



Enter & View Report

The Princes Centre

December 2021



What was the project about?

Healthwatch Bucks wanted to find out about people's experiences of attending the community opportunities offered by The Princes Centre.

Why did we do the project?

In 2021-22 we are looking at Covid19 response and recovery in Health and Social Care. Together with our cross-cutting interest in lesser heard voices, we decided to visit locations where community opportunities are provided. These had to close in 2020 during the pandemic and then adapt to changing circumstances as they opened through 2020 and 2021.

We wanted to hear from those who attend day care provision in Buckinghamshire. We wanted to hear what they gain from the experience and how it promotes well-being and self-reliance, one of the aims of [Our Ambition | Buckinghamshire Council \(buckscc.gov.uk\)](https://www.buckscc.gov.uk). In this, Buckinghamshire Council are looking to develop “meaningful and appropriate day and employment opportunities in the community to enable people to live fulfilling lives. We want to support a culture of choice for individuals rather than the current culture of dependency and having to fit in to services”.

We also wanted to identify good practice and ways to improve service delivery.

What did we do?

Our Enter & View visit to the service on 20th October was planned with the provider in advance. For more details on Healthwatch Enter and View and full details of the visit, including the names of our authorised representatives, please see Appendix 1.

We talked to 9 clients and 5 members of staff. We also observed the interactions between these people, 11 other clients and 5 other staff members. Some clients are non-verbal, and others chose to not talk to us. Our authorised representatives used a set of questions to guide their conversation with clients. It covered topics such as:

- what did they like doing at The Princes Centre?
- what skills had they improved since attending
- what would they like to change?
- how did they feel about the service?

What did we discover?

The Princes Centre offers day support to older people with dementia or those who feel isolated, as well as adults with mild or moderate learning disabilities and those with mental health difficulties. Different opportunities are available at the two sites in Princes Risborough and Bourne End from Monday to Friday. On the morning we visited the Princes Risborough location,

we talked to those with a learning or mental health difficulty. That morning, clients went swimming, played bean bag throw, or played on the Wii. Outdoor tennis had been cancelled due to the rain. A very busy white board showing the activities for the week by person, time slot and activity was on the wall near the kitchen. This was for the staff as most clients we asked did not know what they were doing until they were told.

How people were treated

Staff were very welcoming with good face to face contact, eye contact and the use of hand gestures, for example, thumbs up. They encouraged clients to put their coats and bags in lockers and made them a drink soon after their arrival. Staff knew each person's preferences whether that might be for a hot or a cold drink or for a particular flavour i.e. peppermint tea. When one person was mistakenly given sugar in their tea, there was lots of positive banter as the staff member apologised and a new drink was made. Even staff who had worked in the centre less than a month knew clients well and were able to tell us what they liked and disliked. Clients and staff were very relaxed in each other's company. They treated each other as equals. We saw one client asked by a staff member to help check that the first aid boxes were complete.

We also saw different communication tools used with clients. Makaton was used with clients to discuss the snack options available on that day. Signing was also used to confirm a client was going swimming that morning. Using picture cards, another client was asked which drink they would like. Later, they were verbally asked to put their plastic cup in the bin which they promptly did. Clients also got on well with others; some hugging each other and many giving thumbs up signs.

What do you like doing?

Two people told us that their favourite activity was Jinglers, the Princes Centre choir. "I'm a jingler." They had enjoyed singing at the Royal Albert Hall previously. One also played the piano every day she attended. "I really like being in groups and with the others." One person told us they loved playing games and got Rumikub out of the cupboard to show us their favourite. Pottery was popular too and we heard and saw how people's interests were reflected in what they made and painted. "We encourage people to make what they want." One person was making a Dr Who Tardis. We saw others painting a plate, a dog and a cat and making a Christmas tree. All clients got involved regardless of their ability. We were also shown small pottery decorations for the wooden metre high tree which had been made by clients in woodwork. This was to go to St Dunstan's church and be displayed with all the other local organisations' handmade Christmas trees.

