

Response to Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group's Consultation: Proposed Changes to Meadow Court



“Some people with dementia need to be cared for by people with extra skills and knowledge about dementia. Meadow Court staff have that extra expertise.”



One Place East
Where disability matters

www.oneplaceeast.org
jon.abrams@oneplaceeast.org
020 8925 2435

Summary

"I would challenge Redbridge CCG to find any other home where they are so caring and understanding, and the staff so well trained."

One Place East welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation on the Proposed Changes to Meadow Court. In talking and listening to carers, relatives, and healthcare professionals we have identified some key themes and concerns.

- In response to our survey question, **84% of respondents strongly agreed** that the local NHS should carry on with its contract for paying for beds at Meadow Court.
- **Four safeguarding concerns** have come to light via carers with regards to dementia patients who have been transferred from Meadow Court. This in turn has exacerbated fears and anxieties amongst relatives and family about the potential plans to move patients from Meadow Court as outlined in Redbridge CCG's consultation document.
- We have raised **concerns about the consultation process**, drawing attention to the Statutory guidance for Clinical Commissioning Groups. For example, the lack of comparative data comparing quality of care. We received additional information from NEL Commissioning Support Unit but three days prior to the end of the consultation period. NEL stated: ***It is not possible to provide a direct comparison of staffing ratios at Meadow Court***¹
- Many respondents were of the view that Meadow Court **does provide specialist dementia care** in Redbridge which is unavailable in other local nursing homes.
- We have heard from carers, relatives and health professionals that there is **a demand for beds at Meadow Court**. We have been told that Meadow Court, in recent years, has not been on the list of Any Qualified Providers given to carers searching for nursing homes.
- The prospect of transferring dementia patients from Meadow Court is causing a great deal of **anxiety, worry and fears** amongst carers and relatives.
- **Value for Money** - Redbridge CCG has not provided, for example, **a cost-consequences and cost-benefit analysis** which would ensure all relevant benefits (health, non-health and community benefits) are taken into account. What about quality adjusted life years? The impact and costs of increased use of antipsychotics? The impact and costs of inappropriate placements? The costs of readmissions and bed blocking?

¹ https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/staff_ratios_and_quality_of_deme#incoming-1058724

Introduction

This personal account from a Meadow Court relative/carer epitomises much of what we have heard from health professionals, carers and other people working in the local health economy. In particular how Meadow Court has staff with specialist skills and knowledge about dementia, which appears to be lacking in many of the nearby nursing homes.

I am writing to you as I know Meadow Court very well - my husband has lived there for the past six years, and I spend much time there. It is an excellent home and provides first-class care - not only for people in Redbridge but also seven other boroughs because there is a dire shortage of suitable homes in this part of the country.

May I just tell you briefly what happened when I was trying to find a home for my husband Geoff 6 years ago:

As Meadow Court was full, the only home that would accept him was the Old Deanery in Braintree which is an hour's drive away. A beautiful building, appalling care, and they terminated his contract after ten days (he took a lady's walking frame, and she fell over).

I was visiting every day, and if I did not stay until 11 pm and put him to bed, they didn't bother and left him in an armchair all night. (A couple of years later there was a Panorama investigation which showed not only inadequate and poor care, but some of the staff were sent to jail for abuse.)

Geoff then transferred to Meadow Court. On the first evening, he was trying to pick up and throw chairs; the staff said 'Don't worry, he'll settle down in a few days', which he did, apart from a couple of incidents.

