

# Widnes Hall Care Home

Enter & View report

06 March 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 Widnes Hall 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:** Widnes Hall, Coronation Drive, Widnes WA8 8BL

Service provided and run by: Anchor Hanover Group

**Healthwatch Halton Enter & View Team:**

Kathy McMullin, Julie Birchall, Jane Pritchard

**Date of visit:** 06 March 2023



## Initial Impressions

Widnes Hall provides accommodation and personal care for up to 68 people; some of whom live with dementia in an adapted building over two floors.

At the time of our inspection 67 people were living at the home.

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

There was ample parking to side of the building and disability spaces in front of the main doors all bays were clearly marked. The area was clean and well maintained with flower beds and pots.

A defibrillator was attached to the outside of the building facing the car parks.

The wall to the right of the main entrance was discoloured / stained due possibly due to a leaking gutter.

On the main door to enter reception there was a sign stating the bell was not working and gave a number to call for entry. The number was not very clear, and was difficult to read and we witnessed several people struggled to get in. There was a sign stating the home had protected mealtimes and also information on coronavirus. The reception door looked a bit cluttered with the number of posters displayed on the glass.

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.

We were welcomed by the deputy manager who gave us a tour of the building and was professional throughout. The signing in and out process within Widnes Hall is electronic for visitors, professionals, and staff. (A separate system for staff). This appears to be a good idea and enables families to leave feedback straight away, but is a little time consuming for professionals visiting the home.

Face masks, gloves, aprons, and gel were available in the reception but there were no current rules for them to be worn around the home.

Anchor Hanover Group feedback and suggestion forms for families and friends were available and there was also a staff notice board displaying training, dates and times and a sign notifying people when the fire alarm tests/drills would be completed.

In general, the reception was quite large with a bright and cheerful atmosphere, but it seemed to be doubling up as a general office too, as the homes printer and numerous filing drawers were in the reception. (The manager did advise us that the main office was getting redecorated)

There was also a fish tank, a lovely cart that displayed raffle prizes and a wall mounted TV playing background music. Signs to different units were also displayed around the building.

All staff appeared very friendly and welcoming.

The outside courtyard was a fantastic space full of seating and lots of planting areas and had been used recently for Morris Dancing and a visit from the Mayor of Halton.

## **Internal Physical Environment**

Widnes Hall is split into four units two for residential (Kingfisher lower 16 and Chaffinch upper 16) and two for Dementia (Magpie lower 18 and Robin upper 18) Consisting of upper and lower floors and mirroring layouts. The home has a total of 68 rooms, 67 were occupied.

All rooms are ensuite with a wet room. All rooms on the ground floor have a large window and door to access the outside. The rooms we saw appeared clean, carpeted, and painted with artwork.

There were four bathrooms within the home, one on each floor, for any resident that would like a bath. Baths are fully adapted for anyone with disabilities. (One of the bathrooms was being re-decorated during our visit.)

All units had touch safe push button safety systems in place around the home on all corridors and in all rooms.

On the residential units there were very comfortable open plan lounge dining rooms that were home from home with TV's, fireplaces, lamps, and flowers and lots of artwork on the walls.

The dining rooms had ample seating for all residents and there were menus on the tables. Staff advised the menu was a six-week rolling menu.

While visiting we noticed a cleaner was cleaning residents' rooms, but rather than plugging the vacuum into an electric socket within the bedroom, it was being plugged in on the corridor. This created a trip hazard as the cord was laying across the corridor floor and staff and residents were walking up and down the corridor.

Kingfisher unit had a conservatory area with seating that housed a bar, one-armed bandit slot machine, and table football. This area had background music playing.

The bedroom doors were all the painted in the same colour with individual numbers on them, some doors did have the resident's photo on.

On Chaffinch unit there was also a library area for residents and a hairdressing room.

On Magpie and Robin units each had its own lounge and separate dining room. Magpie residents were taking part in balloon activities and an interactive light show during our visit.

