

## Visit to The Cotswolds - 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014

### Background:

The Cotswolds is part of the Oakleaf Care Group and offers long term residential/nursing care to men suffering from brain injuries, who have been through active rehabilitation, and still require further support to manage risk and enhance their life skills. The unit has only been open since the middle of 2013 and has the facility to offer support to 29 men. At the time of the visit there were 20 residents in situ.

Originally the building was owned by the Local Authority and was a 49 bedded residential care home for older persons but was closed in 2012 as it was no longer fit for purpose. Following the acquisition by the Oakleaf Group the building has been refurbished and updated to an extremely high standard.

Following discussion with Nene Clinical Commissioning Group (Nene CCG), Claire Lodge and Diann Layram from Healthwatch Northamptonshire visited The Cotswolds on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014 to support the Nene CCG Quality Assurance review taking place at the same time.

### Summary of visit:

- 1. The Building:** The initial impression of the Home was one of attention to detail. The décor was well maintained and furniture was comfortable and in good condition. The front entrance/driveway was controlled by electric gates and the gardens both front and rear were well maintained - security was evident and staff were quick to answer the request to enter.
- 2. Reception/Welcome:** Staff were very welcoming and informative. Uniforms are not worn but all staff had name badges and were easily identifiable. A background description of the service was given by the Clinical Lead and the Service Manager, and both were available throughout the visit to answer any questions/queries that we may have had regarding the delivery of service.
- 3. Activities:** There were both group and individual activities planned for the residents and at the time of the visit a quiz was being held in the main lounge - there were boards detailing the times and dates of the activities but we did not see any written evidence of those activities as it was not our remit to see individual care plans.
- 4. Dignity of residents/Contact between residents and staff:** There was a high ratio of staff to residents at the time of the visit. Interaction between staff and residents observed during the visit was respectful and supportive - due to the

range of disabilities experienced by the residents the staff had to speak slowly and at times loudly to ensure that the resident understood what was being relayed. This could be disconcerting to someone observing who did not know what disability the resident suffered from.

5. **Appearance of Residents:** All residents were dressed appropriately - their clothes looked well cared for and we were able to see the laundry where the clothes were washed/dried/ironed and repaired when necessary. There was no visible evidence of the residents being encouraged to manage their own laundry as part of the rehabilitation process.
6. **Cleanliness and hygiene:** The Home presented as clean and well maintained with no odours. There were notices encouraging personal hygiene and staff were seen to be observing good hygiene practices such as using gloves appropriately and wearing aprons and hair nets when dealing with food.
7. **Food and Drink:** When discussed with staff we were assured that dietary needs were met and that there were choices at each meal. However, when asked one member of staff was unable to say what was on the menu for lunch - but was able to produce a list of menu choices that the kitchen staff were working from that day. This was a concern as when speaking to some of the residents regarding their meals they were unable to say what they had chosen for that meal. When pressed regarding the meals the general response was that they were 'ok'.
8. **One to one conversations with residents:** 10 residents were in the main lounge and garden following the morning activities and we were able to spend some time with them. Communication was difficult at times due to the range of disabilities and some of the residents had not been at The Cotswolds very long so it was not easy to ascertain levels of satisfaction. Some said that they were well looked after and others said that they only wanted to stay until they could 'go home'.

### **Conclusion:**

The conversion of the building has been carried out to a high specification and the atmosphere was relaxed. The staffing levels at the time of the visit were good and the qualifications/experience were appropriate to the needs of the residents. However due to the newness of the service and the fact that some of the residents have only recently been admitted it was difficult to assess the effectiveness and satisfaction levels of the service provided. We would recommend that a return visit should be undertaken later in the year.