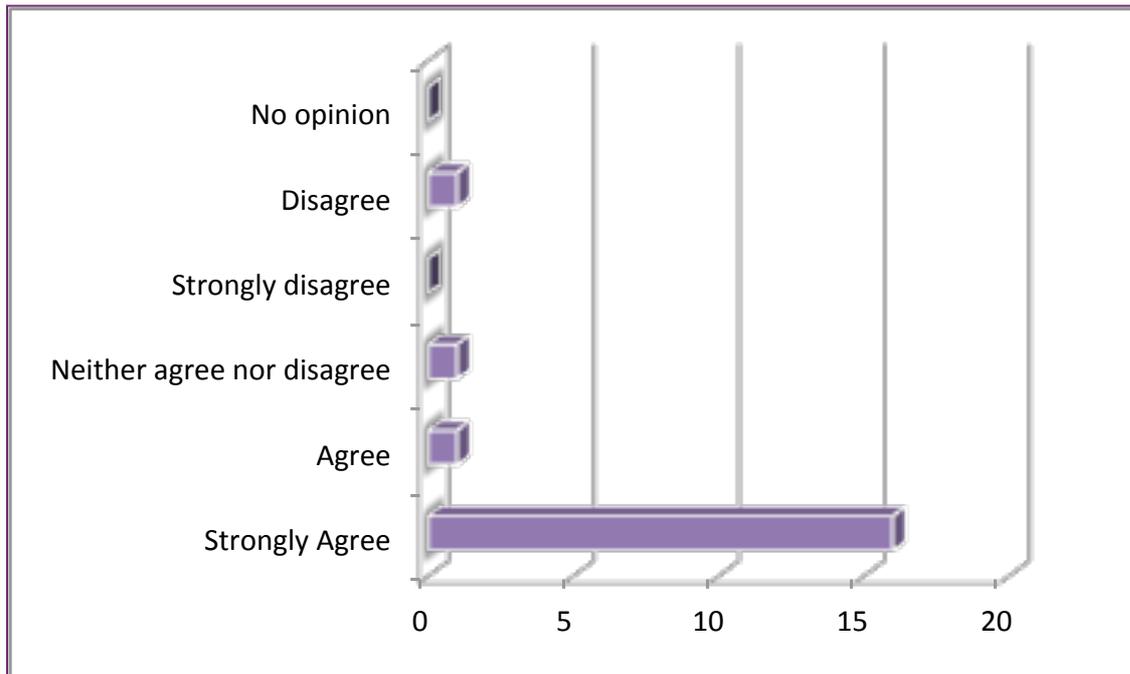
First, he flung one of the carers against the wall, and she was taken to A&E with a suspected broken leg. Second, he pushed a nurse when she was giving medication; she fell over a trolley and was off sick for 10 days with sciatica.

I was shocked that my husband would do anything like this and very worried that he would have to leave, but the nurse in charge said 'No. It doesn't matter if he hurts us, that's what we're here for'. They have had other residents who were much worse, frequently punching the staff, and they were always treated with kindness and respect. I would challenge Redbridge CCG to find any other home where they are so caring and understanding, and the staff so well trained.

Response to our survey question

What do you think of the following statement:

“The local NHS should carry on with its contract for paying for beds at Meadow Court”



Strongly Agree	16	84%
Agree	1	5%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	5%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	5%
No opinion	0	0%

Safeguarding Concerns

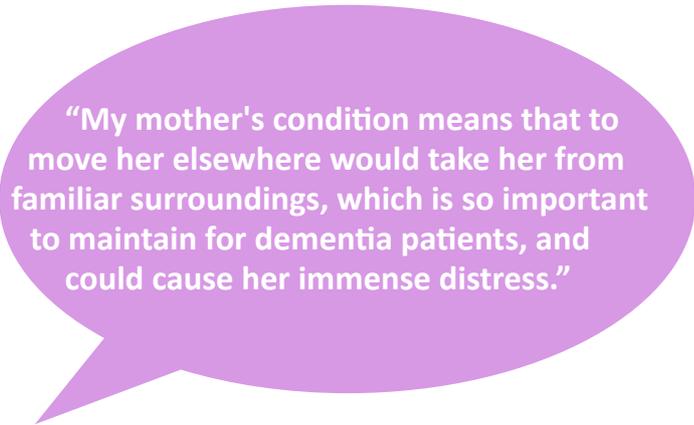
During the consultation process, some safeguarding concerns have come to light via relative/carers, in particular involving dementia patients who have moved recently from Meadow Court to other local nursing homes.

These safeguarding concerns have been passed on to the governing boards of Redbridge CCG, and Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust.

