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Halton Haven Hospice

Runcorn

2 March 2020

Enter & View report

VISIT DETAILS

Halton Haven Hospice

Barnfield Ave, Murdishaw, Runcorn WA7 6EP.

Date of visit: Monday 2nd March 2020

Time of visit: 9.30am - 11.30am

Healthwatch Authorised representatives: - Jude Burrows, Irene Bramwell, Sue Ellison, Jane Pritchard

WHAT IS ENTER & VIEW

People who use health and social care services, their carers' and the public generally, have expectations about the experience they want to have of those services and want the opportunity to express their view as to whether their expectations were met.

To enable the Healthwatch Halton to carry out its activities effectively there will be times when it is helpful for authorised representatives to observe the delivery of services and for them to collect the views of people whilst they are directly using those services.

We carry out our 'Enter & View' visits not as inspectors but as visitors to that service. We view the service provided and observe the care and support offered and we look to obtain the views of the people using those services.

In carrying out visits, we may be able to validate the evidence that has already been collected from local service users, patients, their carers' and families, which can subsequently inform recommendations that will go back to the relevant organisations. Properly conducted and co-ordinated visits, carried out as part of a constructive relationship between Healthwatch Halton and organisations commissioning and/or providing health and social care services, may enable ongoing service improvement. Healthwatch Halton's role is to consider the standard and provision of local care services and how they may be improved and to promote identified good practice to commissioners and other providers.

OVERVIEW

Halton Haven Hospice is a local charity that provides specialist palliative care, advice and clinical support for people over 18 years old and their families in Widnes, Runcorn and surrounding areas. The hospice offers physical, emotional and holistic care through teams of doctors, nurses, counsellors, chaplains and other professionals including therapists and social workers. The service has a day unit to support patients who are still living at home, as well as an inpatient unit that offers expert palliative care and support to people with life limiting illnesses. Halton Haven offers care to day patients as well as inpatients. The hospice has 12 beds available on their inpatient unit. Halton Haven support people with multiple health conditions, including but not limited to cancer.

Halton Haven relies largely on fundraising by volunteers and donations to maintain their service, which is free to patients and families.

The visit

We completed an announced visit at Halton Haven Hospice on 2 March 2020, on the request of the hospice, to learn about their work and patient care.

During the we spoke to patients, visitors and staff. We also provided details of a link to an online questionnaire for staff and one for family / friends of patients to complete if they were unable to speak to us on the day. The survey link was also promoted by Halton Haven Hospice and Healthwatch Halton through social media channels.

Observations

Halton Haven is based in a quiet residential area of Runcorn and is situated close to local bus routes. On approach there is a road sign directing drivers to the Haven, but this could be clearer with more notice given. There is a small car park directly outside, including disabled parking, an ambulance space and spots for the Haven's minibuses. As parking is limited, patients and visitors can also use the car park of the local leisure centre, which is situated approximately 200 yards away. We were told that the Haven would like to update car parking facilities in the future, funds allowing. The site includes several separate buildings and well-maintained garden areas.

The main reception at Halton Haven is attended to by volunteers. On the day of our visit a volunteer receptionist was on duty and we were asked to sign in. The

reception area has comfy chairs, local information leaflets, accessible toilets and hand gel. The latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) report on Halton Haven, from a visit in March 2016, was on display, together with The Haven's complaints procedure and safeguarding information. There were also several fundraising items available to buy. Due to the Coronavirus outbreak information posters were displayed on doors around the hospital, with up to date public health information.

Graham Ellams, from Halton Haven's Quality Assurance team, came out to meet us and explained that he would show us around the different units and areas of the hospice.

Halton Haven Hospice feels peaceful and welcoming.

All areas were spotlessly clean, and we saw several of the cleaning staff working during our visit. Hand gel is available at entrances to areas and on corridors. There are a variety of outdoor spaces available to patients and visitors, including garden, seating and woodland areas. A new woodland walk has recently been added to the outdoor space and is fully accessible to wheelchairs.



Halton Haven Hospice has a total of 98 staff and 110 volunteers. Staff and volunteers are offered on-going, in-house education and training, to allow them to best fulfil their roles.

It is mandatory that everybody completes the following training,

- Manual Handling
- Safeguarding
- Equality and Diversity
- Health and Safety
- Data Security
- Fire Safety
- Safeguarding children
- PREVENT
- Information governance

In addition to this, clinical staff complete a range of competencies and training for:

- Safeguarding level 3
- Blood
- Defib/CPR
- Mental Capacity
- Infection Control
- Moving and Handling

A new initiative was also being promoted around the hospice, '**Time to Change**'. The '**Time to Change**' scheme helps to support staff mental health. A display board, explaining this initiative and the employer pledge to staff wellbeing, was mounted in one of the corridors. One staff member told us; "*There are members*

of staff to speak to if you are experiencing mental health issues. I am told how valuable my role is and how my extensive knowledge helps other team members. My workload is assessed and changed if I become stressed.”

