



Enter and View Report: Birch Court Nursing and Residential Home

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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 staff 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. Where information applies to a specific unit within the care home, or is common to both, this will be indicated in the text.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Warrington would like to thank everyone at Birch Court Nursing and Residential Home for their welcome, and in particular, Catherine Haycock (Registered Manager), and Karen Dixon (Clinical Services Manager) for making time to share information with the visiting team and answering their questions.

Purpose of the visit

Prior to the visit, Healthwatch Warrington received intelligence from the Care Quality Monitoring Meeting, that the Birch Court remained on an improvement plan. As such, our team of staff and volunteers visited the home to gain further insight into the provision of care, as well as to form an impression of how the organisation's values contributed to the lived experiences of residents and visitors to the home.

The visiting team aimed to speak directly to as many residents, and their relatives and friends as possible.

Details of the Visit

Details of the Service

Birch Court Nursing and Residential Home is run by HC-One Ltd and located in a Howley; which is close to Warrington Town Centre. The home is split into five separate single-storey houses: Brook House, Moss House, Fern House, Bank House and Waterside House, each with the capacity to accommodate 30 people. Birch Court offers General Nursing, Dementia Nursing and Dementia Residential. At the time of the visit, Bank House was closed.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) visited the home on 7th October 2016 and undertook a focused inspection in relation to the 'Safe' section, following concerns raised anonymously in relation to staffing levels. Subsequently they awarded Birch Court a rating of 'Requires Improvement'. The CQC returned on 8th and 9th March 2017 and undertook a full inspection. The first day was unannounced. Following this visit the home was given an overall rating of 'Good' and was rated 'Good' in all the five domains. You can read more about this inspection and access the full report by visiting the CQC's website: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-3116296157> At the time of the inspection, Birch Court was run by BUPA Care Homes Limited.

Location, Date and Time

Birch Court Nursing and Residential Home, Egerton Street, Howley, Warrington, Cheshire, WA1 2DF on Wednesday 20th February 2019, from 10:00am to 12.15pm

Panel Members

Adrienne Roberts - Healthwatch Warrington, Community Outreach Lead and Enter and View Authorised Representative

Lauren Roberts - Healthwatch Warrington, Enter and View Authorised Representative

Provider Staff

Catherine Haycock - Registered Manager

Karen Dixon - Clinical Services Manager

Spotlight on Values - ‘Located in a peaceful suburb of Howley, near Warrington, Birch Court is a friendly care home that offers nursing, nursing dementia and residential dementia care’.

‘With sitting rooms, space for Residents to pursue their hobbies and interests and a lovely dining room, Birch Court has a host of places in which to relax, dine, exercise, socialise and be creative. The pretty landscaped garden and patio is the perfect spot to spend time with friends and family, and is happily looked after by some of our Residents. The bright, comfortable bedrooms and living areas are all easily accessible by wheelchair.

The home’s caring team has created a family atmosphere, encouraging everyone to eat and celebrate special occasions together. Residents are invited to decorate their rooms with small items of their own furniture and treasured belongings so that it feels just like home. Daily life is thoughtfully designed to support mind, body and soul’.

As such, our visiting team would expect to see examples of these values and standards being evident in everyday experiences at Birch Court Nursing and Residential Home and playing an active role in shaping its culture. You can read more by visiting <https://hc-one.co.uk/Carehomes/Birch-Court.aspx>

Results of the Visit

First Impressions and Entrance Area

Birch Court Nursing and Residential Home was easy to find, and the sign could be seen from the main road. It is situated in a residential area, within a few minutes-walk of the Warrington town centre. There is a large car park, and on the day of the visit, there was ample parking available for the visiting team. There are well-maintained gardens and walkways, with plenty of shrubs and plants. This gave a welcoming feeling on arrival.

The double-door front entrance was free from litter and complemented with cheerful hanging baskets. There was open access to the reception area and a book for visitors to sign in/out. There was hand sanitizer next to the book and a vase of fresh flowers. There was a second door that led into the main reception area. There were two large desks for a receptionist and administrator and their names and job titles were clearly displayed. There was a seating area with a table and four chairs, and a small table with tea and coffee making facilities. There were notice boards displaying the CQC rating, Certificate of Liability insurance and several framed pictures; one of which was the HC-One values.

The visiting team was met by Catherine Haycock (Registered Manager) and soon after they were joined by Karen Dixon (Deputy Manager). Both have recently commenced working at Birch Court. The team sat with them and they discussed the home and current position in relation to residents, staffing and future plans. Catherine confirmed that the Enter and View posters had been received and were on display.

The main reception area is not often used by the family and friends of the residents because each of the five houses has its own direct entrance for visitors. For security purposes, visitors are required to use a doorbell and wait for staff to allow them inside.

