



## **Enter and View Report:** **Victoria House Care Home**

Date of visit: Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018

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# Background

## What is Healthwatch Warrington?

Healthwatch Warrington helps the residents and communities of Warrington to get the best out of local health and social care services. We gather the views of local people and make sure that they are heard and listened to by the organisations that provide, fund and monitor services. We are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with a Registered Charity Number of 1172704.

## What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View (E&V) visits. Local Healthwatch representatives, who are trained volunteers, carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) allows local Healthwatch representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, care homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, opticians and pharmacies. E&V visits can happen if people identify a problem. Equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation; enabling lessons to be learned and good practice shared. Healthwatch E&V visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. If safeguarding issues are raised during a visit, Healthwatch Warrington safeguarding policies identify the correct procedures to be followed.

## Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to the findings observed on the specific date of the visit. This report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users / residents and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time. Wherever possible, the report below is in the words of the E&V team members present at the time of the visit. The report has been collated by the Healthwatch Warrington team and some of the text has been formatted to allow for easy reading. The essential facts of the visiting team's reports have not been altered.

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Warrington would like to thank everyone at Victoria House, in particular Belinda Byron (Home Manager), for welcoming our team and taking the time to answer their questions.

## Purpose of the visit

As part of Healthwatch Warrington's Enter and View programme, visits are made to local residential homes in accordance with information received from the local public, service users, carers and monitoring authorities. Healthwatch Warrington previously visited Victoria House Care Home in June and July 2017, having received intelligence that indicated concerns at the home (around staffing levels, cleanliness, risk assessments, food and nutrition and aspects of person-centred care).

Healthwatch Warrington's subsequent report made a number of recommendations for improving service delivery, including a focus on renovating the physical environment, improving infection control procedures, strengthening leadership and increasing the involvement of resident's relatives in life at the home (as well as better activities provision for residents). We shared our findings with partner organisations, which informed their subsequent inspections and work with the provider.

As such, Healthwatch Warrington conducted a follow up visit, in part to observe if our recommendations had been acted upon, and to see what changes had occurred (if any), since the home's new manager came into post. As with other Enter and View visits, the visiting team's overall aim was to gain impression of the quality of care being delivered, as well as the 'feel' of the home, from the perspective of local people (not a formal, clinically-focused inspection). The visiting team also took into consideration the stated values of the provider, when making observations at Victoria House, and reflected on these in relation to their impressions of 'lived-experiences' in the home.

## Details of the Visit

### Details of the Service

Victoria House is owned and operated by W H Investments Limited. Located in a quiet, suburban area of Grappenhall, Victoria House is an adapted building that can accommodate up to 30 people, with personal care being provided to residents in accordance with their needs (some of whom are living with dementia). Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted an inspection at Victoria House in November and December 2017 and subsequently rated the service as overall 'Requires Improvement'. The full CQC inspection report can be found online: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-581494553>

### Location, Date and Time

The visit took place at Victoria House, 27 Victoria Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 2EN, on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018, from 6:30pm - 8:15pm.

### Healthwatch Warrington Representatives

Adrienne Roberts - Healthwatch Warrington, Volunteer Co-ordinator and Enter and View Authorised representative

Jim Sinnott - Healthwatch Warrington, Enter and View Authorised Representative

Eileen MacDonald - Healthwatch Warrington, Enter and View Authorised Representative

### Service Staff / Named Contact

Belinda Byron (Home Manager)

## Spotlight on Values - Victoria House's Philosophy of Care

According to Victoria House's website:

(<http://www.victoriahousecarehome.co.uk/>), the provider aims to offer its Residents a secure, relaxed, and homely environment in which their care, well-being and comfort are of prime importance. This includes maintaining an awareness of resident's ever changing needs (physical, emotional, spiritual, etc.), as well as involving residents, their families and carers in the development of individualised care plans.

In order to achieve this ambition, Victoria House has identified the following aims and objectives;

- **Privacy:** The right of a Resident to be left alone and undisturbed whenever they wish.
- **Dignity:** The understanding of a Resident's needs and treating them with respect.
- **Independence:** Allowing a Resident to take calculated risks, to make their own decisions and think and act for themselves.
- **Choice:** Giving a Resident the opportunity to select for themselves a range of alternative options.
- **Rights:** Keeping all basic human rights available to the Resident
- **Fulfilment:** Enabling the Resident to realise their own aims and helping them to achieve these goals in all aspects of daily living.

Therefore, Healthwatch Warrington's visiting team would expect to see evidence of these values strongly influencing 'lived experiences' at Victoria Care Home.

# Results of the Visit

## First Impressions, Entrance and Reception Area

On approach from the main road, Victoria House is prominently sign posted. There is no designated parking at the home and visitors are required to park off-site (on nearby roads). The drive way and front garden areas appeared to be well-maintained. The home's main entrance is accessible via a set of steps. Disabled access is facilitated by 'grab handles' fitted at either side of the entrance and a wheelchair ramp to the right. However, the wheelchair ramp was not clearly advertised from the front of the building.