Moreover, these safeguarding concerns have also exacerbated anxieties, worries and fears amongst relatives/carers at Meadow Court who are obviously extremely concerned about the potential transfer of loved ones from Meadow Court to surrounding nursing homes.

“I had put my husband’s name on the waiting list for a place at a local Nursing Home because it seemed a very nice home. Patient X was moved there and died a couple of weeks later, apparently because they didn’t know how to give her food or drink, I don’t want my husband to go there after all. In fact it seems to be a death sentence to move the residents anywhere.”

Meadow Court relative/carer



“My mother’s condition means that to move her elsewhere would take her from familiar surroundings, which is so important to maintain for dementia patients, and could cause her immense distress.”

Patient and public participation in commissioning health and care

According to statutory guidance, *Patient and public participation in commissioning health and care: Statutory guidance for clinical commissioning groups and NHS England*: sufficient information and reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response:

“Those being consulted should be provided with sufficient information to enable them to understand what the proposal is, the reasons for it and why it is being considered. They should be made aware of the basis on which a proposal for consultation has been considered and will be considered thereafter, including any criteria to be applied or factors to be considered. This may involve providing information about (or at least making reference to) arguable alternatives and the reasons why they are not also being considered. The level of detail provided will depend on the circumstances.”

Summary

- ✓ We have heard from carers, relatives and health professionals that there is **a demand for beds at Meadow Court**. For instance, we have been told that Meadow Court is not on the list of Any Qualified Providers given to relatives searching for nursing homes. If this is correct, this may partly explain why people choose other nursing homes. It is our view this should have been made clear in the consultation document.
- ✓ We received the staffing ratios and data comparing quality of care in nursing homes on 25 October, **3 days prior** to the closure of the consultation. It is our view that the data should have been available from the outset of the consultation.
- ✓ **Value for Money** - Redbridge CCG has not set out, for example, a cost-consequences and cost-benefit analysis which would ensure all relevant benefits (health, non-health and community benefits) are taken into account.

- ✓ The consultation document does not address the fact that some people affected by dementia also have **challenging behavioural problems which require a particular set of expertise, skills and knowledge not available in many nursing homes**. The data subsequently provided by Redbridge CCG on 25 October 2017, does not appear to address this issue either.

- ✓ There is not data in the consultation document on the numbers of people who visited Meadow Court in view of placing their loved ones there and turned away

Health Scrutiny Committee, 27 September 2017

At the Committee meeting on 27 September 2017, Redbridge CCG indicated that it could not provide an evidence base comparing the quality of care at Meadow Court with the 17 nursing homes within four miles of Meadow Court.

One Place East subsequently received staffing ratios as a result of a freedom of information request. However, the **information supplied does not appear to distinguish between general nurses, trained psychiatric nurses and mental health nurses**. It is, therefore, not possible from the data provided by Redbridge CCG to compare the quality of dementia care in nursing homes.

Why is the issue of general nurses and mental health nurses important?

As a Doctor who works at Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust told us:

“Some people with dementia need to be cared for by people with extra skills and knowledge about dementia. Meadow Court staff have that extra expertise. There were two care homes in Redbridge with these skills, but the other home has already been closed. To get a care home with these extra skills costs more, they tend to have more qualified nurses and a higher staff ratio. It is not true that the surrounding nursing homes are the same.”

There are clinical implications of placing people with dementia with behavioural problems in care homes without adequate mental health nursing input. For example, if there is not the skill and expertise in a nursing home this can lead to an increasing dependence on the use of antipsychotic drugs for patients in care homes.

Does Meadow Court provide specialist dementia care?

As we explained above, some people with dementia need to be cared for by people with extra skills and knowledge about dementia. Relatives, carers and health professionals have told us that staff at Meadow Court have that extra expertise and skills not available in surrounding nursing homes

As a BHR Doctor explains:

“There were two care homes in Redbridge with these skills but the other home has already been closed. To get a care home with these extra skills costs more, they tend to have more qualified nurses and a higher staff ratio. It is not true that the surrounding nursing homes are the same.”

We have also received a number of other responses from health professionals supporting the view that Meadow Court provides specialist care which does not appear to be available in surrounding nursing homes.