There was a lot of laughter in the room where clients were competing to throw a bean bag in a hole multiple times. This involved a lot of movement as well as hand eye coordination. Those who needed help because of sight impairments were given directions; "follow my voice X" "perfect length". Others were encouraged to have a rest if they got tired or were physically supported if they needed it. There was a very good rapport between everyone. "He's lovely he is". When one client asked for the deputy manager to be fetched to watch them, she appeared in seconds and clapped and cheered with everyone else.

What have you got better at since coming here?

At the Princes Centre people told us they had learnt Makaton and tennis which they had not done elsewhere. One person said they had improved their singing. Another client said this was

their first day painting pottery. “It’s good to try something new.” They, and another person, played cards and games at the Bourne End location and told us they enjoyed coming to the Princes Risborough site for the more creative opportunities. “I have made lots of new friends here.” Two people said they enjoyed the education sessions. One talked about writing ‘All about Me’ stories and another told us about the simple maths they had learnt.

What could make your experience better?

Whilst many people told us they didn’t know what would make their experience at the Princes Centre better, some were able to answer the question when we asked, “If you had a magic wand, what would you change about your time here?” Four people suggested new experiences they would like. These were belly dancing, candle making, wood turning and a tuck shop.

How do you feel about the service?

Clients told us they enjoyed coming to The Princes Centre. They enjoyed the range of opportunities whether it be the sportier ones such as bowls or tennis or the creative ones such as woodwork and cooking. Although we only observed lunch time briefly, we saw everyone including staff, from all floors, chatting and eating together. It was very relaxed and homely. “I think we’ve all been very lucky here. The staff are superb.”

Our recommendations

Based on what clients told us and our observations, we recommend The Princes Centre:

- looks into introducing the new activities client mentioned (belly dancing, candle making and wood turning taster sessions) to gauge demand
- sees whether clients might want a tuck shop to buy refreshments or whether they are looking to run a small enterprise.
- puts up a noticeboard next to the weekly planner for that day’s activities possibly using pictures/photos to indicate who was doing what on any day. Clients could then be able to easily find out themselves what they were due to be doing.

Service Provider Response

We had recently carried out our own customer survey and received similar views to your report. We also had an independent senior care professionals carry out a full service evaluation which offered recommendations which we feel we have addressed since that time. Therefore, your recommendations are similar to our independent report and feedback.

How were people treated

It was good to hear staff were welcoming and treated all our clients with respect. We take particular pride in our approach to people, and one that includes listening and understanding. We also attempt to include the clients in day-to-day activities and ‘roles’ around the centre, i.e. the clients assist with our H&S checks, recycling, and planning. Communication is high on our agenda. However we work with families and carers and source individual behaviours and gestures which allow the clients to communicate with us if speech isn’t their first form of communication. We have developed individual communication packs using symbols and pictures to enhance our understanding with individuals.

What we do

It was great to hear the clients enjoyed the variety of activities. The feedback included the joy of hearing laughter and fun, which is such a positive insight into what we offer. Individual abilities were taken into account, when people needed a 'break' they were supported. Our clients are totally involved in the building and planning of 'activities' and their choices are often included. There are some activities suggested that would be beyond our capabilities, but we would try and include some aspect of their choices. It was reported that the clients were complimented by others (staff) and encouraged by their inclusion in different activities, and we are thrilled to receive praise and positive feedback.

Recommendations

The recommendations from Healthwatch were;

- **Introducing new activities - All clients are involved in decisions on many activities introduced at the centre and the planning of these. However, whilst we would like to vary what we offer there are limitations although we always attempt to incorporate some aspect of choice i.e. candle making will be included in some craft activities.**
- **Run a small tuck shop - We would like to encourage the clients to be as independent as possible and use the local shops to purchase any 'tuck shop' items. Also, we constantly battle with families and carers for them to lead a healthy lifestyles. We have introduced drinks available to buy at lunchtimes, but to put tucks shop**

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bucks would like to thank The Princes Centre clients and staff for their contributions to this Enter and View visit.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

Appendix 1: Enter and View Background and Visit Details

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives 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 allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to watch how service is delivered and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, care homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues, however, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

Details of visit:	
Service Provider	The Princes Centre
Service Address	The Princes Centre Clifford Road Princes Risborough Buckinghamshire HP27 0DP
Date and Time	20 th October 2021 9.30am - 12.00 pm
Authorised Representatives	Alison Holloway Meady Waterhouse

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