residents' health and respond appropriately - consulting other health professionals where necessary - in order to provide the right level of care, and prevent you from having to move again.*

At Rathmore House.....

Management told us that they reviewed residents' care plans once per month and had a resident of the day scheme where particular attention is paid to a resident on a given day.

One **staff** member told us that they observe residents and let management know if there is a change. The other staff member told us that management regularly review residents.

The **family** member we spoke to said that staff respond "very well" or are "very attentive". One family member commented that "they usually tell us (about a change); they are very good at keeping in touch."

We asked two **residents** if the staff notice if they start to need extra help: one said that staff did notice and the other said that they thought they would do if the issue arose.

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, fully. Everyone we spoke to agreed that Rathmore House is proactive in responding to changing care needs.

- 5. Actively involve residents, family, friends and their local community in the life of the home.** Homes should have a clear way for residents, relatives and friends to get involved in decision-making in the home, if they choose to, such as a Residents and Relatives Committee. Homes should not have set visiting hours, or any other arrangements that make them feel more like a hospital than a home. They should have good links with the local community, for example by arranging visits from local schools.

At Rathmore House.....

Management told us that they have an “open door” policy and that family members can email their comments to the home as well. They also hold a residents’ and relatives’ meeting four times a year. They provided an example of a family member suggesting that the home acquire a fish tank to provide visual stimulation for non-verbal residents which is something the home has adopted.

Management told us that they try to create a sense of community through having parties such as the one happening on the day we visited. They also told us that they celebrate residents’ birthdays and celebrate holiday seasons and festivals such as Eid, Halloween, christmas etc.

Management told us that the local church come in to the home. They also have links with local trades people and shops but they don’t visit the home. The management told us that they are thinking of inviting more schools in to visit the residents.

Staff told us that family members are often at the home and can get involved in the activities.

Staff told us that they try to create a sense of community through singing together and through activities like parties. They told us that every Monday they have a resident of the day who they pay special attention to.

One staff member told us that lots of organisations come to the home, while the other staff member said that local organisations don’t visit the home very much.

Two **family** members told us about how they could get involved in the way the home is run. One said that they did so by attending residents’ and relatives’ meetings. The other family member said they hadn’t been particularly involved but felt that the home would be open to suggestions. One family member provided an example of how they had suggested that staff wear name badges which the home has adopted.

The family members are also now invited to medical appointments of their relative after requesting for this to happen.

Four family members were asked how the home creates a sense of community. Three family members mentioned the activities and parties which the home organises. One mentioned the residents' and relatives' meeting.

One family member was asked whether any local community organisations came into the home and responded that they thought they did, to play games with residents.

One **resident** commented that they were perfectly happy and had no suggestions. Two residents commented that they have opportunity to give their feedback to the home and are asked for their opinions, with one resident mentioning the residents' and relatives' meetings as one of those opportunities.

One resident commented that local people don't generally come into the home much. They noted that they do have lots of volunteers who come in to do games but that they aren't local people.

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, but... Rathmore House has a clear way for residents and relatives to get involved in decision making and we were told that the home are open to suggestions and given examples. However, Rathmore House could potentially be more proactive in encouraging feedback in a range of ways and in seeking out links with local community organisations.

6. Offer meaningful activity and enjoyment to suit all tastes. *Care homes should not be boring places - they should offer an interesting range of activities and entertainment that match the tastes and preferences of their residents, including support for individual activity. Homes should take steps to stop residents from becoming isolated or lonely while respecting their privacy and choice.*

At Rathmore House.....

Management told us that they run a range of activities to suit a range of needs. They told us that they offer activities such as dancing, singing, massage and aromatherapy. They also offer occupational activities, such as helping to tidy up. Management told us that Rathmore House has a resident of the day” scheme to focus attention on a particular resident. They told us that they use picture cards with non-verbal residents to enable them to get involved and that each resident has a key worker who knows them and their habits. They speak to relatives and use the life histories of the residents to ascertain their likes and hobbies where it is not possible to gain this information from residents themselves. They have individual activities care plans. They commented that not all residents like to be involved in the activities and sometimes it’s better to simply sit with a resident and hold their hand.

