

# Estuary House Care Home



Enter and View Report, October 2024

# Introduction

## What is an Enter and View visit?

Healthwatch Liverpool has 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. Enter and View visits are carried out by small teams of trained members of our staff and volunteers to observe a health and social care service at work, for example at a GP practice, a care home, or a hospital. We only visit services that are publicly funded, e.g. through the NHS or via local authorities.

## What happens during an Enter and View visit?

During an Enter and View visit we talk to people using the service, whether patients or residents, and to friends and relatives where appropriate. We also speak to staff to find out where they think the service is working well, and where it could be improved. We also observe the service. We write up our observations and the feedback we receive and publish it as a report. Our report is sent to the provider of the service, as well as to regulators such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the local authority, and NHS commissioners when appropriate.

If there are recommendations in the report, the service provider is asked for a response, which we later publish online alongside the Enter and View report.

## Details of the Enter and View Visit:

**Name of the service visited:** Estuary House

**Address:** 96-110 Eastern Avenue, Speke, Liverpool, L24 2TB

**Website:** [www.wilshirehealthcare.co.uk](http://www.wilshirehealthcare.co.uk)

**Date and Time:** Tues 15th Oct 2024, 10:00am – 12:00pm

The names of the members of the Healthwatch Enter and View Team that undertook the visit were:

- *Terry Ferguson, Engagement and Project Officer*
- *Claire Stevens, Engagement and Project Officer*
- *Kerri Bradley, Volunteer*

This was an announced visit. We would like to thank Estuary House staff and residents for facilitating the visit and for taking the time to talk to us.

## **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 Estuary House was to learn more about the service, and to find out from observations, and speaking with people, 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.

## **Safeguarding**

Healthwatch Liverpool Enter and Views 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.

# About the Service

## Background

Estuary House Care Home is owned by Wilshire Healthcare Ltd and provides specialist care and support for people with a wide range of mental health needs, dementia and neurological conditions/traumatic brain injury (TBI). The home also offers nursing care for residents' physical health needs and/or complex care requirements. The home has existed in its current iteration since 2021.

The home is located in the Speke area of Liverpool (L24) and provides individual accommodation with en-suite facilities for up to 41 people, with 36 people being in residence at the time of our visit. It operates across 3 units and all residents except one are male.

There are 3 enclosed outdoor areas which are well used by service users and their families for relaxation or therapeutic activities.

The home does not charge top-up fees.

## Discussion with the management

We were met by Gary Range (Hospital Director) who provided us with key background information before introducing us to Gina a Support Worker who took us on a tour of the building and introduced us to service users and staff who were happy to speak with us.

## Staffing

Estuary House employed 136 staff members on the day of our visit, and many staff had been in post long-term, with some teams having stayed together for years, having previously worked together for other employers. Only 9 staff had left since 2021. Agency staff are used to cover vacancies, but this is kept to a minimum wherever possible and none had been used in the past 3 weeks. Staff come from all over the world and use their backgrounds to create fun cultural events for residents, such as the recent celebration of Onam, a Hindu harvest and cultural festival celebrated in Kerala.

Each ward has a dedicated nurse on shift and Estuary House also has a dedicated physiotherapist, occupational therapist, psychologist and speech and language therapist (SALT), as well as other medical staff.

The staff we met were welcoming and friendly, and seemed to have very positive professional relationships with each other and the service users.

## Relationships with GPs/Pharmacies/Dentists

Service users are registered with the Margaret Thompson Medical Centre, which the home has a good relationship with. It normally takes about 2 weeks to register new residents. Most service users are registered at Love Teeth for their dental care. Some also have their own chiropodists/podiatrists.

## Relationships with Hospital Trusts

Hospital admissions and discharges generally go smoothly but, as things get busier over the winter, paperwork and equipment can sometimes go missing. This hadn't happened to date this year, but staff noticed a spike around Christmas the last few years and expect this to happen again. They say they experienced problems last year with equipment going missing, last-minute discharges and discrepancies in residents condition compared to what they had been told by hospital staff.

Staff say the immedicare/telemeds system is good when the system works but it can be erratic. At the time of our visit staff were waiting to speak to the technical support team.

There is a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting every Wednesday which includes a SWAGGA Link Worker, Mersey Care, a Community Nurse and others.

A staff member told us that *"The MDT are great we don't wait on anything. If we need dietician referrals there are no delays"*

## Establishing Residents' Interests and Wishes

Before any potential service users are admitted to the care home, there is a face-to-face meeting with the individual.