Staff can wear or display a green ribbon to show they are available to talk and offer peer support.

Day Unit

The Day Unit is bright, clean and nicely decorated with comfy armchairs. There was an additional room that is usually used for crafts and activities. However, at the time of our visit it had some workmen doing maintenance in it.

Patients can access Physiotherapy, Counselling, a Psychiatrist, massage and complementary services whilst using the day unit.



As the day unit is not used by patients on a Monday, we were not able to see it in use or speak to any patients. The space is used on a Monday afternoon by a local Foodbank group.

Inpatient unit

A sign asks people to *‘Speak softly and walk quietly’* when in this area.

On entering the inpatient unit there is a nurses station and a notice board to inform patients and visitors which staff are on duty that day. This board was up to date. A notice was displayed asking people not to approach or disturb staff in red tabards, as they are distributing medicine to patients.

The unit is staffed by Palliative Care Specialists including Doctors, Nurses and Health Care Assistants. A Doctor is on duty from 9am - 5pm and on call out of these hours. The notice board also shows which menu is currently being used. A whiteboard was mounted on the wall with the name of each bedroom on it. The rooms were all named after flowers. Patient requirements could also be noted on this board and one room had a note to say a bedding change was needed.

We were told that chiropodists and opticians come into the home if needed by patients. Staff informed us that the average patient stay is 2 weeks. Vacant beds were available at the time of our visit.

The inpatient unit offers patients private rooms with en-suite facilities. En-suite all have a toilet and a sink and some also have a shower. The rooms are well decorated, in a homely style, and had large flat screen TV's mounted on the wall. Use of the TV's is free of charge. An inpatient, who had stayed in on a few different occasions, spoke with us and said, *“staff are superb, nothing is too much trouble. Buzzers are answered quickly.”*

During our visit we saw that patient call buzzers were answered immediately. Patients can get up and go to bed at a time they chose.

The bathrooms on this unit had accessible baths or wet room showers. The ones we viewed were well decorated and very clean. A staff hand cleaning room is based in the inpatient area. Most laundry is done off-site, but a small laundry room is also available for onsite washing needs.

A weekly menu is offered to patients, we viewed this in the dietary file. This file also contained forms for finding out a patient's dietary requirements. The menu we saw included a choice of meals and desserts. Alternatives such as jacket potatoes and omelettes are also available. Staff told us that drinks and snacks are available on demand and they will always try and accommodate individual needs and tastes.

We noted that the hospice has achieved a full 5-star rating for food hygiene by Halton Borough Council.

There is a large bright lounge area, with couches, tv and a dining table available for patient and visitor use. There were lots of information leaflets on the hospice and outside services on display in the lounge. The lounge also has a large conservatory which overlooks the gardens, which was being maintained at the time of our visit by volunteers from a local organisation, Wonky Garden.

Within the conservatory there were books and toys available for children to play with, as well as a CD collection.



A visitor in the lounge told us; *“the care my wife gets in here is amazing, the staff are brilliant, and I am very happy with the care she gets. All the staff are very caring and supporting. It is an amazing hospice.”*

A ‘Quiet Room’ is based in the inpatient unit. This room has comfy seating and a stain glass window. Religious artefacts are available. The Hospice employs a Chaplain who offers emotional and spiritual support to patients and their

families. Patients can also request visits from religious leaders of their choice, such as a Priest or Vicar and the hospice will facilitate this.

Patients can have visitors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is up to them to choose when they want visitors and how many can come in at a time. Families are very welcome at the hospice and can help themselves to hot drinks, sit in the lounge and watch TV.

The staff we spoke with in the inpatient unit told us, *“It is an honour to work here”, “I couldn’t cope without my colleagues”*.

Family and visitor support

We were told that Halton Haven offers support, information and counselling to families during their loved ones care and post bereavement. The Family Support Centre has information on sessions and events running at the hospice displayed, as well as *‘Thank you’* cards from past service users. A wishing well is in the entrance area, for visitors’ donations.

A patient and carer support group meet weekly. This offers practical and emotional support. Families are offered continued supported by the hospice post bereavement and are offered 12 counselling sessions, free of charge. A staff member explained that, *“family support is just as important as patient care”*.

