

# Simonsfield Care Home

Enter & View report

31 January 2023



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## What is Enter & View?

People who use health and social care services, their carers, and the public generally, have expectations about the experience they want to have of those services and want the opportunity to express their view as to whether their expectations were met.

To enable us to carry out our activities effectively there will be times when it is helpful for authorised representatives to observe the delivery of services and for them to collect the views of people whilst they are directly using those services.

Healthwatch Halton has statutory powers to carry out what we describe as 'Enter and View' visits. These are visits to health and social care settings which help us in our role as the independent local champion for health and social care.

These visits are carried out by small teams of trained members of our staff and volunteers to observe a service at work.

Due to the pandemic, we have been unable to carry out visits to local care homes, and therefore we have been concerned that the voice of care home residents has not been heard, and residents and families may be unaware of the existence of Healthwatch as their independent champion.

We carry out our 'Enter & View' visits not as inspectors but as visitors to that service. We view the service provided and observe the care and support offered and we look to obtain the views of the people using those services.

Prior to our visit we sent out a short pre-visit questionnaire to the manager of the home. Responses to the questionnaire have been used in producing our report. A link was also supplied to a questionnaire for staff and one for family / friends of residents to give their views.

## Why did we carry out this visit?

Enter and View visits can take place for a variety of reasons, for example to find out more about a particular service, or in response to public feedback.

The Enter and View visit to Simonsfield Care Home was to learn more about the service, and to find out where the service appeared to be doing especially well, in addition to finding out if any improvements could be made. The visit was not in response to any prior feedback or concerns identified relating to the quality of this service.

Our 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, and the Local Authority will be notified on the same day as the Enter and View visit.

There were no safeguarding concerns identified during this Enter and View visit.

## Enter & View Visit Report

**Care Home:** Simonsfield Care Home, 53 Boston Avenue, Runcorn WA7 5XE.

Service provided and run by: Hill Care 1 Limited

**Healthwatch Halton Enter & View Team:**

Julie Birchall, Jude Burrows, Kathy McMullin and Jane Pritchard.

**Date of visit:** 31 January 2023. Arrived 10.50am.

Simonsfield Care Home offers residential and dementia care for up to 63 residents across two areas, on the upper and lower floors. At the time of our visit 57 residents were living in the home.

The home is situated in a residential area of Runcorn. It is easily accessible by car and is within a short walking distance of bus stops.

There are car parking spaces situated directly outside the home, with disabled parking spaces available. When we arrived, there was space for available for car parking.

The front of the home was clean and tidy, and there were some potted plants on display. At the back of the car park, we noted there was a skip and old furniture waiting to be removed and a large patch of moss on the car park near to the fire exit.

During our visit we toured the home, as well as speaking to residents and staff. We provided the manager with the link to an online questionnaire for staff members and one for family / friends of residents to complete if they were unable to speak to us on the day. We also promoted this link through our social media channels.



## Initial Impressions

The entrance to Simonsfield is via a secured double door. There was a sign on the door about protected mealtimes and discouraging visiting during these times, whilst also noting there was an option for friends and family to assist residents at mealtimes.

A four-star food hygiene rating was displayed on the window of the main entrance.

On ringing the bell, we were greeted promptly by a member of staff, and welcomed into the home.

Debbie Smith, Simonsfield's manager, then came to greet us. We were asked to sign-in, wear masks and wash our hands in a nearby bathroom before entering the home.

The entrance to the home felt warm and welcoming. A desk with signing in book, masks and a hand gel dispenser was in place. Healthwatch leaflets and a poster about our friends and family survey were on display. In the reception area.

The most recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection summary was displayed, as well as the homes complaints policy. Suggestion forms and nomination letters for employee of the month were available on another table.

A display on the Six Steps to Success in End of Life Care<sup>1</sup> was mounted on a clear display board. This programme aims to enhance end of life care and we were told that Simonsfield follows this programme.

Sofas and a well-stocked sweet stall were also in the reception area.

Artwork was displayed on the walls.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eolp.co.uk/SIXSTEPS/>

## Observations

We were initially shown around the home by the manager, who explained the reason for our visit to the residents before leaving us to look around independently.