Staff listed a number of activities available at the home such as karaoke, dancing, salsa etc. One staff member told us that they use their body language to communicate with non-verbal residents and that some residents can communicate through writing.

Three **family** members commented that there were lots of activities on offer and gave examples. Two family members noted that their relative isn’t particularly interested in the activities and one family member suggested that it is difficult to engage people with advanced dementia. One family member commented that they didn’t feel they could really suggest any ideas for activities as their relative had only ever enjoyed going to the theatre and they thought that wouldn’t be possible at the home.

Three **residents** were asked about their hobbies in the home. One responded that they liked dancing but weren’t physically able to do that much anymore. Another responded that they liked singing and did that in the home. They also had a

camera around their neck which they said they didn't use much anymore. A third resident said they liked to get involved in most activities in the home.

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, fully. Rathmore House has a range of activities to suit all tastes, including occupational activities. Residents have individual care plans and there is a “resident of the day” scheme, to focus attention on a particular resident

- 7. Make sure that you can see a GP or other health professional like a dentist, optician or chiropodist, whenever you need to.** *You have the same rights to see a health professional promptly if you are living in a care home as you would if you were living in your own home. Ask the care home about the relationship they have with their local NHS services - does a GP visit regularly? Can they call a GP out in an emergency? How easy is it for residents to see a dentist, optician, chiropodist or physiotherapist, either for a check-up or in an emergency?*

At Rathmore House.....

The **management** told us that a GP visits weekly and that a District Nurse visits daily. They also said that residents have a medication review twice per year. We were later informed that residents have access to local dentists in the community who visit the home or residents go out to a dentist of their choice. We were told that staff have oral hygiene training provided by the NHS.

Staff told us that a GP comes in regularly and a District nurse though there was some confusion about the frequency of these visits.

Family members told us that the GP comes in regularly.

We spoke to three **residents** about this issue. One said they don't need to see a doctor, the other said that they see the GP regularly and a third noted that they had seen someone else who had fallen attended to by a doctor.

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, fully. People we spoke to said that residents have regular access to GP and dental services.

- 8. Accommodate your cultural and lifestyle needs.** *Care homes should be set up to meet your cultural and lifestyle needs as well as your care needs, and shouldn't make you feel uncomfortable if you do things differently to other residents. They should also be proactive in finding out what your needs are, so they can accommodate them.*

At Rathmore House.....

Management told us that they invite in religious persons to help residents keep up their faith. They also told us that they celebrate world food days and where residents eat different traditional dishes from around the world and celebrate religious festivals such as Eid and Christmas. They told us that they had recently received a silver award for Equality and Diversity. It is not clear who gave this award.

Staff told us that one resident is vegetarian and that this is accommodated.

We asked one **family** member about this issue and they felt it wasn't relevant to their relative.

We asked one **resident** about this issue but they were unable to cite any need. However, they were able to continue their habit of smoking and a covered area outside was provided with wheelchair access.

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age’s indicator?



Yes, fully. The people we spoke to about this issue agreed that Rathmore House makes provision for cultural and lifestyle needs.

- 9. Show that they’re always looking to improve. You should be able to find out what current residents, their families and friends think about the home. The care home should be happy to help you do this - for example, by putting you in touch with a residents and relatives group, or allowing you to speak to residents and visitors in private. They should also have support in place for people who wish to make a complaint at any time, and there should be a healthy culture of challenge and feedback between residents, relatives and staff.*

At Rathmore House.....

Management told us that they are open to suggestions for improvement. They have a residents’ and relatives’ meeting four times a year where people can make suggestions. They told us that they have a comments book for suggestions. We were not able to locate the comments book and family members we spoke to were not aware of its existence.

Management also explained the complaints procedure and said that residents or relatives would be provided with independent advocacy should they require it but that most issues are resolved before a formal complaint is made. The manager noted that she had dealt with three complaints since starting at the home eight months ago.

Management told us that before people move in, they and their relatives can visit the home and speak to residents and their family if they are present. They advise people to visit more than once before they decide to move in.

