

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

GAVIN ASTOR HOUSE

NURSING HOME

Royal British Legion Village Aylesford Kent

Does a resident have to have a connection with the Services?

Those with a Services connection are given priority and form the majority of our residents. This connection can extend to the wider family, including sons and daughters. Most of the time we are also able to accept applications from those with no Services connection.

What disabilities and ages do you cater for?

We cater for adults who have been assessed as needing nursing care. This includes two categories of care:

- adults aged 18 – 65 with physical disabilities who need nursing care
- older people with nursing needs.

Do you provide respite care?

Our service is designed to cater for those with a long-term illness and nursing need, so most of our residents are here on a permanent basis and we do not offer respite care. This is one of the reasons we have such a stable and happy atmosphere, as staff and residents can get to know and understand each other, developing a long-term relationship that is not undermined by also having to deal with the turnover of temporary residents.

What if a newly-admitted resident just cannot settle?

As far as possible, residents (or their relatives) make an informed decision to move in on a permanent basis based on their preliminary visits to the home and their discussions with staff. We do everything we can to ensure new residents settle in quickly and easily and, by taking the time when drawing up the personal Care Plan at the outset to include details such as life history, interests and personal preferences, most residents begin to feel at home quite quickly. To check the suitability of the placement, residents and their relatives are invited to a review after four weeks. In the unlikely event that the resident appears unable to settle or we are unable to meet their specific needs or expectations, a more appropriate alternative course of action can be agreed.

How can I be reassured that my father will be well looked after by genuinely kind and caring staff?

We have developed a rigorous recruitment procedure that puts the needs of residents at its heart, and we see the recruitment of good nurses, carers and ancillary staff as fundamental to the delivery of the excellent service of which we are

proud. We are therefore highly selective, with the recruitment of the right person for the job being more important than filling a vacancy. As part of the selection process, shortlisted candidates are offered the opportunity to work a voluntary shadow shift with an experienced nurse or carer. This allows staff and residents to meet them and give valuable feedback that can help ensure residents have confidence in the staff that care for them and are comfortable with them. In addition, as so many of our staff are happy to commit to 'caring' as their chosen long-term career, we are not dependent on casual agency staff.

If my mother calls for help how quickly will you respond?

All rooms are equipped with a call button linked to a control panel in all corridors and nurses stations that will alert staff if they are needed. In all instances we aim to reach residents at the very earliest opportunity, and the high staff/resident ratio usually means that someone can do so quickly. In the event of a sudden influx of calls we naturally have to prioritise our response according to the assessed level of need of each resident and therefore the degree of risk involved. Calls from residents are never ignored.

What if my father needs special equipment?

We are well equipped with all the usual aids such as hoists, bed rails, commodes and low-profile beds. If special equipment is needed, this will become evident during the pre-admission needs assessment and will be costed and in place before a resident moves in. Residents can bring their own special equipment if they have it.

Can residents bring their pets?

We understand that many people enjoy the company of pets, and that their presence can have a therapeutic benefit. However, we also have to consider the preferences of our other residents as well as the practical responsibilities. We will therefore consider each request on its merits, depending on need and the number of animals already in the Home. We do already look after a communal cat, and four guinea pigs. Pets may be permitted to visit if it is appropriate.

What are the arrangements for personal laundry?

Personal laundry is taken care of in our purpose-built laundry room, which is equipped with two commercial washing machines, two tumble driers and ironing equipment. Residents' clothes are marked with their name and can be safely put in the

laundry to be returned fresh, dry and pressed as soon as possible. This service is included in our fees. Dry cleaning can be arranged at extra cost.

What are the arrangements for making and receiving telephone calls?

Each bedroom has a telephone point for those who wish to have their own private line installed or who wish to take advantage of Broadband for computer use. Many residents are happy to use one of our trolley payphones, which can be used for outgoing calls in the privacy of their own rooms. There is also an easily accessible public telephone near the main entrance.

Can residents venture out alone?

We encourage residents to exercise choice and maintain independence, and they are free to journey out alone if they feel able to do so. However, unless we have arranged the journey and any necessary supervision, we are unable to accept responsibility for their safety once outside the Home.

What if we want to take a resident out for the day?

If a resident wishes to go out with family or friends they are free to do so, but in these circumstances we

cannot accept responsibility for their safety once outside the Home.

What are the visiting arrangements?

Visitors are welcome at any time, as long as the resident is happy to see them. We provide a kitchen where visitors can prepare drinks and snacks at their convenience, and also a room where they can stay overnight if necessary.

This is particularly helpful if a resident should become ill, as it gives their family privacy during a particularly difficult time.

Do you provide 'end of life' care?

On moving in, 'end of life' care is discussed with the resident and their relatives and their wishes noted on the front of the individual's care plan. We are committed to carrying out 'end of life' care with respect for those wishes, and with sensitivity. During this time in particular the resident will receive the highest possible continuity of care from their dedicated keyworker, and extra pain relief can be administered by our qualified nursing staff.

All our nursing staff are being trained in the 'Liverpool Care Pathway', which is a multi-professional model setting out the delivery of best-practice nursing care for each individual at the end of life.

What are your fees?

The cost of providing care varies from one resident to another depending on their specific needs, and the care 'package' is therefore tailored to individuals. The fees appropriate to your individual situation will therefore be determined by the initial assessment of your nursing needs.

While providing a quality service we are also committed to offering value for money, and to ensure our calculations are fair and objective we utilise the William Laing toolkit – an industry-leading and carefully constructed financial software package.

Our residents are either self-funding, funded by Social Services on an individual basis (topped up as appropriate by private contribution), or by the NHS under continuing nursing care.

The current rules surrounding nursing fees can be complicated and confusing and specific advice is

available from the Home & Care Services Manager or from the Senior Administrator.

What is included in the fees and what is not?

Fees include the cost of fully trained staff in attendance 24 hours a day, on-site catering, provision for special diets, laundry, call system, central heating, Visiting Medical Officer services, and Home-based activities and therapies.

They do not include dry cleaning, hairdressing, manicure and pedicure, chiropody, dentist and optician services, telephone calls or personal contents insurance.

What if we have a complaint?

We take the views of our residents and their families very seriously, so we actively encourage our residents to express any concerns or issues they may have and provide many opportunities for them to do so. This means most concerns can be addressed on a one-to-one basis and resolved very quickly before becoming a complaint. Nevertheless we also have a robust formal complaints procedure, a copy of which is included in the 'Service User's Guide' given to residents on admission and also displayed on notice boards.

As well as using the formal procedure, residents or their relatives wishing to make a complaint can contact Social Services, their own Care Manager, or the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to do so.

Is there any independent information that would tell me more about Gavin Astor House?

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is a new health and social care organisation set up by the Government to inspect and assess care homes to ensure they meet the needs of those who use them, and that they meet or exceed the national minimum standards defined in the Care Standards Act 2000.

They carry out unannounced inspections of all homes, speaking to residents, relatives and staff, scrutinising procedures and documentation, observing activities and collecting evidence to support their findings.

The CQC report on any particular care home is a public document that can be viewed online at www.cqc.org.uk or requested in printed format by calling **0870 240 7535**.