The corridors in the home were spacious, clean and bright, with handrails and we noted toilet doors were in a contrasting colour to the walls. The hallways were decorated to look like streets, with brick work wallpaper, streets signs and a bus stop.

Bedroom doors were painted in different bright colours and numbered to look like the front door of a house. Residents' names were displayed on their room door, and a framed photograph of the resident was in place on the outer wall.

The Manager explained that all these factors help to give the care home a homely feel, as a resident lives at 14 Holly Avenue, for example, as opposed to in a numbered bedroom on a corridor.

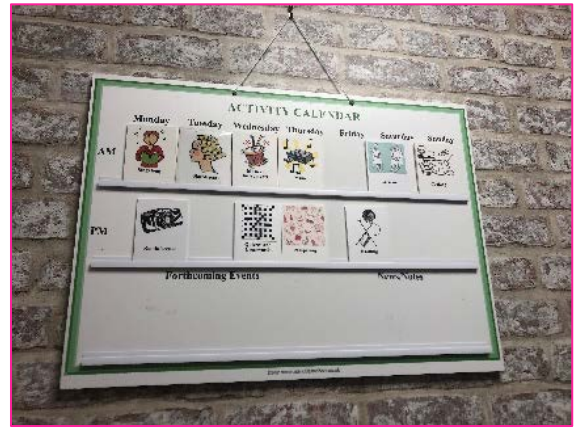
Dementia friendly signing was used throughout the home using coloured images and clear text to label areas such as dining rooms and bathrooms.

Bedrooms had en-suite toilet facilities and could be decorated to the resident's choice. We viewed a bathroom, which was spacious, clean and equipped with hands rails and hoist.

We noted that care staff wore uniforms and masks across the home. The Manager wore a uniform and was serving tea and chatting to residents during our visit. We saw a number of posters around the home with positive messages, including messaging around staff working in the residents' home and the resident not living where they work.



Results of a Simonsfield Care Home Survey from 2022 were on display on a noticeboard. 'You said, We did', boards were displayed in both areas of the home to show suggestions they have acted upon. These were dated March 2022.

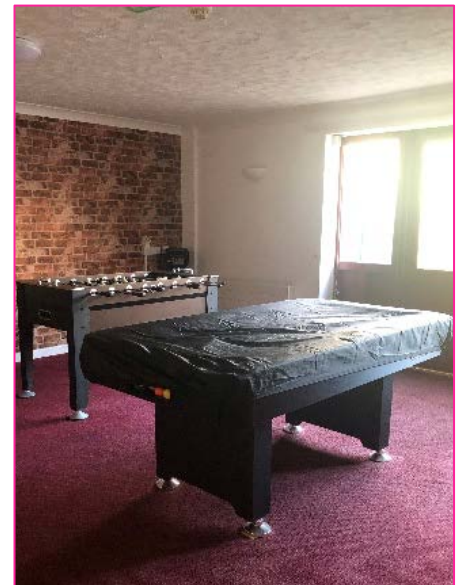


A part time Activity Coordinator is employed at the home, and a second person is being recruited to this role. We saw activity timetables displayed throughout the home, with sessions including singing, art, bingo and pampering.

As well as the set activities for the week residents also have the chance to visit local Sure Start to Later Life social group, go shopping and take part in days out to places such as Southport.

One resident told us that they were taken out weekly to the British Legion for a veterans breakfast group.

There was also an activity room on the ground floor, with a pool table, treadmill, table football and games mat. This room leads on to a large outside area with seating and plants.



The activity rooms and garden are also accessible for residents from the upper area of the home. In the garden there is an Outside Pod, that was previously used for visiting during COVID restrictions. Plans are in place to turn this into a shop for residents so they could buy toiletries, tights, and other basic items.



## Lower Floor - residential care

The lower floor at the home is for residential residents.

The whole area was clean, bright and well decorated. The area has a lounge, dining room, bar area, cinema room, games area as well as bedrooms and bathrooms.