On the day of the visit, Fern House was having a new carpet fitted in the lounge and it was decided that the team would not visit in order to avoid further disruption to the residents.

The visiting team chose to spend time on Waterside House (Dementia Nursing) and Brook House (Dementia Residential). They had the opportunity to talk with residents, relatives and members of nursing/care staff. Both houses had a small reception area, with a signing in/out book, hand sanitiser, clock and photographs of the members of staff working on the unit.

Activities and Leisure

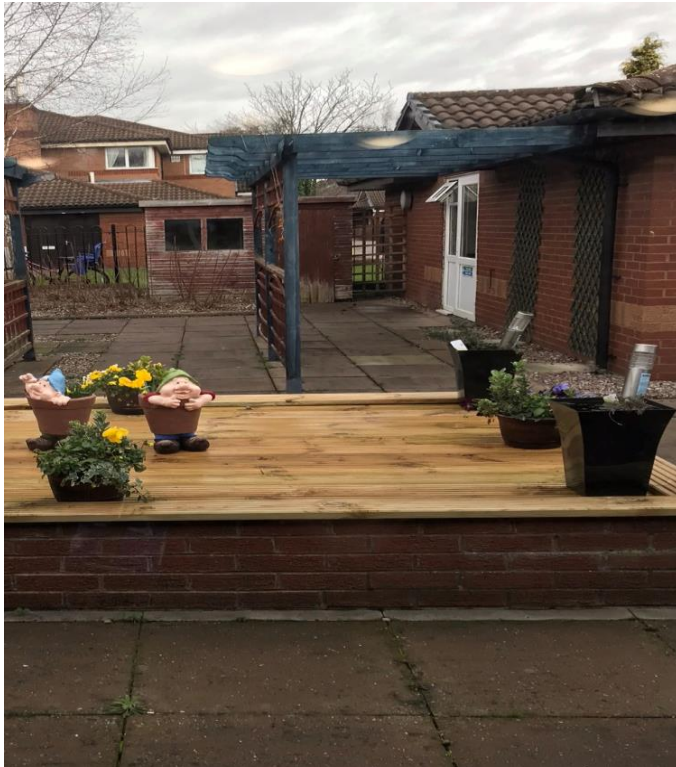
On entering Waterside House, the visiting team was shown around the building and spent some time with residents in the open plan lounge and dining area. There appeared to be several staff on duty, and they were interacting with the residents in a friendly and respectful manner. The Wellbeing Co-ordinator was sitting with a group of residents who were taking part in activities. She informed the visiting team that each of the houses has a Wellbeing Co-ordinator and in addition to doing activities with the residents in each house, they also do joint activities at the on-site coffee shop, special events and plan trips in the community.

The room contained lots of comfortable chairs, and a large, well-stocked fish tank. There was a Frank Sinatra CD playing in the background and at the time of the visit, the large wall-mounted television was turned off.

The team met with Jan (Waterside House Manager) and she was happy to show them around the unit and answer any questions. The staff office was situated in the lounge/dining room and had large windows, allowing clear visibility and observation of the residents in the area.

Each house has an enclosed garden and patio area, with pleasant, well-maintained

flower beds, decorative features and seating areas. They can be clearly seen from the lounges/dining areas and one resident commented on how much he enjoyed looking at them from his arm chair next to the window. He stated that when the weather was warmer, he would spend time sitting outside. A member of staff also commented that they would soon be sowing seeds and growing outdoor plants and vegetables with the residents.



One of the residents, who had been living in Waterside House for approximately four months, stated that he enjoyed taking part in sing-alongs. Another stated that “it is a nice place and there is plenty to do”. Another resident stated that he had been at Waterside for four years and liked living there. “Everything is under one roof and the staff are very good”. He told the member of the visiting team that he would be going to the hairdressing salon with a member of staff to have his hair cut that afternoon.

Adjacent to the lounge, there is a small reminiscence lounge, with items and from the period of the Second World War; including a military uniform. There was a mural of the Golden Gates at Warrington Town Hall, which many of the residents

would recognise. However, it was reported that the room is not well used, and it has been agreed to change the use of the room to an old-fashioned sweet shop and residents will be able to visit the shop to purchase sweets and other small items, for example toiletries.

The lounge area is carpeted, and the dining area, corridors and bedrooms have hard surface flooring. There were lots of lovely pictures and furnishing around the unit. One area was reminiscent of a home and had an ironing board, iron, laundry basket and picture of clothes hanging on a clothes line. Another area was set out like a seafront, with a wooden bench, painting of the beach, inflatable rings, buckets and spades, and holiday postcards pinned to the wall. There was also an area with a dressing table, mirror and jewellery on display.

There was a photo-board mounted on one of the walls, which displayed lots of photographs of the residents and staff at the Christmas party. There was another board displaying lots of thank you cards, and an activities schedule which included choir practice and games.