Estuary House has a 'Get to Know Me' document which is specifically targeted at getting to know new residents as individuals and understanding their needs and interests, ideally before admission. This comprises an A4 sheet for every resident and is accessible by all staff, including agency staff, so they are able to learn about residents.

Service users are able to visit/stay with their families as part of the process of moving back into the community, and staff told us they had recently discharged two service users. They said that it gives them a real boost to know they are helping people to get back out into the community, but it does come with a sadness as they get to know the residents so well.

There are support services from external organisations to aid with applications for benefits and housing, and staff will actively support service users to maximise their income.

There is a service user representative and regular meetings with service users and families.

## Visits and Activities

The home offers a wide range of activities to suit service users' interests. These include football therapy, music and, on the day of our visit, one resident was out volunteering at an alpaca farm. Walking groups are organised as well as eat-well guides, and a range of books, CDs and DVDs are available.

The Estuary House physios are able to provide what they called *"real world activities"* and are not limited to the types of care provided in hospitals.

There are no restrictions on visitors, and they can attend 24/7 if they wish, however staff prefer them to book a day in advance if possible.

---

On the day of our visit there were 2 service users under DOLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) who had to have visits under supervision.

Staff showed us the recently introduced newsletters which are given to family and friends of the residents with updates on their loved ones and Estuary House activities.

Staff encourage service users to use public transport as well as the facilities 2 minibuses to go out, go shopping or for visits, which helps build individual confidence. Personal care preferences are set and acknowledged and prioritised. There are good relationships with local shop workers.

## **Meals**

The home has 2 in-house chefs and 5 kitchen staff. Service users contribute their meal ideas and there are themed nights once a month – which can include decorations and dressing up. These are enjoyed by all.

Residents are offered 2+ menu options as well as various light bites. Menu options are rotated which guarantees a variety of food and drink choices each week as opposed to a repetitive menu. The majority of food produce used is fresh.

There is a Friday chippy night where residents can order a takeaway from one of the local shops.

One of the Polish residents goes to the local Polish store with staff to purchase food from his home country. We saw him eating it at the table in the lounge.

Staff advised that they can meet cultural needs for diets and can also arrange for pureed diets as needed.

Food that residents bring in is tagged with expiry dates when opened, which we saw happen.

## **Residents' Belongings**

There is one laundry for all the residents so clothing can sometimes be mislaid. Due to laundry services being limited there is an immense amount of organisation and planning to ensure that each resident can have access to do their own washing at least twice a week.

Everyone has a property list and there's a lost property day once a month. Service users are also encouraged to take photographs of their property to make it easier to identify. Items such as CDs or DVDs are marked with people's names. Most service users have a key to their own bedroom and are encouraged to lock the room when they go out. This encourages trust and privacy.

# Observations

## Observations of the building and facilities

We were shown around the home by Gina.

The outside of the building looked clean and well maintained with a small but busy car park.

Inside, there was a homely, welcoming, entrance and we were given a warm welcome by staff and service users. The environment was busy but friendly with clean, modern, facilities. The premises were well heated throughout maintaining the homely feel. In the Reception area we saw CQC reports available to read, an opportunity offered to make comments, compliments and suggestions, and some information about Healthwatch which was slightly out-of-date.

Each Unit is secured with key code/swipe fobs for staff. Kitchen areas, access lifts and garden entrances are also key coded/staff accessible. We noted the access restrictions in the kitchen to reduce infection control.

There are PPE stations on each Unit and in each communal space, with a First Aid kit on each Unit.

There is a photo wall of staff with names for easy recognition.

The Units are named after places in Liverpool - Hope Street, Matthew Street, Strawberry Field and Penny Lane - which adds to the welcoming feel of the home. There is a nurses' station on each unit.

Accessibility features such as ramps were in place out to the gardens and at the main entrance, as well as a lift to the upper floor.

There are 3 gardens including a games area and a quiet space.

Each unit has directions and room signs on corridors, with Easy Read and pictures.

A timetable showing which staff were due on duty each day and which areas they would be working in was available to provide clarity and openness to service users.

### Hope Street

This unit is upstairs but service users based here can go anywhere they want and can attend activities downstairs, including watching football matches on TV. Approximately half the residents here are elderly and the other half are looking for their own accommodation so that they can move out. The atmosphere feels informal and the interactions between staff and service users are easy-going.

We saw the lounge and dining area which included a jukebox with music chosen by the residents, a fireplace made of cardboard by a service user's family

member, a board showing the date and weather, and a sink which service users had asked for and which was supplied for them.