During our visit we saw ten residents sitting in the lounge area and another watching a film in the cinema room. Residents in the lounge were in individual comfy chairs, watching TV. This room also has some table and chairs, with menus on in a café style. Two staff members served tea around the lounge area and made sure that the resident who had chosen to watch a film in the cinema was given a drink too. Adapted cups were available if needed. Snacks and drinks were also readily available for residents; including cordial and crisps.

We observed staff chatting to residents individually in a caring, supportive way. During our visit we saw the Activity Coordinator leading a game of bowls in the lounge area. A resident in the cinema room told us they enjoyed visiting and watching films. They told us they visit here regularly. The cinema room was set up in a realistic way, with chairs, a large screen and a popcorn machine. Another resident told us they would like to visit the cinema but haven't been taken yet. They explained they would *"like to go with a gang of us"*.

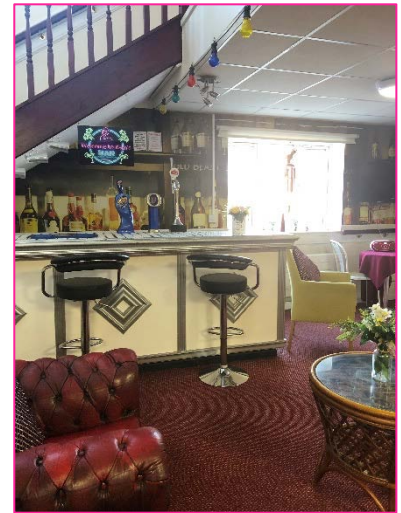


One resident told us *"I can't fault the day staff, lovely"*. They explained they did have a problem with a member of the night staff who did not meet their needs. They had reported this to senior staff and were told different staff will see to them from now on.

Another resident told us *"they don't always mix the right people together"* in relation to some of her fellow residents support needs.

The home has a bar area, called 'Kath's bar', with a realistic looking counter, pretend beer pumps, stools, leather couches, tv and radio.

A member of care staff explained that the bar was named after a former member of staff and residents use this area regularly to watch tv and listen to music.



## Upper Floor – dementia care

The upper floor of the home is dedicated to dementia care. The corridors, which are set out like streets, had flowers, activity boards, clocks, easy read calendars, information on the weather and seasons, information boards for staff and family, and lots of interactive wall art activities along the walls. There were also storage baskets attached to the walls containing dementia fidget toys.

The hairdresser/barbers salon, two lounges, a dining room and a tearoom are also in this part of the home.

The dining room was set out like a restaurant with cutlery, napkins, glasses and menus, the menus rotated, and they also had a visual picture board on the wall to match the menu for that day.

There were approximately fifteen residents in this area. Everyone we met was appropriately dressed and clean. Staff were friendly and helpful to residents. A new monthly knitting session activity was scheduled on the day of our visit.

Staff interacted with residents in a caring manner, both in the communal areas and when entering a resident's room. Staff were knocking on resident's doors and greeting the residents by name in a friendly manner. Residents we spoke with gave positive comments about their home, *"it's great"*, *"the food is nice"*, and *"there are good activities"*.

One resident was very keen to show us their room. It was well maintained clean, bright and tidy with the bed made. There were personal items on the wall which they were proud to show us. They said that they felt happy, and it was home, and all the staff were *"nice people"*.

Another resident was complimentary about the food telling us, *"there is always a choice"*.

One resident told us they would like to be more active, *"I have always been busy and would like to do more"*. They told us they had been made aware of the knitting session and were going to attend that afternoon.

While we were with the manager, one resident was struggling to find their room. The manager gently guided the resident to their room and showed them how to open the door.

We saw another resident talking with the handyman about the job they had done together repairing a photo frame. The resident said they were *“very happy to be able to help out.”* The handyman was engaging with the resident in a very caring and compassionate way and said he often gave him ‘jobs’ to do.

Residents in both areas of the home appeared well cared for. The floors in the home are separated by a keypad entrance door, with a safety gate in place on the stairs. There are keypad security locks on external doors on the lower floor.

## **Additional support / care**

We were told that GP cover is provided to the home by Tower House GP practice. The Manager explained the practice works well with the home and visits regularly.

A district nurse visits the home daily.