During our visit we met a gentleman whose wife had been a patient at the Hospice 12 months previously. He still stays in touch with staff and told us, *“it is fantastic, marvellous. Staff couldn’t have been better, they even offered me my own bed in my wife’s room, so marvellous, a fantastic level of care.”*

He also explained how he had been able to visit his wife whenever he wanted to and his daughter had accessed counselling sessions from the Hospice after her mother’s passing. They had found this helpful.



Community

Halton Haven Hospice interact regularly with the local community. The hospice runs many fundraising events such as party nights, sponsored events and walks, to pay for their service. 50% of funding is awarded by Halton Clinical Commissioning Group but the remaining 50% must be raised each year. Local organisations and community

support are promoted on notice boards. Halton schools and groups regularly fundraise with events and sales of items such as teddies.

A community café has recently opened onsite and is available for use by local groups. A newly refurbished 'Metsa Shed', funded by a local business, is available for use by activity groups and will be used as a Wellbeing Hub. On the day we visited, 'Wonky Garden', a local community group, were using the shed. The volunteers from this group also help to maintain the gardens at the Hospice. We spoke with the garden volunteers and they spoke enthusiastically about their roles and how supporting the hospice had also helped them personally.

The hospice also has a small gift shop on site to help with fundraising efforts.

The hospice offers end of life and care planning training to local care homes. They are currently running an informal, drop-in session at the hospice for care staff. This allows them to be able to take the time to attend. Longer training sessions are also available. Presentations are given to local schools and organisations to explain and demystify the Hospices work, end of life care and to encourage support for the hospice through fundraising and volunteering.

A staff member told us; "This service is a much needed and vital service for the people of Halton to provide that specialist palliative care, we are well supported by the people of Halton, and although we are not the richest area it never ceases to amaze me on how generous the people of Halton are and not just in realms of the public but also companies who support us some times this is free of charge, we have a lot of volunteers who also support us and they are a vital part of us being able to provide the care we do. I feel really proud to be part of this organisation and it means a lot to me that people recognise the hard work we do and appreciated and support this vital service."

At the conclusion of our visit we thanked Graham for taking the time to show us around Halton Haven Hospice.

Friends and Family questionnaire results

We received 23 responses to the online questionnaire for family and friends. In the comments below not everyone's replies are included. Due to the number received we've highlighted a cross-section of responses.

The results of our Friends and Family questionnaire showed that people found the care the hospice gives to be very good. Twenty-one people rated the care and support as 'Very Good'. One person rated it as 'Good', with one more rating it as 'OK'.

We asked, ‘What do you think the service your relative/friend is at does well?’

The responses received were all very positive. People spoke highly of the service telling us;

- *“Halton Haven Hospice is a kind caring place nothing is too much for any of the staff brilliant caring people like to say thank you for all you have done for me!”*
- *“Care for the patient and their families. Very open, upbeat yet honest. Show a lot of dignity and professionalism”*
- *“Putting the patient at the centre of everything they do and ensuring that their care is particular to their needs, as well as supporting family and friends.”*
- *“It does everything extremely well. I cannot find any faults. The treatment my wife is receiving is excellent and beyond what I was expecting. The staff are very attentive and pleasant. The rooms are very pleasant and comfortable. I cannot express my gratitude enough. It is also good that I can visit any time and no restrictions are placed on visitors. We were able to organise a lunch for a number of relatives in the lounge for which we provided the food. It made my wife very happy.”*
- *“Halton Haven does everything well, I have been a patient and the care I received was second to none. The nursing and care staff are amazing, nothing is ever too much trouble from the care they gave to me to the support they gave my family. The support extends from everyone, reception, cleaning staff and CEO all are to help. The day care centre is run by fabulous staff who can brighten a crappy day, and Cath is amazing her wonderful treatments and a listening ear.’*

We also asked, ‘What do you think the service your relative/friend is at could do better or what do you think could be improved?’

People were positive again, telling us:

- *“Absolutely nothing needs improvement”*
- *“it would be hard to improve on the service that I received at the time my relative was there they absolutely fantastic throughout the time they were needed.”*

Some people did make suggestions for improvements, such as:

- *“Small maintenance things like ensuring the modesty curtains have enough curtain hooks and expanding the menu to cater for dietary requirements”*
- *“The only thing I think could be improved is additional car parking for visitors”*

Other comments included-

- *“I think Halton Haven Hospice provides a level of care and support which is not available elsewhere in the area. I would be much happier if they received 100% funding and did not have to fund-raise so much to support the day-to-day costs of the Hospice.”*
- *“I cannot sing their praises enough. We naturally wanted to stay at home for as long as possible but just recently this became impossible as I could no longer lift her and reluctantly agreed to send her to the Halton Hospice. I am very glad I did as I have developed a hernia from lifting her for which I am getting treatment myself.”*

Staff feedback

During our visit we noted that the staff were approachable, friendly and appeared respectful of patients, each other and us, as visitors. Staff we spoke with were very positive in their comments about working at the hospice and the care provided to patients.

