

# **Day time support centre at Knight Hill House**

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## **Report on services provided by Age UK Lancashire**

**Date of assessments:** May-July 2015

**Contact Details:** Day time support centre at Knight Hill House  
Blackburn Road  
Padiham  
BB12 8JZ

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## Introduction and rationale

Age UK Lancashire has a number of daytime support centres at locations across Lancashire and requested an independent assessment of four of their daytime support centre services by Healthwatch Lancashire to gather views of service users and their next of kin to inform their quality improvement programme.



## Methodology

All participants gave their consent to being approached by Healthwatch Lancashire. The assessment was undertaken in 3 stages:

### Stage 1, Service User Questionnaire:

Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers spoke with and completed a questionnaire with 10 service users that focused on:

- Access
- Environment
- Food and nutrition
- Activities
- Dignity, enjoyment and well being
- Conduct of Age UK Lancashire staff and volunteers

### Stage 2 Next Of Kin Telephone Survey:

Healthwatch Lancashire spoke with the next of kin of 7 service users, using a telephone survey. The aim was to identify whether both service users and their next of kin benefited from the service.

### Stage 3 Environmental Assessment:

Healthwatch Lancashire undertook environmental assessments of each centre. Assessors completed an environmental assessment focusing on food, cleanliness & safety and identified whether the environment was fit for purpose.

## Observations

### Access

The majority of service users and their next of kin reported that they felt the location, access to the building and the time and day was good and convenient for them.

Both the service users and their next of kin would like to receive regular updates regarding the service to know what is going on at the centre. During the environmental assessment, Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers observed that the appearance and maintenance of the building, grounds and external social spaces was very good. There was an access ramp, handrails and lighting at the entrance, however no sign visible with the name of the centre or Age UK Lancashire logo on, making it quite difficult to find.

### Venue environment

Service users and their next of kin reported positively about the general ambience of the centre and stated that cleanliness was generally considered to be 'excellent' and the condition of the decoration, furniture, flooring and equipment was good and the seating comfortable. The level of noise, temperature and lighting was OK but on occasion noise levels were an issue and lighting in some instances too bright. The toilet and bathroom facilities received positive comments.

Service users stated that they were unaware of the emergency evacuation procedures.

During the environmental assessment, Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers observed that there was a small noticeboard of information available that was up-to-date in the reception area, and the reception area had a homely feel. The toilets and bathrooms were in general clean and fit for purpose. The communal area looked to be comfortable though with limited seating. There was evidence that some areas would benefit from cleaning including the windows that were very dirty.

Noise levels seemed to be high, with staff's mobile phones kept going off with 'unusual' ringtones, the door kept buzzing, a radio was playing and then there was general noise from conversations of

both staff and service users.

Emergency exit was clearly identified, however the emergency exit partially blocked by wheelchairs.

### Food and nutrition

All service users stated that they participate in the meals and refreshments the service provides. There was mixed opinion amongst service users regarding the choice of food available. All stated that portion sizes were sufficient, in general presentation and temperature of food was good and that they were able to request more if they liked. All service users said that there is a choice of hot and cold drinks available during the day and all commented that snack, biscuits and cake are frequently offered during the day but there is no fruit on offer.

For those service users who have specific dietary needs or assistance with feeding, this need was always met.

During the environmental assessment, Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers observed that service users are able to access water independently. There was no menu available, however there was a small whiteboard displaying one choice of meal and dessert and also displayed is information for the service users on how to obtain advice on food allergens. It was observed also that unnecessary activity is ceased during mealtimes.

The dining area and kitchen was clean and presentable. Healthwatch Lancashire were assured service users who require assistance with feeding are identified and helped, but this was not observed. Toast, tea and coffee was served on arrival but with no other breakfast options available. Snacks were available but staff had to be asked for them and there was no fruit offered. Napkins and clean crockery/cutlery provided. The lunch served looked appetising and served at correct temperature and when tasted was described as 'tasty'.

## Observations continued

### Activities on offer

The majority of service users stated that the activities on offer utilised their experience, skills and interests. None of the service users said that they are involved in planning the activities. The next of kin rated activities on offer as OK to good.

### Dignity, enjoyment and wellbeing

All service users stated that they enjoy attending the centre and that they felt safe during their time there. They and their next of kin all felt they were treated with dignity and respect. With, in general all next of kin reporting that they had noticed an improvement in their relative's mental and physical health as a result of using the centre and indeed their own.