Residents have access to Netflix on the television as well as the main terrestrial channels.

### **Penny Lane Lounge**

There was a large TV and comfortable seats in this area, with resident-created art on the walls and an Easy Read menu on display with the day's date. We also noticed Easy Read information about how to make a complaint.

There was a table with chairs where staff and residents were sitting together, and there were also pool/table tennis facilities.

There was a notice about an ice cream van visiting the car park at 2:00pm on Wednesdays.

### **Service Users' Rooms**

Residents can decide whether or not they want their picture on their bedroom doors and can decorate as they like.

### **Gym**

During our visit multiple staff members were undertaking cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training in the gym, so we did not go in, but staff said they are very proud of the space and that residents really enjoy using it. Some residents also use the local Lifestyles swimming pool and gym which is a short walk away.

### **Hallways**

The hallways were filled with artworks of local places and people, and multiple photographs of residents taking part in activities. Staff told us, *"Residents do tonnes of stuff, they like to get out and about even if it is just going the shop."*

There was Easy Read signage in nearly every area of Estuary House including bathroom doors.

There was a 'You said, we did' board on display.

### **Garden area 1 (sports garden)**

This large garden area is used for sports and had a volleyball area set up. There were benches to relax on and a feeling of privacy. Residents and families have raised money for a greenhouse that will be installed in one of the gardens. Staff advised that they have a good relationship with Grow Speke a local charity that produces fresh, local vegetables which are donated to The Market Place, South Liverpool Homes' community shop.

### **Multi Faith Room**

There was a small multi faith room which included seating and a table. We also noticed that prayer mats were available and were told that a Muslim resident uses the room to pray with friends.



There were books from various faiths available and there was Easy Read information and communication materials as well.

There were also posters informing residents of activities taking place provided by various faith organisations

Service users also use the space as a Quiet Room and we were told about one service user who needs 1:1 care but is provided with time alone/his own space because staff are able to monitor him via a camera monitoring system in this room.

### **Smoking Areas**

Staff advised there are smoking areas outside. We saw one of the smoking areas which had a covered bench available. Residents are provided with one-to-one support with smoking if required, whilst others who have more independence have their cigarettes lit by staff and are given more space. Nobody has access to their own lighters or matches.

### **Observations of the kitchen and catering area**

There is a resident's kitchen that is often used by residents who are working towards moving back into the community. The laundry planner for residents who do their own washing was on display. There were Easy Read signs about e.g. correct chopping boards to use. There was fresh fruit available and a trolley with cereals and other breakfast items available for those who wanted to make their own breakfast.

### **Observation of activities**

There was a refurbished activity space in the rehab area which was completed but not yet specifically used. Staff advised that residents are currently deciding what the room will be used for. It included a large open space with lots of natural light looking out into the garden area. Staff told us *"It's their house, they should decide how to use the space."*

Staff said they are linked in well with local organisations such as Goals Soccer Centre/Grow Speke Community Garden/Noah's Ark and Halewood alpaca farm.

One of the residents who uses public transport has a framed map of the Merseyrail travel routes outside his room to support him in deciding where to travel to.

Staff told us that shadow leave is offered to residents to further encourage accessing the community and offering as much freedom as possible. They also encourage residents to volunteer to build up their confidence and to support the community – for instance, at the local Food Bank.

Activities in the care home include a breakfast club which had been attended by 12 residents on the day of our visit. Staff said they do approximately 12 supported shop runs a day. They also offer weekend trips, with the most recent being a trip to Blackpool.

## **Observations of how Estuary House engages with friends, family and residents.**

There are regular residents' meetings and staff meet regularly with residents – including the residents' rep – and with family members.

There were communication charts and augmentative and alternative communication devices (AAC) available for residents.

There are 3 daily handovers between staff so that updates and information are shared regularly.

# Feedback from residents, relatives, and staff.

Healthwatch Liverpool spoke with several residents, relatives and staff members. All of whom gave us positive feedback. Examples include:



*"I love it. They need more places like this – long term, and our family agree. They need individual rehab homes. He's been here since before*



*Christmas and it's calmed him. He's letting others do his personal care. He is so calm now whereas before he was aggressive and agitated. He gets on well with the staff and gets treated like a friend. We don't want to move him away as I can now bring our son in to see him, and he won't kick off. I can now sleep better at night."* **Service User's Partner**

**"It's lovely they are like my family they support me. I want to stay here."**

**Service User A**

**"I get out whenever I can. I would like to get out more. I love this place, the staff are lovely, they are boss."** **Service User B**

