

## **Health, Wellbeing & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Visit**

**Accommodation setting:** Mildmays Extra Care Scheme, 6 Mildmay Park, Islington, London, N1 4PF

**Date:** 7 January 2025

**Time:** 16:30 – 17:30

**Attendees:**

**Councillors** - Jilani Chowdhury, Joseph Croft, Benali Hamdache & Janet Burgess

**Officers** - Bhavya Nair, Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Mildmays Registered Manager:** Jacqueline Millar

Mildmays is an Extra Care scheme situated in Islington and was acquired by Housing 21 in February 2023. The scheme enables residents to live independently with access to 24/7 on-site care and support for people over the age of 55. Living in Extra Care means residents live in their own home but with the peace of mind that having help on hand brings. Residents would have their own front door and letterbox; can have friends and family to visit (without asking permission) and can bring their pets too. Islington Council have 100% nomination rights to the scheme – all residents who live there have been referred from Islington Adult Social Care.

The Members of the Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee visited Mildmays to observe and to have the opportunity to interact and have informal conversations with 9 older residents, including residents with disabilities who live in the extra care housing.

The aim of the visit was to:

- Understand what type of service extra care provides and the resident outcomes it aims to achieve for/with residents.
- Speak to the residents at Mildmay to understand what matters to them and their experience of living in extra care housing.
- Speak to the Mildmay team about their experience of working within extra care.

During the meeting, the residents shared their thoughts and opened up about their experiences of living at Mildmays Extra Care as below:

### **Resident 1:**

The resident had been living in Mildmays for a number of years. The Extra Care Scheme provided residents with options to have their own private life, as well as choosing to be a part of the community within Mildmay. Although the resident had family members who stayed in touch, there was still a sense of feeling lonely. The resident felt happy and settled in life and this would not have been possible if they were living alone in the community.

**Resident 2:**

The resident was happy to be at Mildmays as they felt they would have otherwise been homeless. There was a sense of belonging and felt like they fit in well with the community formed at Mildmays. There was the added benefit of having carers who visit to provide support and assist with daily tasks.

**Resident 3:**

This resident built their life here. It was mentioned that before arriving at Mildmays, they lived in a care home for older people which was not suitable. Mildmays is different to an older people's care home. The resident expressed the importance that people should not just be moved into older people's care homes as it may not be suitable for them. They would like to stay at Mildmay for as long as possible. A lot of support is available, an example provided was that there was a problem with the heating in the resident's unit and a senior member of staff had helped by visiting the unit to assist in resolving the issue. The Senior staff checked and advised that they cannot live in the unit without a working heater, and the heating issue was resolved immediately. The resident is currently having their bedroom renovated and is happy about this. There was a massive difference between their life in a care home and now in Mildmays. Being at Mildmays has had a big impact on their quality of life.

**Resident 4:**

The resident felt safe, and the staff are lovely. During Covid was looked after during lockdown. Felt safe and secure.

The visit also consisted of a Q&A session, where the Members asked the residents various questions:

**Questions:**

1. How do you feel living in Islington and would you like to live in another borough?
  - Some of the residents had been living in Islington for many years and would like to continue to stay in Islington.
  - Another resident mentioned that the care and support at Mildmays was strong, and it was very important for him to stay in Islington, so he continues to receive the support he needs. Staying in the borough had helped him move forward in life.
  - Another resident added that they were born in Islington and have friends, family and connections in Islington and would like to be close by as this makes them feel safe. There was also easy access to shops, church etc.
  - Another resident contributed by saying that if she did want to move, she would like to move to the West Country. The management team at Mildmays advised that Housing 21 has the facilities to move residents across their schemes and will look into this for the resident if they are still interested.

2. Do you have a choice for your care plan, or do you just get told about what your care plan is?

- There is a choice in the type of care provided.
- Residents did not want anyone to do just anything and they develop their care plan with senior management team and carers. An example provided highlighted that residents have the choice to go out for their daily needs like shopping, instead of sending the carer to do the shopping on their behalf.
- Another resident added that they have a say in developing their care-plan and nothing is forced on them.
- The care plan is always reviewed and updated. There is a flexibility for the resident to go back and add or amend. Any issues that arise are always discussed with the managers.
- Residents gave good feedback on carers and they appreciate their hard work. The importance of having trust and building great rapport with carers was mentioned.

3. How many carers are there in total?

- There are around 90 carers across Mildmay, this includes bank staff as well.
- Management added that the staff turnover is very low with less than a 1% turnover. Some of the staff have worked in Mildmays for 10-20 years. There is stability in terms of staffing and there is also great teamwork.

4. Is the care you receive consistent?

- The care is consistent. It was highlighted that the service had an enhanced GP surgery service for residents. Every Friday the doctor visits and sees residents who have put down their names to be seen. They also include details of any issues and illness that they wished to discuss with the doctor.

Members of the Committee highlighted the following key points during the visit:

## **Planning**

The service was in the process of trying to create additional new flats in one of the end blocks. However, this process had been complicated and challenging. There has been a lot of requests for more information around this.

The members asked if there is a recommendation about the planning process for this kind of accommodation.

## **Provider**

The members noted that Housing 21 had taken over the scheme in 2023. Housing 21 is a provider that delivers extra care housing but crucially is focused on delivering good quality care, and this focus on care seems to be transforming the place. Housing 21 has invested a lot in facilities and in coproduction. It does seem really important that we get the right providers for this type of accommodation in Islington.

## **Facilities:**

The members noted that Mildmays offered a great mix of spaces: Communal spaces; Private space; a lot of garden space. That seemed key to the positive feedback we got from residents about the place that they live.