The visiting team spent time on Brook House and on entering the unit there was a 'meet the team' board, along with a signing in/out book, with a clock positioned above it.

The unit was clean, tidy and well maintained throughout and there were no unpleasant odours. There was a lovely photo-board in one of the corridors showing photographs of residents, and there was a customer feedback board and dates for your diary board.

The team met with Daniel, (Brook House Manager) who kindly showed them round and answered any questions. He said that had worked at Birch Court for nearly four years.

It was noted that most members of staff had name badges on and a few words personal to them, for instance Daniels had "selfie queen" on his and an activity co-

ordinator was noted to have "I love Lego" on hers, which is a nice touch and may help residents to build a relationship with them.

The lounge was half carpeted, half hard flooring. All residents were mobile. There were ladies seen cuddling dolls, and it was great to see that doll therapy is utilised as it seemed to have a calming effect on the residents. There was a fire place with photographs and ornaments with a mirror above it which gave it a homely feel. There was also a fish tank which was relaxing. There were plenty of arm chairs in the lounge and a clock on the wall which showed the correct time.

One member of the visiting team spoke with a lady who said that she had been there since last summer. She said that she didn't like it at first because it was a big change, but she likes it there now. She said that the staff are good and at one point Daniel walked past, and she smiled and said that she likes him. She is often asked if she would like a drink and she never goes hungry, although she said that sometimes at meal times, she does feel a bit rushed. She could see the TV from where she was sat in her chair, which is the chair that she always sits in. She is always warm enough. She said that she doesn't get involved in activities, it's not her thing really, she likes to keep herself to herself. She was dressed nice and appeared to be well cared for. She stated that she uses the hairdressing salon.

Both members of the visiting team spoke with two family members who had come to see their mother/wife. She had been in Brook House for three years and due to her illness, communication with her is no longer possible. It was a hard decision for her to leave the family home and go into a care home, but it was essential for them that she was safe, because it got to the point where it was not safe enough for her at home.

One of the relatives stated that when his wife first came to Birch Court, Brook House needed refurbishment. This has been done, and there are new chairs and a new carpet, and it has been nicely decorated. The relative informed the visiting team that the staff listen if you make suggestions or raise concerns. He gave the example that previously there was only a small TV on the wall, which was not big

enough for the residents to easily watch. He mentioned this to the staff, and it was actioned very quickly, and a large TV was put on the wall within days. During the visit, the TV was switched on and had subtitles on for residents that may be hard of hearing.

The relatives stated that the most important thing is that the care his wife receives is good, and the resident's husband commented that the staff "deserve medals" and he described them as "patient and kind" more than once. There is not one member of staff that he doesn't like or is unsure of. He hasn't eaten a meal, although he has been offered food when he visits his wife at mealtimes.

The visiting team was informed by a member of staff, that on Valentine's Day they did a meal for those residents whose spouses wanted to come in, and they set up tables and place-cards. This was considered to be a very nice touch.

Another resident was happy to talk to the visiting team and offered to show one of them his bedroom. The room was personalised, and he pointed out his radio, which he listens to every day. He also stated that he has a beer after his meals. This was confirmed by a member of staff who stated that the gentleman had always had a beer with his meals at home, and his daughters were happy for this to continue.

There is a hairdressing salon close to the coffee shop and on the morning of the visit there was a lot of activity, with several residents using both facilities. The salon is open on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and appointments are not always necessary.

The atmosphere was pleasant, and it was very apparent that the residents were enjoying socialising. This area is used by any residents at Birch Court and some residents who have limited mobility, had been assisted to the coffee shop and hairdressing salon; whilst others had been taken by wheelchair.

Food and Refreshments

The visiting team observed one lady was having a late breakfast because she had refused it earlier, and the Housekeeper was observed offering mid-morning snacks and drinks to everyone. Jeanette the Housekeeper on Waterside House, informed the visiting team that she offers the residents lots of drinks and snacks, including fresh fruit.

There is a choice of meals available and alternatives are provided if the residents do not like anything on the menu. One of the residents stated that “the food is excellent and anything you want, they give you”.

On Brook House the menu was on display. That day the options for lunch were yogurt and cardamom marinated chicken or minced lamb with homemade herb dumplings with diced potatoes cauliflower and sprouts. Residents could also have sultana sponge and custard or coffee and walnut cake. Choice for evening meal included cream of broccoli soup, assorted sandwiches, homemade fish goujons, mushy peas and potato wedges, arctic roll and fruit coulis or yoghurt or ice cream and fruit. At the time of the visit it was noted that staff were bringing drinks to residents.

Residents visiting the coffee shop are provided with complimentary drinks and biscuits. There is also a selection of crisps, chocolate and other snacks that can be purchased for 50 pence an item.