"I love it. I'm well looked after. They got me walking again [*service user had been immobile when admitted*]. It's nearby everything and I like to go places like the Albert Dock and Speke retail park." **Service User C**

"I feel well looked after. I enjoy reading history books and meditation, and I feel catered for as a vegetarian." **Service User D**



"We never see this as work, it's a vocation." **Staff Member A**



"I've been here 4 years now. Before I started, I had never done this kind of job. For activities we do anything they want to do really such as shopping. It's good because they have 3 vans and there is loads nearby. We try and make it as normal as possible here. It's good because there are more staff than service users. It's mostly us [*not agency staff*], they never leave us short". **Staff Member B**

"I like working here, they are like my family. It's not work because I like the service users. Service users will ask staff for their opinion, and we build trust and get to know them. We do things like help families with what service users want for Christmas." **Staff Member C**

"We have family of service users that have passed away that still visit the home. We have a jukebox donated by family. We have residents that were told they have weeks to live that are still with us months later and doctors are shocked." **Staff Member C**

"I like the special occasions celebrations. We bring in our own food and have big buffets and events." **Staff Member C**

"They do music, bands come in, a lot goes on. Residents go to Yew Tree Farm which is an alpaca farm managed by a nurse and it's so therapeutic." **Staff Member D**

"I have got a lot of equipment, and we engage well with voluntary organisations but don't get much from the council. They could fix the pavement outside." **Staff Member E**

"One family member said they thought their relative would die but after they moved in here the family member said "What did you do? He's still alive!" **Staff Member F**

# Summary and recommendations

## Summary

Overall, the feedback we received from service users, relatives and staff was very positive. The environment was welcoming, friendly and supportive. Food choices appeared to be good, and residents' dietary and cultural needs were met. The range of activities and support available was impressive, and service users and family members appeared to have a genuine input into all aspects of life at Estuary House.

The building and garden areas were well-maintained and although we did not enter any service user's rooms, we could see that they were also well-maintained and reflected individual interests and tastes.

We did not see bathrooms or toilet facilities, so cannot comment on these.

## Positives and Good Practice

Our visit highlighted a number of examples of positives and good practice which included but were not limited to:

- Activities and support tailored to individual need seem a particular strength. Staff discussed how they want to support residents in accessing the local community. We are impressed by the number of activities on offer and how well linked Estuary House is with local organisations.
- Several service users and staff mentioned the family atmosphere at Estuary House, and it was clear that there were genuinely close bonds between residents and staff. The service users also appeared to have good relationships with each other.
- The multidisciplinary staff available on site combined with the gym facilities is very impressive. It gives the opportunity for specialised recovery for residents and allows for staff to share expertise and ideas. It makes Estuary House seem like an environment where people can thrive.

## Recommendations

We have no specific recommendations for Estuary House on this occasion, but we will share up-to-date information about Healthwatch Liverpool and the Live Well Directory<sup>1</sup> – including how to contact us for up-to-date information about dentists currently accepting new NHS patients,<sup>2</sup> as these were topics which arose in our conversations with staff.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.thelivewelldirectory.com](http://www.thelivewelldirectory.com)

<sup>2</sup> [www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/contact-us](http://www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/contact-us)

# Appendix

## Healthwatch Liverpool – Powers to Enter and View Services

Healthwatch Liverpool was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and came into being in April 2013. We work to give local residents a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided.

We enable people to share their views and concerns about local health and social care services, helping build a picture of where services are doing well, and where they can be improved. Enter and View visits are undertaken in accordance with the remit of Healthwatch Liverpool and assist us in carrying out our statutory functions under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Enter and View visits are not designed to be full inspections, audits or an investigation of the service, rather they are an opportunity for us to get a better understanding of the service by seeing it in action and by talking to staff and service users.

We aim to identify and share good practice wherever possible. However, if during a visit we identify any aspects of a service that it has serious concerns about, then these concerns are referred to the appropriate regulator or commissioners of the service for investigation or rectification.

Any safeguarding issues identified will be referred to the Local Authority for investigation. Addressing issues of a less serious nature may be done directly with the service provider.

For more information about Healthwatch Liverpool, please visit our website [www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk) or contact us using the details at the end of this report.



**healthwatch**

Healthwatch Liverpool **Liverpool**  
151 Dale Street  
Liverpool  
L2 2AH

[www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk)

t: 0300 77 77 007

e: [enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk)

 [@HW\\_Liverpool](https://twitter.com/@HW_Liverpool)

 [Facebook.com/HWLiverpool](https://www.facebook.com/HWLiverpool)