A significant number of service users and their next of kin stated that they would not know who or how to comment or complain about the service, however all stated that they had no complaints to make.

### Conduct of staff and volunteers

Service users and their next of kin all reported positively with regards to the conduct of the centre's staff and volunteers, stating that they were caring and that in general there were enough staff and volunteers to meet the needs of service users. There were comments by next of kin regarding that the staff always seem to be different and keep changing and this can sometimes affect their relative. In addition, some service users stated that staff and volunteers are not easily identifiable.

### Other comments

In general service users stated that the centre was value for money.

During the environmental assessment Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers observed that the centre was very busy and this meant that there were not enough seats for all of the service users to sit together. Some service users had to sit on the sofa in the dining room area, whereas others were in the lounge so unable to socialise, this impacted on the ability for service users to interact, with some sitting in silence. The activities on offer on the day was singing,

however this did not seem to utilise the experience, skills and interests of service users.

## Quotes

During our visits we gained many comments, this is just a selection:

### Service user quotes...

“There is no problem getting in the building as you always have someone there to help you.”

“It is marvellous - very clean and tidy.”

“Noise levels are not too bad - you get used to the front door bell ringing all the time.”

“Noise - It's OK, but sometimes I cannot hear very well.”

“I have to sit in the corner to get away from the brightness.”

“The food is always very good and appetising.”

“Activities could be improved and I would really enjoy having political debates and discussions, as there is a life outside of being old.”

“I think it would be good if the centre could help me with other problems such as getting to the dentist.”

“It could not offer me anything else, as it has brand new bathrooms and everything here is great. I was amazed when I first came.”

“I cannot think of anything else to improve it, as I really enjoy coming as it gets me out of the house.”

“The staff are very good here and I really enjoy coming. I would come here more but two days was too exhausting for me.”

### Next of kin quotes...

“It is really nice, clean and smart.”

“When there is a meeting on, there is a lot of buzzing from the front door which I think could be disturbing for service users.”

“Safety is very good; I know that she is safe when she is there.”

“My relative makes flower's, does paintings and plays dominoes and the staff tell my relative that they have missed her, if she did not attend the previous week.”

“The staff are very nice with her and she would tell me if she wasn't.”

“My relative is a 'different person' after returning from the centre and is much more interactive.”

“Possibly a bit more evening activity and weekend trips away and the centre opening at the weekends would be good.”

“The staff always seem to be happy.”

“It is a life line - happy with the service.”

## Areas for improvement

Following on from our observations and from the opportunity of speaking with service users and their next of kin to gain their opinions and suggestions for improvements, the following have been identified:

- Providing access to more information about the centre and its staff and provide guidance on how to comment, compliment or complain about the service.
- Making fruit available as a snack and work with residents to look at the choice of menu.
- Looking to reduce noise levels and improve lighting.
- Work with service users to engage them in planning of activities on offer.
- Ensure greater awareness of emergency evacuation procedures for service users.

## Response from Age UK Lancashire

Age UK Lancashire requested this independent review of our Daytime Support Centres to support us in our ambition for continuous improvement across all services we deliver to and for older people across Lancashire.

Knight Hill House is a large centre that is available 5 days a week. We are proud that so many customers enjoy the centre, its staff, volunteers and activities and that some attend the centre on multiple occasions throughout the week.

We strive to ensure our customers experience the meaningful activities, enjoy a nutritious meal and return home at the end of the day looking forward to their next visit.

Noise levels have been identified as an issue from both mobile phones and the door alarm. Whilst we have been able to eradicate the mobile phone noise instantly, the alarm on the door is there to ensure our customer's safety. However, through the feedback from this report, we have highlighted this as an area for improvement, and will look for a solution to the level of noise this creates.

We are very fortunate to have a cook that is on site every day and whilst she will always ensure customers have an alternative choice of food to what is on the menu, we recognise this might not be clearly stated. Again, we will address this through our continuous improvement plans.

In addition, each morning we have introduced a "Welcome 5 mins" where we speak about the activities for the day and reiterate the emergency procedures.

We are also introducing a newsletter that will be available for all customers and next of kin, that will include a range of information regarding the centre.

# healthwatch Lancashire

**Tel** 0300 3038811

**www**.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

**info**@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

**Twitter**: @HW\_Lancashire

**Facebook**: facebook.com/lancshealthwatch