The dining rooms on both Magpie and Robin needed decoration and repair for wear and tear. (The deputy manager confirmed that new kitchens were being fitted in July). The kitchens were still clean and serviceable. There were no set tables, no menus on the tables, no picture menus. There was only a small menu printed on the wall.

One dining room had a lounge notice on the door but was only being used as a dining room.

There are also sections of the ceiling that shows the clouds and can be changed in line with sunsets and night-time for mood changes to promote a calm environment.

Walls are contrasting with a brick theme. There is a Beatles theme on the walls with pictures and records and other musical items.

On all floors there were water fountains and a small snack table with juice and jelly babies. There were lots of notice boards containing photos, flowers and gardening information, a map of the world with postcards, resident's artwork and activity timetables and entertainment posters.

## **Staff support skills and interaction**

The home is currently staffed on each unit with one team leader and two staff on residential units and three staff on the Dementia units. We were advised that the manager has also been given the go ahead to recruit to 120% to cover for holidays and sickness so that agency do not have to be used and this is for all areas, including domestic and catering.

Staff are encouraged to develop their skills. Face to face training takes place as well as yearly reviews and e-learning.

In the entrance hall, on the staff noticeboard, we noted there were training reminders and dates displayed of different training sessions for staff.

Throughout our visit staff interacted well with residents and it appeared very natural, they were chatting, one member of staff was cuddling a lady with dementia as she found this soothing and helpful, and another resident had a doll she was comforting. They appeared at ease and comfortable with each other.

Staff we observed on the day were very caring and showed dignity and respect to residents.

We observed some staff updating care plans and others delivering activities throughout the units.

We observed a member of staff carrying out gentle lower leg exercises with residents.



## **Residents social, emotional, and cultural welfare**

Widnes Hall does not have a dedicated activities coordinator. We observed that staff put a lot of time and effort into all the activities for the residents including bingo, arts and crafts, gardening, and trips out. There were plenty of posters on display advertising entertainers and singers in the coming weeks and months.

One resident who is a retired priest helps by carrying out services at times, he really enjoys this and puts this on Facebook (Permissions have been obtained for anything put on social media.)

We were told that all staff are trained in 'Zest Wellbeing', which is a chair-based exercise and is delivered weekly and advertised throughout on monthly planners.

A Gardening Club takes place each Thursday and on Tuesday a 'Bake Off' get residents baking and interacting.

The home has extensive garden areas, and even grows its own vegetables.

## **Residents welfare**

During our visit the residents we saw appeared to be clean and tidy, and all dressed appropriately.

Some other residents that Healthwatch spoke to were very happy with staff and their rooms. They said they could join in with activities if they wanted. One resident told us, 'I love it here and wouldn't want to go anywhere else'.

One visitor we spoke with told us she was very happy with the home and her mother's care.

We were informed that each resident is risk assessed and this is reviewed monthly. Management reviews each fall when they occur and complete a weekly and monthly review looking for trends. Sensors are implemented if required.

The home makes reasonable adjustments to support residents with dementia, learning disabilities or other special needs. Staff have Level 2 dementia training. A weekly multidisciplinary team (MDT) meeting is held with the mental health team. We were told the patients have detailed care plans and distress plans to identify triggers.

Breakfast had been cleared away by the time we arrived, but we did not see any signs of set up for lunch by 12 o'clock.

We were told that all meals are home cooked, and mealtimes were protected from visitors.

Residents were encouraged to access the outside area in good weather. There was plenty of seating, and evidence of summer fairs and activities in the garden.

The home is currently raising money for a minibus, so more trips and outings can be arranged and delivered by the home.

We were informed that the home advertises monthly residents' meetings and produces a newsletter.

## Advocacy support

One resident was currently receiving Healthwatch Advocacy support and a further two waiting for referral.

## Facilities for involvement with family/friends

Some residents' families were present during our visit, and they were happily interacting with staff and residents in the communal lounges, residents' rooms and in the library area.

We saw on a notice board a 'You said, we did' poster, with a comment about getting clean clothes back and the response from the home about an extra laundry assistant employed.