We received 28 responses to the staff questionnaire. Overall, staff who responded told us they were very happy working at the Hospice, with 89% saying they felt supported and valued. 79% of staff said they had worked at the Hospice for 3 years or more and would be happy for a family member to be looked after here.

We asked, ‘What do you think the service you work at does well?’

Staff said:

- *“The hospice provides a valuable service not just for patients but their families, the nurses are at their best nursing and chatting to their patients, going down memory lane is very important to someone reaching their end of life.”*
- *“Patient care, and family support including bereavement support.”*
- *“The hospice delivers quality end of life care, in a manner that seeks to put patients and families first i.e. patient focused care. I think that the Hospice achieves this through being open and honest, treating people with respect and dignity and looking to ensure that the service is accessible to all who require its support.”*
- *“Patient care is paramount and I feel we do this really well. Infection control is also maintained well. Patients are treated with respect and dignity at all times.”*
- *“We are always looking at ways to improve our services, for example we had a refurbishment of the inpatient unit, so we asked the patients what they*

would like in the rooms which would make them feel much more at home and would make the environment more user friendly, we have also just done this with the menus also and asked for feedback what they would like to see on the menus.”

We asked, ‘What do you think the service you work at could do better or what do you think could be improved?’

Some themes came up on improvement ideas from staff. These included improved internal communication within the staff teams:

- *“Better communication between staff.”*
- *“Communication across teams is an area which requires improvement.”*
- *“better communication between departments. I work in a separate building from the rest of the Hospice and are often overlooked and only find out what is going on by chance.”*
- *“Communication could also be improved in some areas.”*

Improving external communication was also mentioned:

- *“I think engaging with the local community and corporate world to inform them about its valuable services and the stories they have.”*
- *“Communication is an area I believe can improve and in looking to do this the Hospice has recruited a Community Engagement Lead, to help with getting the message out into the community of Halton in respect to what we do, what we want to do in the future, that we are here delivering a quality service and looking to listen to ideas as to what people want from us going forward.”*
- *“I think Halton Haven would benefit from “shouting” about their achievements and service to the community.”*
- *“Be better supported by the hospital staff as we are part of a wider healthcare provision.”*

Several staff commented on funding and facilities-

- *“Need to find more ways of raising funds in these challenging times. This is being developed however and revised structure in place to support the process.”*
- *“I believe that the care Halton Haven give is second to none, but I am sure that more funding would help improve things. Funding for equipment for the wards and the Day Care Unit.”*

- *“The building is maintained to the best of our ability but ageing buildings and a lack of funds to invest in the estate is taking its toll now and some areas of the hospice are ready for replacement/upgrade/refurbishment.”*
- *“The facilities could be more modernised; we have not long had the refurb which is lovely but equipment we use could be improved such as our IV pumps.”*
- *“A wider menu and one that caters for specific dietary requirements. Making sure that there are sufficient hooks for the modesty curtains.”*
- *“It would be great to have more referrals both to the in-patient unit as well as the day case unit.”*
- *“Additional services such as hospice at home, I think this would break barriers for individuals that want to be at home but receive the same standard of care from the comfort of their own home.”*

Other comments included:

- *“I am very happy to work at Halton Haven and feel privileged to be able to look after someone in their final hours, days or weeks of their life. I feel very supported by all the team with no exceptions. I hope Halton Haven continues to serve the community of Halton for a very long time and I work here until my retirement as I wouldn't want to work anywhere else. “*
- *“I have never worked in a more open, honest and caring environment. This is not a sad place (considering what it's purpose is) it is extremely positive and supportive.”*
- *“The hospice is undervalued by some stakeholders, palliative care is in danger of losing its identity, patients and families will suffer as a result of this.”*
- *“Hospice care is the right level of care. It's what everyone should have, at Halton Haven it is truly holistic, wrapping around patients and families. Unfortunately, the experiences of many who come to us from home or hospital have been very negative, well below what should be acceptable, often failing at a very basic level. We pride ourselves on excellence and are safe, efficient and innovative. Currently partner agencies are being discouraged to refer in and our commissioners are not helping resolve this. Beds are empty when we know patients are out there who need our services which is both sad and unacceptable, a political situation it seems is overriding patient need and choice.”*

Visit Summary

Halton Haven Hospice offers day and inpatient support to patients with a variety of life limiting illnesses and their families. It provides a friendly, peaceful and caring environment to patients and their families at what is a very difficult time.