“A lot of homes cannot cope with people with dementia challenging behaviour.”

“Clients are cared for by qualified Mental Health Nurses. They will not receive this specialised care in a nursing/ care home setting.”

It is also unclear from the data provided by Redbridge CCG whether surround Nursing Homes have qualified and trained mental health nursing staff to care for people affected by dementia and who also have challenging behavioural problems.

Is there a demand for beds at Meadow Court?

Summary

- ✓ We have been told by a number of people that Meadow Court is not on the list of Any Qualified Providers given to relatives searching for a dementia nursing home in Redbridge
- ✓ Respondents have told us that carers of people with dementia who are aware of Meadow Court are told it is not available due to costs

One of the reasons put forward in the Consultation document for the proposed changes to Meadow Court is the claim that people are not taking up beds. However, relatives and carers as well as health professionals working in the local health economy have suggested that this is not the case.

“It is also not true that carers of people with dementia are offered Meadow Court. They are in fact told that it is not available as it costs more and people have delayed discharge from KGH because of this policy.”

Doctor at BHR

“I have been assured that in the past few years many people have made enquiries and requests to view the home via Care UK’s head office. Staff have told me that people have been shown around, saying it was perfect. However, I have also been told that when they contacted Redbridge CCG they were informed that they are not placing anyone at Meadow Court.”

Meadow Court Relative/Carer

“As I understand it there is a waiting list to get into care homes so closing one down doesn't make sense. I also

understand that Meadow Court is not being offered as an option in some cases.”

“If this is true then it's not surprising that the uptake has diminished. With the demand for care home places high marketing it as an option would likely solve the issue and not demand the closure of the venue.”

Anonymous

“This is a very important nursing home for people with Alzheimers. There is a national shortage of nursing home places and beds in hospitals are being blocked because there is nowhere for patients to go.

“It is not true that people are not choosing to go to Meadow Court. We know that doctors/social workers have been barred from sending people there. The home is now almost empty which is scandalous when there are so many people needing a place.”

Meadow Court Relative/Carer



“As a dementia sufferer my mother has been extremely well cared for at Meadow Court for nearly 9 years. This is a very good home with wonderful staff and specialist facilities.

Anxiety, worry and fears – Transferring Meadow Court Patients

There is of course a tremendous amount of worry, concern and anxiety and fear amongst relatives and carers around transferring loved ones. This has been exacerbated by the safeguarding concerns that relatives and carers have brought to light as well as the CQC reports of the surrounding homes.

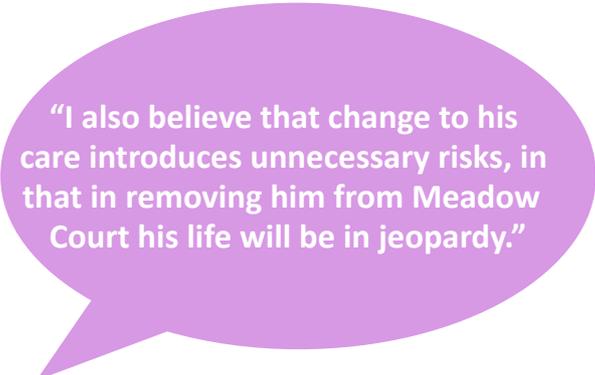
“As a dementia sufferer my mother has been extremely well cared for at Meadow Court for nearly 9 years. This is a very good home with wonderful staff and specialist facilities. “

“My mother’s condition means that to move her elsewhere would take her from familiar surroundings, which is so important to maintain for dementia patients, and could cause her immense distress. With an increasing and ageing population we should be creating more of these homes not closing them down.”

Relative of dementia patient at Meadow Court

“And for the people in care it will be a move that I think could actually destroy the person imagine these people as little as they can remember have the security and some sort of knowledge of where they are and to move to a new place will confuse and upset them so much yet they will not be able to speak how they feel I think is disgracefully, inhuman of the NHS to think of doing when there is many other options to make use of the areas that are empty”

Anonymous



“I also believe that change to his care introduces unnecessary risks, in that in removing him from Meadow Court his life will be in jeopardy.”