The Later Life and Memory Service (LLAMS) team visit weekly.

We were told there have been some issues with hospital discharge. Residents mostly used Warrington Hospital, if needed. On discharge from hospital, residents could often arrive at the doorstep to the home, unexpectedly and without a Covid test being carried out at the hospital. The home would then do a lateral flow test, with residents, before allowing them back in and would request a PCR test for any new people entering the home from hospital, to avoid an outbreak of Covid. We were told that residents paperwork is sometimes missing when they return to the home from hospital stays.

The home has its own hair salon room, which is staffed by a hairdresser each Tuesday and Wednesday.

Entertainers, such as singers, visit the home on a regular basis.

Talks are currently taking place with a local church, who are keen to support the home with visits. Bibles are made available across the home.

## Advocacy support

Local Advocates visit the home when needed. Thirty-two residents were currently under DOLs (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) and two residents were under Care Act Advocacy.

Information on Advocacy support was displayed on a notice board in the home. However, we noted this information was for a national service that does not cover Halton. No information was seen on the local Healthwatch Advocacy Hub that may be able to support residents, although this support is currently accessed by the home.

## Facilities for and involvement with family / friends

The Manager runs an evening surgery, on the first Tuesday of each month, that families can attend with questions and suggestions for the home. This was promoted near the main entrance as well as an invitation to approach her or to visit her office whilst in the home. Suggestion sheets were also available for visitors in the reception area.

The home has a café like area, furnished with tables and chairs, for friends and family who are visiting. Visitors can help themselves to tea and coffee in this area. Dominoes and playing cards are also available.

We were told that families can be supported to stay in the home during end-of-life care, with air beds and toiletries available to them.

## Summary

Simonsfield Care Home is a warm, welcoming and well-presented home that cares for up to 63 residents. We found both the residential and dementia areas of the home to be well decorated and clean. The well-maintained street style decoration, artwork and readily available drinks and snacks all aided to give Simonsfield a very homely feel.

Residents appeared well looked after and comfortable in the home. Staff seemed happy in their work and caring towards residents. The Manager was present around the home and well known by the people living there. She was clearly proud of Simonsfield Care Home.

Good procedures appeared to be in place to keep infection rates down. All visitors were required to wash their hands and wear a mask before entering the residential areas of the home. COVID-19 tests were also checked or completed before residents entered the home after a hospital stay.

The cinema, hair salon, café and activities rooms are great additions to Simonsfield, offering residents a good living experience. The home offers a good selection of regular activities, with an Activity Coordinator being in place to facilitate these.

The CQC last published a report on Simonsfield in December 2020<sup>2</sup>, rating the home as Good.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-135650841>

## Friends and family comments:

We had no responses to our online questionnaire for friends and family members of residents.

## Staff comments:

Two members of staff completed our online questionnaire.

Both had worked at the home for between 1 and three years. Both respondents said they felt supported and valued as staff at the home, with one telling us, *'I have been supported and I have moved up from carer.'*

When asked what they felt the home did well, one person told us, *'It provides a friendly caring environment for both residents and employees. It's a very challenging environment for all staff members who go above and beyond their tasks.'*

The other staff member said, *'We care for our residents we know them we are family to them and them to us we spend 70% of our time with them.'*

When asked what could be improved, both members of staff highlighted pay rates for staff as in need of improvement.

## Recommendations

- 1.** Replace the Advocacy posters displayed with new up to date posters with local Healthwatch Advocacy Hub information and contact details.
- 2.** Ensure residents religious and spiritual needs are met by finalising visits from local churches or other suitable organisations.
- 3.** Clear the moss patch from the fire door exit to avoid a potential slip hazard.
- 4.** Continue to action suggestions from residents and families on regular a basis.
- 5.** Invite Healthwatch Halton to any future planned events involving residents and family members.



## Service Provider Response

The following response was received from Debbie Smith, manager of Simonsfield Care Home.

- 1.** The updated Healthwatch Advocacy poster is now on display.
- 2.** Church services have been arranged and are held on the last Thursday of the month, by Father Ravi of St Augustine's Church.
- 3.** The moss patch was on our action plan and has been cleared away.



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