The Haven is well decorated and was spotlessly clean. The gardens offer a variety of outdoor spaces, including seating areas and an accessible woodland walk. These areas are all well maintained. As highlighted in feedback from staff, the building itself is not purpose built and is beginning to show its age and some areas of the hospice are looking in need of replacement/upgrade/refurbishment.

Patients and visitors spoke very highly of the care received. The members of our Enter & View team came away from the visit with a very positive feeling about the service, care and support offered by the Haven and all of its staff.

We enjoyed our visit to the Haven and talking to patients, visitors and staff. The hospice felt very person-centred and it was lovely to see the great staff interactions with patients and visitors and we felt a real sense of care and compassion for all while we were there.

While the focus of the Haven's care is rightly on the patient we were pleased to hear about the ongoing support and counselling available to families after the death of their loved ones.

We heard that the Haven is working hard to engage with the local community and to fundraise to get the financial support they need.

The last Care Quality Commission report on Halton Haven was in June 2016. At the time the report said, *'We found the ethos and culture of Halton Haven Hospice was positive and caring and staff spoken with were passionate about working at the hospice. They spoke of the importance of treating each patient as an individual which showed us that some aspects of the hospice were outstanding.'*

Our visit in March 2020 echoes those comments.

Note: Our visit to Halton Haven took place prior to the Covid-19

Recommendations and Suggestions

- On the day of our visit the inpatient unit was only half-full. Staff also commented on the number of empty beds. We'd like to see discussions taking place between local commissioners and Halton Haven Hospice to ensure that those local people who need this service and support at end of life can access these spaces.
- Build closer links with both local NHS acute hospital trusts to raise awareness of Halton Haven and the excellent service it provides. Healthwatch can provide the appropriate contact details for each trust if required.
- Set up regular staff meetings to improve internal communications. Look to offer a range of different ways staff can give their views and suggestions. While the staff feedback we received was very positive there were requests from staff for 'better communications' between staff and management.
- Build on the links made with Healthwatch Halton to encourage further feedback on patient services. We recommend encouraging feedback from visitors and patients on an independent feedback site, such as Healthwatch Halton's website. We can provide a 'widget' to allow people to give their views on the services at the Hospice.
- Ensure checks are carried out on all modesty curtains to ensure privacy and dignity is maintained for patients.
- Review the menu choice available to ensure dietary requirements are being met.

Healthwatch Halton has statutory powers and responsibilities under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Local Healthwatch Regulation 2012 and the Local Healthwatch Organisations Directions 2013 section 5.

Providers and commissioners of health and social care services are required to respond to our requests by:

- Acknowledgement of receipt of the report or recommendation in writing.
- Providing (in writing) an explanation of any action you intend to take in response, or if no action is to be taken, to provide an explanation of why you do not intend to take any action.

Healthwatch Halton are required to report if any providers/commissioners have not provided a response within the required timeframe; this information will be included in our Annual Report.

SERVICE PROVIDER RESPONSE

Response received from Viv Culleton, CEO of Halton Haven Hospice

On behalf of Halton Haven Hospice I would like to thank Healthwatch Halton for their recent visit and subsequent Enter and View report. The report has made very pleasant reading providing reassurance our patients, families and carers feel comfortable, content and confident with regards to our service provision.

The responses to the questionnaire are informative, the hospice will reflect upon all comments made especially those that highlight where improvement can be made, we are so very grateful for the kind words and support shown through the report. The lack of car parking spaces has sadly always been an issue for the hospice, this is a concern we will continue to look at addressing when our finances permit, in the interim we apologise for any inconvenience caused.

I confess to feeling a little disappointed with regards to comments made in reference to communication, as the CEO I strive to enable effective, timely and thorough communication with my colleagues as does the rest of the Executive team. The hospice has department head meetings once a month, board meetings every two months, full staff meetings quarterly, each department has its own meetings monthly to bimonthly. Throughout the hospice information is visibly available via notice boards, communication journals are available throughout the departments. The hospice has several social media platforms which staff are actively encouraged to follow, moving forward I will make sure engagement with departments remote from the main building are focused upon, perhaps look into re-establishing a place of work within the hub of the building, I will also look to secure full staff attendance at staff meetings.

The hospice will continue to explore innovative ways to support the local community, we are committed to maintaining our relationship with the palliative care team along with Halton and Warrington CCGs, we will do this by being open, transparent, responsive, share information and support our external colleagues in a professional and helpful manner.

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