

Quality of Care homes in Wandsworth 2015 to 2017

A challenge for Wandsworth adult social services

At the July Forum meeting Peter West of Health Watch presented a summary of the quality of care homes in the South West London area prepared by Independent Age. The ranking was from the CQC's ranking following inspection. Reports are divided into five areas of quality, ie safe, effective, caring, responsive to people's needs and are they well-led. The rankings are outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate. Sadly there are only a few nationally that are outstanding and fortunately there are not many who are inadequate. Most come in the good or requires improvement which might be in one or more areas. Some improvements will be easier to make than others but the figures show that only 8% of home manage to make the required improvements in the 6–12 months before they receive another inspection.

The percentage of homes in Richmond rated inadequate or requires improvement was 2.3% but for Wandsworth was 32.3%. Later results published by Care Quality Commission from May 2017 show Richmond in the top 20% across the country while Wandsworth is in band 4 for nursing homes and in band 3 for residential care homes.

This is a small improvement but not satisfactory. Those of us of an age, where we might have friends in care homes or we might be looking for ourselves, would hope to find one of good quality. We would say that is one that is rated as "good" by CQC and does not "require improvement" in any of the CQC's five areas of investigation. That may be difficult in Wandsworth.

Wandsworth Borough Council has some responsibility to check the quality of care homes in its area as a responsibility for its citizens who may require one and also because the Council's Adult Social Services will be placing people in these homes and will be paying the costs of a proportion of them. One of the Council officers responsible for monitoring the homes attended the meeting. She told the members that a new system of monitoring was now in place as a result of the shared Richmond/ Wandsworth staff. This, it is hoped, will be able to bring Wandsworth care homes up to the standard of those in Richmond.

There may be constraints on the homes in Wandsworth which are less in Richmond such as Wandsworth might be paying less per person per week than Richmond. It may be just not enough for the homes to provide a good enough service. The Forum heard last year that Wandsworth had upped the price it was willing to pay for care in the person's own home to allow for the increased wages bill with the increase in the minimum wage. Has this been done for the care homes? If not then it is time that it was.

It is the case that most local authorities pay less for a place in a nursing or care homes than it costs because that is what the Government thinks they should pay and what the government allows in its grant to the Local Authority. Residents who pay their own fees therefore pay more. Is that fair?