The home has a small reception area, which was welcoming, tidy and smelt fresh. There was no seating for visitors in this area, due to its small size. However, visitors are welcome in the lounges and conservatory. The visiting team were greeted by a staff member and asked to sign in and out using a visitors' book. The visiting team also saw a notice board, which displayed information about events and just beyond reception, a 'who's who' board was in place - showing photographs of staff members (which is useful for residents and visitors). The visiting team were then introduced to Belinda Byron (Home Manager), who gave them a tour of the building and answered their questions.

## Activities and Leisure

Victoria House had recently appointed an Activity Co-ordinator, Suzanne. Notices detailing a range of activities were displayed around the home. Entertainers (such as singers) regularly attend as part of the activities programme and a hairdresser visits each week. Seasonal / themed events are often planned. For example, Easter Bonnet competition and Easter egg painting competition were taking place around the time of the visit and the winner was being judged by the Mayoress of Warrington (who was due to visiting the home). This would also include a coffee morning session for families and members of the public to attend (as well as the local press).

Belinda is particularly passionate about involving the local community in life at the home and has sought to strengthen these links. For example, St Wilfrid's Reverend visits on a monthly-basis to give Communion and residents are able to attend church on a monthly-basis. Several 'Open Days' had also been planned for members of the public and a Facebook page has been set up - displaying events at the home and activities taking place with residents (with their permission). Other trips into the community had also been scheduled.

In terms of the conservatory area, the visiting team saw that it was a very pleasant room (used for activities), which was equipped with a wall mounted large screen TV. The home also had a back garden area, which Belinda said was due to be refreshed shortly.

### **Food and Refreshments**

At the time of the visit, no meal service was taking place (as it was later in the evening). The visiting team were taken into the dining room and shown examples of menu choices. The dining tables were decorated with brightly coloured, wipe-clean cloths, mats and flowers. This room is quite small and this limited space could hinder the use of wheelchairs and mobility aids.

Victoria House employs two part time cooks, one covering Saturday to Tuesday and one covering Tuesday through to Friday. Speech and Language Therapists (SaLTs) and dieticians are involved in assessing each individual residents' dietary needs in order to determine whether puréed is necessary for some of their meals. Some residents experience issues with swallowing and thickening fluids are prescribed as a result. Residents' dietary needs are recorded and monitored using charts.

Meal times are taken in two sittings, given the size limitations of the dining room. Menus have now been developed in discussion with residents and some of their relatives. However, the preferences of individual residents can be catered for - with an alternative meal provided, if required. The visiting team noted that the cleanliness of the dining / kitchen areas seemed to have greatly improved since the



last visit. For instance, the kitchen door located near a bedroom (near a resident's bedroom) is now kept permanently closed, which is an improvement. In support of this observation, the visiting team also noted a food hygiene certificate on display (showing a five star rating).

### **Clinical Observations: Cleanliness, Infection Control and Medicines Management**

At the time of the visit, Victoria House appeared to be clean, tidy, and well-maintained throughout. There were no unpleasant odours and hand sanitizers were located around the home. Most of the residents were located in social areas and seemed to be clean and well kempt. Also, hand sanitisers looked to be strategically placed (for example, near the front entrance door) and kept adequately filled. This was supported by the results from a recent infection control inspection carried out by Warrington Borough Council, which awarded the home a score of 96%. The visiting team noted that since the last visit (and the change in leadership) there has been a positive transformation in terms of cleanliness at Victoria House.

In terms of external support, Lucy Garvey (Community Nurse, Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust) regularly attends the home, as does a District Nurse. Each resident is registered with their preferred GP and Dr Miller attends each week (on Tuesdays) to care for patients. The home also receives support from the Community Mental Health Team (LLaMS) based at Hollins Park (which includes regular reviews). In addition, residents also have access to an optometrist and dentist who visit the home on a regular basis.

Senior Carers are responsible for managing medication (Belinda carries out sample audits to monitor these activities). Warrington Borough Council officers also help to review medication charts, etc. Belinda commented that prescription medication is now supplied to Victoria House by "Pharmalogic Chemist", based in Preston: <http://pharmalogic.dudaone.com/>. Belinda explained that the home has enjoyed a very good experience with this supplier (as they provide an efficient service for residents).

## Smoking

At the time of the visit, no residents were smokers. However, if residents did wish to smoke, Belinda would personally conduct a risk assessment for each resident concerned.

## Administration, Staffing and Staff Training

Victoria House has been owned by W H Investments Limited for around four years. The home is one of ten homes in the group. Although the home had a 30 bed occupancy capacity, only 15 residents were living there at the time of the visiting (nine of whom were living with dementia), due to a previous CQC embargo placed on accepting new residents, following inspection concerns. This embargo had been lifted four weeks prior to the visit and the home was now able to admit one additional resident, per week. The Home's Manager carries out a personal suitability and risk assessment, before a resident is to be admitted.