## **Additional issues**

### **Hospital discharge**

We asked if there were any issues with residents being admitted to or discharged from local hospitals.

We were told that waiting times for ambulances could be up to nine hours, and sometimes up to 24 hours.

There are also issues with the non-return of DNAR forms with residents when discharged from hospital.

### **Dental treatment**

The manager informed us that there is no access to routine dental care, only support from the community dentist when there is an emergency.

## Friends and family comments:

As part of our visit, we asked the manager to send a link to our two online questionnaires to residents' family members and care home staff.

Thirteen responses were received to the friends and families questionnaire.

In the comments below, not all replies may be included where they cover similar issues.

Eight people rated the care and support provided to their relative or friend as **'Very Good'**, while another three rated it as **'Good'**, and two people rated it as **'OK'**.

The results of the questionnaire showed the majority of people felt that the care given to their family members was very good.

## What do you think the service your relative/friend is at does well?

### General

- *'Since mum has been in Widnes Hall, mum has a healthy appetite now and has put weight on (which mum needed to do) and is engaging with other residents and staff. Mum enjoys living here and has a better quality of life now.'*
- *'With my mum being in Widnes Hall I do not have a worry she is well cared for by good people.'*
- *'Would highly recommend to those looking at putting a family member into care to consider Widnes Hall. The staff and facilities have been second to none, offering peace of mind that your loved ones will be treated with respect and dignity.'*
- *'Lots of activities (though my mother doesn't get involved with those).'*

### Communication

- *'Are good at being visible in the Community and on Facebook.'*
- *'Communication, caring and always keeps family involved, Widnes Hall have always actioned on anything we have raised as a family.'*

- *'Communication with family, care staff work well, team leader CM always rings with any changes.'*
- *'It is very good with communication and keeping me up-dated with mums needs.'*

## **Cleanliness**

- *'The personal care and understanding of the individual needs. Ensuring the individual is encouraged to engage with other residents. Providing excellent care. Excellent hygiene and cleanliness.'*
- *'Widnes Hall is always clean and tidy and there are no smells.'*
- *'Very caring with attention to detail, I am very impressed with the staff who all take an interest. The place is always clean on my weekly visits. In short, I can't speak highly enough of both the staff and the policies.'*
- *'Cleaning standards pretty good.'*

## **Staff**

- *Caring friendly staff. Attractive and clean environment*
- *'Keeping a happy home.'*
- *'I cannot fault the staff at Widnes Hall. Nothing is too much trouble.'*
- *'They make residents feel welcomed and secure. Providing various forms of entertainment, comfort and personal one to one attention to those most vulnerable. They do a fantastic job.'*
- *'They are all a good bunch that work well together and keep people happy with all of the planned activities.'*
- *'Caring and generally sympathetic staff.'*



## What could be improved?

### General

- *'I think the staff need better training, their person skills are lacking with both residents and families.  
They are often not helpful when enquiries are made. I have asked questions to be told either "I don't know" or "I've been off for a few days". This is unacceptable and is an excuse not an answer. Resident's rooms should be checked by a senior staff member on a daily basis for cleanliness and dirty laundry taken to the laundry the same day. Care plans should be followed to ensure residents individual needs and any dietary likes/dislikes are met. Staff also seem confused about their roles and responsibilities as when asked about a job not being done there is a lack of accountability as to which member of staff carer, laundry or cleaner should carry it out. Residents need to be kept tidy, with clean clothing, and look groomed as it is very upsetting to visit and your relative looks unkempt.'*
- *'Be there more for those who need a bit more help.'*
- *'Staff attitudes, training, approachability and better communication.'*
- *'They could probably do with more support from the local authorities to get the funding and credit they deserve.'*
- *Pro-active communication with outside relatives, both generally and specifically. Paper "Newsletter" is often late (i.e. March issue produced in April) - and has to be "discovered" - i.e. never offered to carers, or sent out through the email contacts. Contact with relatives is fine when there's an emergency or an incident. But changes to care plans, to prescriptions, visiting hours have to be discovered by relatives asking questions - they're rarely communicated pro-actively, which can cause confusion.*