Cleanliness, Infection Control and Medicines Management

All the bedrooms on Waterside House and Brook House have a sink in the room. There are no en-suite facilities; however, there are assisted bathrooms and shower-rooms in each of the houses, which the visiting team viewed. All were fully accessible and had equipment for residents with disabilities. They were clean, tidy and equipped with disposable gloves and aprons. The visiting team was informed that there was a schedule of refurbishment due to take place on the bathrooms and

shower-rooms because they were quite dated in appearance. It was observed that there were no privacy curtains up in any of the bathrooms and shower rooms, although some did have tracking attached to the ceiling.

Waterside House and Brook House were clean, tidy and well maintained throughout and there were no unpleasant odours.

Administration and Admission

Bank House is unoccupied and not in use at the present time. The other four houses were not fully occupied at the time of the visit. They provide the following care:

Brook House - Residential Dementia Care

Waterside House - Dementia Nursing

Moss House - General Nursing

Fern House - General Nursing

Staffing and Staff Training

The staffing numbers for each house are as follows:

Moss House, Fern House and Waterside House (Nursing)

8.00 am - 2.00pm - two nurses and four care staff

2.00pm - 8.00pm - one nurse and five care staff

8.00pm - 8.00am - one nurse and two care staff (Waterside has an additional nurse for a resident who requires one to one care at night).

Brook House (Residential) Has the same numbers of staff; however, they are all care staff because there is no nursing care required.

Many of the members of staff that spoke to the visiting team, stated that they had worked at Birch Court for several years. At least two had been there in excess of twenty years. This was thought to demonstrate that Birch Court has a good staff retention.

Privacy, Dignity and Treating People as Individuals

The visiting team noted that staff used resident's names, were genuinely caring and appeared to treat people as individuals. Interactions between staff and residents appeared friendly and respectful. It was apparent that staff and residents were familiar with each other.

All the bedrooms on Waterside House and Brook House had a memory box mounted on the wall outside the door and almost all of them contained family photographs and small personal items belonging to the residents. It was good to see that family members/friends had filled the memory boxes; however, the visiting team felt that it would add to the personalisation and assist memory if a photograph of the resident was clearly displayed on or by the door.

Residents and their families are encouraged to personalise their rooms, and many have done so. Many of the bedroom doors were open and the visiting team could see pictures, ornaments, televisions and personal effects in bedrooms. The rooms viewed appeared to be clean and tidy.

The visiting team also noticed that the residents generally appeared well cared for and their appearance was clean and tidy. Everyone that they spoke to was comfortable and did not express any concerns about Waterside House and Brook House.

Safety

Access to each of the houses could only be gained by ringing the door bell and waiting for the door to be opened by a member of staff. All visitors are asked to sign in before entering.

There were numerous fire exits signposted throughout the building, and fire extinguishers were situated in several locations. Fire action plans were on display.

At the time of the visit, there appeared to be sufficient numbers of staff on duty in social areas to maintain the safety of the residents.

Encouraging Positive and Respectful Attitudes

All members of staff seemed very positive and happy in their work. This contributed to a happy atmosphere throughout Waterside House and Brook House. There was evidence that the staff were aware of the residents likes and dislikes, and that care was personalised.

Resident's birthdays are remembered, and tea parties organised. All residents were spoken to in a friendly manner and called by their first name.

Family members are made to feel welcome and members of staff referred to them by name when introducing the Healthwatch visiting team. One of the residents was being visited by three generations of her family; daughter, grand-daughter and great grand-daughter, and everyone appeared relaxed and enjoying the visit.

Other Comments

The visiting team observed that staff were committed and enthusiastic in their work to support all residents to live a happy life in an environment that feels like home. The new Management Team appeared keen to make further improvements and build on the positives already in place.

Refurbishment is underway on some areas within Birch Court and this will improve the facilities and environment. The home was purpose built in 1988 and the improvements include modernising the bathrooms and shower rooms. However, the two units visited, were well maintained, clean and tidy throughout.

There are lots of personal touches and pleasant seating areas, both inside and outside of Waterside House and Brook House. On Waterside House, one of the inside seating areas has a bench with a plaque in remembrance one of the former

residents who has passed away. There are lovely soft furnishings, pictures, gardening books and bunting; which is an ideal setting for residents who enjoy gardening.

Recommendations

1. ***Fit privacy curtains to bathrooms and shower rooms:*** the visiting team found that none of the bathrooms and shower rooms on Waterside House and Brook House had privacy curtains, although some had tracking in place.
2. ***Refurbishment:*** The visiting team were encouraged to see that refurbishment is taking place at the home and support plans to carry out further upgrades at the home.

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

Response from provider

“HC-One and Birch Court are delighted with the report. Our number one priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of our Residents and so we are pleased to be a part of the Health Watch program.”

healthwatch
Warrington

your
voice 
 **counts**

**We want to hear about the
care you received from a
local healthcare service.**

