

Birchlands, Barley Mow Road, Englefield Green, TW20 0NP



## About Birchlands

Birchlands is a purpose-built residential care home, constructed in the 1970s. It provides accommodation and personal care for up to 52 people who may be living with dementia or have needs related to being an older person. Admissions during the pandemic have reduced and as of 9 September 2021, 20 people called Birchlands their home.

Birchlands is a two-storey building. The bedrooms each have a wash hand basin and are split over seven living areas with a central reception and communal area, day room, kitchen and staff facilities. There is also a large communal area which includes a day room, main kitchen and staff facilities.

It is located in a quiet village location in its own grounds, Birchlands care home is close to local services and amenities, including a variety of shops and a village green. Birchlands has a strong connection with Royal Holloway University. Students helped to create a sensory garden and they also regularly visit the home to participate in arts and craft activities with the people who live there.

Birchlands has established a good working relationship with the local GP surgery with doctors visiting the home as part of a weekly round.

Birchlands was inspected by the Care Quality Commission in July 2021. It was rated 'Good' [The CQC report for Birchlands can be viewed here.](#)

## Background

Surrey County Council initially built and ran Birchlands before its management was transferred to Anchor Hanover Trust in the late 1990s on a long-term contract.

On 31 March 2019, the contract with Anchor Hanover Trust ended and the council took back the responsibility for operating the care home.

Since taking back the care home, the council has undertaken internal reviews of the building structure and commissioned independent property surveyors, Savills, to undertake a building condition survey.

## About the service

The dedicated staff at Birchlands work hard to provide a caring service for all people living in the home. Over time fewer people are choosing to move into a residential setting, preferring to remain in their own homes and local area for as long as possible. When people do need to move to a residential care setting, they often have more complex conditions and require specialist care and support. In addition, when families and potential future residents do view the home, some tell us they are looking for a service with more modern facilities.

Staff also work very hard to make Birchlands as homely as possible, and to deliver dignified care. The layout of the home and the bedroom sizes in particular are relatively small in comparison with new build care homes. This means it is a challenge to accommodate additional equipment, such as hoists or other mobility aids that many people with complex needs require to safely get in and out of bed or move around the building. The bedrooms lack access to any en-suite facilities meaning bathrooms and toilets are shared by both men and women living in that area of the home. Many people today prefer having their own facilities, as these afford greater privacy and dignity to the individual. Over the last two years it has also become increasingly evident that shared facilities present a challenge when managing the control of infections such as norovirus, flu and COVID-19.

## About the building

In December 2020 independent property surveyors Savills were appointed to inspect Birchlands and prepare a report on the condition of the building. The full report is

available on Surrey Says, or a printed version is available upon request. (See contact details at the end of this document.)

The report's main findings were that the home is well cared for but considered to be beyond its optimal economic lifespan. The building is reaching an age where maintenance and running costs are significantly higher than the industry standard. Due to wear and tear, failure of the infrastructure and equipment could happen at any time.

Considerable investment would be needed to bring Birchlands up to modern standards and expectations.

## About the costs

The council regularly monitors expenditure to understand how much it costs to provide services. These are broken down by care home and show how much it costs the council to provide care and accommodation for one person for one week.

Costs are separated into revenue costs (the cost of providing care to residents on a day to day basis e.g. staff salary, food, heating and lighting) and capital costs (generally one-off expenditure on a building or equipment such as replacing a roof or fitting of replacement boilers).

Information provided by Savills has enabled the council to compare anticipated costs of continuing to provide services from Birchlands as detailed below:

The anticipated weekly cost of providing care per person over the next 30 years is estimated to be:

- £892 per week - continue to operate the services maintaining Birchlands as it is now
- £1201 per week – partially modernising facilities and reducing the number of bedrooms
- Where alternative placements need to be found we would seek to utilise capacity within our existing block funded and contracted care home provision or where needed approach the independent sector. These costs may vary depending on the needs of the individual and the local circumstances.

## What are the options being considered?

There are three options for consideration:

### **Option 1: Maintain and sustain Birchlands Care Home and continue to meet building compliance standards**

This option would mean no significant changes to the building or service.

There are various issues to consider for this option, for example:

- Birchlands would continue to find it challenging to accommodate people with complex care needs due to the constraints and limitations of the building
- Shared bathing and toilet facilities would continue to impact on privacy and the control of infections within the home.

### **Option 2: Modernise and refurbish Birchlands Care Home**

This option would mean major refurbishment or reconfiguration to bring the home up to a standard that is fit for the future, with a more suitable environment, including en-suite facilities.

There are various issues to consider for this option, for example:

- This may require residents to be moved from Birchlands for a period of time to enable works to be completed.

### **Option 3: Support residents to move to an alternative care home and close Birchlands Care Home.**

This option would mean the council working closely with residents and their families to find an alternative care home.

There are various issues to consider for this option, for example:

- Surrey County Council adult social teams would reassess the needs of the people living at Birchlands and work with other providers of care to secure alternative, quality services
- Surrey County Council will support staff to be redeployed or to find alternative employment externally

## **How to contact us, have your say and send us your feedback**

It is important for Surrey County Council to understand your views on this consultation regarding the future of Birchlands. All comments received during the consultation period will be considered and an options paper will be presented to Surrey County Council's Cabinet for a decision in February 2022.

If you would like to contact us to discuss any queries about the consultation or receive any information about this consultation in another format, please contact Surrey County Council using the details below.

You can also use the details below to send us your comments and feedback:

Telephone: 01372 832257 (Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm)

SMS (text only): 07527 182861 (This service is for the deaf and hard of hearing only. Please start your text with the words 'care home survey')

Email: [servicedelivery.info@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:servicedelivery.info@surreycc.gov.uk)

Post: Mr C Hastings, Area Director, Service Delivery Management Team, Fairmount House, Bull Hill, Leatherhead. Surrey. KT22 7AH

Alternatively, if you would like advice from an independent source, please contact Healthwatch Surrey:

Telephone: 0303 303 0023 (local rate number)

SMS (text only): 07592 787533

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchsurrey.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchsurrey.co.uk)

Post: Freepost RSYX-ETRE-CXBY, Healthwatch Surrey GF21, Astolat, Coniers Way, Burpham, Guildford, Surrey, GU4 7HL