Staff told us that if people had suggestions for improvements the home is open to them and would tell the manager. They said that there was a complaints procedure and that people could make complaints without fear. They told us that potential residents and their family can come to visit the home and speak to people before they move in.

Three **family** members we spoke to told us that if they had a suggestion to improve the home it would be “sympathetically received” and that the home is “open to suggestion” and “would listen very well”. A fourth said that they could speak to the manager.

Two family members said that the complaints procedure was very clear. A third said that they hadn’t followed any formal complaints process but had raised issues with the manager which had been resolved “straight away”.

All four family members said they had been able to visit this home or its sister home before their relative moved in and had spoken to residents and family members. One family member had eaten lunch while visiting.

We spoke to two **residents** about suggestions they had for improving the home. One resident told us that it was difficult to get up the stairs but that they hadn’t yet told anyone this. The other resident wasn’t able to think of any suggestions. They felt that they had settled into the routine of the home and didn’t really consider making improvements. They commented that there’s no “quick fixes” as everyone has different needs and ideas.

Does Rathmore House meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, but... Everyone we spoke to suggested that Rathmore House is happy to receive feedback and work to improve. Rathmore House could build on this strength to be more proactive in encouraging feedback from residents and relatives who are more timid about voicing their opinions. It was not clear that the comments book mentioned was widely known about.

4 Service provider response

Healthwatch Camden recommendation:

We said that Rathmore House has some links with local community groups but could potentially have more regular contact.

Rathmore House said:

- *We have made good relations with the local church and have been advertised in the Parish magazine.*
- *We are starting work experience students in the New Year for a few schools who have asked for this service.*
- *We have started a new hairdressing service for our clients and take 2 residents to local village hairdressers.*
- *We are introducing ourselves to local schools to share young and old experiences.*

Healthwatch Camden recommendation:

Rathmore House could build on its strength of involvement through holding regular surveys of staff, residents and family and by promoting existing methods of feedback such as comments boxes.

Rathmore House said:

- *We currently have comments books; one for all subjects and the other for food and catering Issues.*
- *This is for staff, residents and all visitors to comment in.*
- *Staff are invited to complete survey monkey on-line a few times per year and we also have investors in people each year who interview staff for their comments on their work place and the company.*
- *We intend to bring this recommendation to the relatives meeting and see if they might suggest another way in which they may prefer to give feedback.*

5 Background

5.1 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.

5.2 Strategic drivers

As part of our work, we aim to seek out the voices of those people who can be least heard: which includes people living in residential care homes. Many elderly people who are not able to live independently are residents of either nursing homes or residential care homes. In Camden there are currently seven residential care homes for older people. A total of approximately 400 people are resident in these homes. Residents of care homes are, almost by definition, seldom heard with little choice and control. They live in an environment that is often isolated from the wider community and any expression of their needs, wants, preferences and experience is likely to be mediated by a third party - whether care home staff or relatives. Local people have told Healthwatch Camden that they want us to work to ensure that the voices of people in residential care are heard.

5.3 Methodology

Two Healthwatch volunteer authorised representatives and one member of staff spoke to staff, residents and their relatives using a set of pre-prepared questions which follow the theme of the ten Quality Indicators drawn up by Independent Age (see “Purpose of visit”). The questions have been designed to draw out information on the ten topic areas and have been tailored according to the audience. We spoke to four residents, four staff members (including, jointly, the Registered Manager and Deputy Manager) and four family members. Not all individuals were asked or responded to each question. Authorised representatives made notes of their conversation. These notes form the basis of this report.

We agreed the visit with this service in advance and sent posters to be displayed to advertise our visit to residents, their relatives and staff. Authorised representatives wore ID name badges and made sure to gain individuals' agreement before asking the questions and verbally explain the role of Healthwatch Camden and the purpose of the visit. We have discussed our findings with the provider and they have been given opportunity to add context to what was observed and contributed at the time.

5.4 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Camden would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors, staff and volunteers for their contribution to the enter and view programme.

5.5 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our 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