### Activities

- *'Residents need to have more entertainment.'*
- *'Staff need to engage more with the residents and give them meaningful activities as they are bored because of inactivity.'*

- *'Staff should be more involved with the residents and do more activities. The residents are bored as most of the staff seem disengaged as they sit filling in care plans whilst ignoring the residents.'*

## **Maintenance**

- *'Décor, decoration has been completed, however I feel curtains and some areas have been missed.'*
- *'Garden areas could be made more attractive.'*

## **Staff comments**

Six members of staff completed our online questionnaire. All six said they felt supported and valued as staff at Widnes Hall. All six said they would be very happy for a friend or family member to be cared for at Widnes Hall, with one staff member saying, *'My mother-in-law lived at Widnes Hall for her last years and was very happy.'* Another person said, *'I know how much care & compassion all the carers give in Widnes Hall towards all the residents.'*

One staff member commented, *'I have worked at Widnes Hall for 14 years and would not work anywhere different I feel that it is the best home around, residents are always on the front of everyone's mind. If the residents are happy, we are doing our job.'*

## **What do you think your home does well?**

- *'We work well as a team. Residents' wellbeing comes first. Nutrition and hydration stations on all units. Person centred care planning. Good leadership from the management team.'*
- *'I think Widnes Hall communicates well within the home & also the care towards all residents.'*
- *'Residents are our main focus, their health and wellbeing, and happiness.'*

- *'We look after our residents very well. We keep them hydrated and well fed. The management supports her team well.'*
- *'We work well as a whole home team nothing is too much trouble for anyone from the handyman to the manager. I feel that we work well with other health care professionals, as well as all the family members.'*
- *'I feel that all the care team & management within the home give 100% care towards all the residents we have.'*
- *'We have regular meetings and supervisions. Communication is good I feel fully supported from my team.'*
- *'Regular supervision processes and opportunities.'*
- *'Anchor gave us a £500 bonus at Chrirstmas and the manager has an open door policy.'*

## **What do you think your home could do better?**

- *'Contacts to outside contractors and additional support contacts.'*
- *'I think Widnes Hall, has nothing to improve in my opinion. I feel that we work well with other health care professionals, as well as all the family members.'*
- *'Electronic care planning is in the pipeline I feel this would be a huge benefit to the home.'*
- *'I would like to be able to join in with more activities, but some days can be busier than others.'*

## Summary

Healthwatch Halton would like to thank all residents and staff at Widnes Hall for allowing us into their home and workplace and for taking time to talk to us.

Widnes Hall is a 68 bedded home providing both residential and dementia care. Everyone we met during our visit was warm and welcoming, and we could see and feel the care, respect, patience, and kindness the staff have for the residents and the camaraderie between them.

Our visiting team stated they could see the improvements that had been made at the home and were pleased to hear about what further works were planned.

The feedback given by residents' friends and relatives was generally very positive. We hope the home's management will pass on these positive comments to staff at the home.

There were also comments received on what the home could improve on, in the view of the respondents. We hope these will also be taken into consideration by the management.

## Recommendations and suggestions

- 1.** There were several boxes behind the bar in the conservatory, which contained care plans and other personal documents and reports for residents. It was evident this was archiving, but data is confidential and should be stored securely and protected. (This was discussed with managers during the visit and was being addressed straight away)
- 2.** Implement the plans for refurbishment of the dining room and kitchen.
- 3.** Some seating in the lounge has seen better days and needs updating due to wear and tear.
- 4.** Ensure power cables aren't trailing across corridors when bedrooms are being cleaned.
- 5.** Promote Healthwatch and Advocacy services within the home. (We did not see any advocacy leaflets or Healthwatch posters throughout the building)
- 6.** Entrance. The main entrance doorbell was not working. This should be repaired / replaced as soon as possible.
- 7.** Main Building. The paving flags outside the main entrance were quite dirty and presented a possible slip, trips or falls hazard if they were wet. Ensure these are kept clean to reduce the risk.



## Service Provider Response

No response has been received to the report from Widnes Hall.



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