The visiting team spoke with Belinda, who has been in post as Victoria House's Manager since January 2018. Belinda has been employed in care home management for approximately eleven years and was awaiting her CQC registration for Victoria House. Belinda appeared to be very enthusiastic about making improvements to care standards and the physical environment of the home.

Victoria House had undergone recent refurbishment and most of the carpets had been replaced with hard surface flooring. At the time of the visit, the home's third floor was being upgraded. The décor has also been improved and some furniture replaced since the previous Healthwatch Warrington visit. Furthermore, the home employs a "Handyman" (Monday to Friday) to carry out routine maintenance.

In terms of staffing levels, Belinda told the visiting team that she has successfully recruited to all vacant posts - the result of a focused recruitment drive. As such, the home has greatly reduced its use of agency staff. Having spoken with long-serving staff members, the visiting team gained the impression that retention and staff morale have also significantly improved recently.

Staff shift rotas were as follows:

- 8:00am - 2:00pm, one Senior Carer and three Care Assistants
- 2:00pm - 8:00pm - one Senior Carer and two Care Assistants
- 8:00pm - 8:00am - two care staff

Staff benefit from a range of training opportunities - including induction sessions, general knowledge (such as moving and handling procedures), as well as specialist knowledge around specific roles. Refresher training is also accessible. Formal NVQ to Level 2 training is available for Care Assistants, as well as Level 3 for Senior Carers.

Communications with the home's owner were also reported to have improved (management speak on the phone, usually once or twice a day). The owner is also making more regular visits to the home.

### Safety

Victoria House has numerous safety procedures in place. In relation to the physical environment, key pad entry systems and a sign-in book help to control visitor flow. Also, unsuitable flooring on the ground floor has been replaced with a dementia friendly alternative (fairly neutral, non-shiny pattern); helping to eliminate trip hazards. The home was also seen to be tidy and uncluttered, with no obvious obstructions inhibiting access to passage ways or fire exits. Furthermore, in the event of a night time health-related emergency, staff would call a GP, or the NHS 111 phone triage service.

### Privacy, Dignity and Treating People as Individuals

At the time of the visit, all ground floor bedrooms were occupied and each bedroom door showed a photograph of the resident, alongside their name. Future residents will move into rooms on the second and third floor. The visiting team were invited to look inside one of the occupied bedrooms, which contained lots of personal effects and was homely and pleasantly furnished.

The visiting team looked at unoccupied bedrooms on the second and third floor. The rooms had recently been re-decorated, re-carpeted and nicely furnished. Some rooms also offered en-suite toilet facilities (but no showers).

In relation to person-centred care, staff were seen to treat residents with respect (for example, addressing them by first name, where appropriate, and knocked on doors before entering residents' bedrooms, toilets and bathrooms). Residents were also seen to be appropriately dressed. Each resident is supplied with a "This is Me" booklet, containing personal details that facilitate person-centred interactions. The visiting team also spoke with residents, who appeared to be cheerful and said they liked living at Victoria House.

During the previous visit, care plans were flagged up as a problematic issue. However, this seems to have been addressed, with Belinda commenting that; "There's been a massive overhaul and improvement in Care Plans, which are now more detailed" - reflecting a strong focus on person-centred care and values. Furthermore, Warrington Borough Officers had been actively involved in supporting care plan improvement reviews.

Belinda has also focused on gaining more feedback from resident's families by issuing questionnaires, setting up group meetings and inviting them to meet with her on a one-to-one basis. However, Belinda reported that attendance at these meetings could be improved.

### **Encouraging Positive and Respectful Attitudes**

The visiting team observed positive and respectful interactions between residents and staff.

## Other Comments

Overall, the visiting team enjoyed their visit to Victoria House and commend Belinda on overseeing the notable improvements made since Healthwatch Warrington's previous visit. As the result of stronger leadership, marked improvements have been made in key areas at Victoria House, including; staff morale, competencies and retention, the physical environment, clinical procedures and person-centred care.

However, the visiting team felt that maintaining this positive direction is still dependant on the continuing commitment and support of the home's owner, as well as the continued support of external partners (such as Warrington Borough Council), particularly as the number of residents increases. The main area of potential improvement would be finding ways to successfully boost the involvement of relatives and carers in the home (i.e. in terms of providing feedback), which is reflected in the recommendation made below).

## Recommendations

- 1. Improve Relative and Carer Involvement:** Victoria House should continue to try and improve relative and carer engagement with life at the home (with the aim of being responsive to any complaints, comments and suggestions). Healthwatch Warrington could discuss ways of helping to facilitate greater uptake of relative and carer involvement in events and/or gaining feedback as an independent, third party.

## Distribution List

This report has been distributed to the following:

- Warrington Borough Council
- NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Healthwatch England

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Response from provider

The service did not provide a response to this report within the given timescales.

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