

# Enter & View Report

Speirs House Care Home

January 2025



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Details of visit

Service provider	Speirs House Care Home
Service address	Traps Lane, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4SF
Registered Manager	Feruna O'Donovan
Date/Time of enter and view visits	7 January 2025
Status of enter and view visit	Announced
HWK Authorised Representatives	Jill Prawer (HWK staff team) Julie Pilot (HWK volunteer) Kezia Coleman (HWK staff team)
HWK visit lead	Jill Prawer, Projects Officer, Enter & View
HWK visit support lead	Kezia Coleman (HWK staff team)
HWK contact details	Address – Suite 3, 2nd Floor, Siddeley House, 50, Canbury Park Road, Kingston upon Thames KT2 6LX  Phone – 0203 326 1255  Email – <a href="mailto:info@healthwatchkingston.org.uk">info@healthwatchkingston.org.uk</a>
Service provider	Greensleeves Care

## 1.2 Acknowledgements

This visit was undertaken by authorised representatives at Healthwatch Kingston. We would like to thank Speirs House Care Home (Speirs House) residents, relatives/friends, and staff members for their contribution toward the enter and view programme.

## 1.3 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings on the specific date and time set out above. The enter and view report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff. It is only an account of what was observed and contributed through interviews during the time of Healthwatch Kingston representatives' visit.

# 2 Executive Summary

Healthwatch Kingston (HWK) champions better standards of care in socially funded health and social care services. As part of our remit, we recruit Authorised Representatives (ARs), volunteers from the local community who are trained to undertake enter and view visits with the aim of identifying good practice and areas that could be improved in socially funded health and social care services. This report presents the findings of the HWK ARs' visit to Speirs. Speirs House is situated in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK) and is one of the homes run by Greensleeves Care.

Speirs House has 36 beds arranged over one floor. There is a dining room with separate areas for residents to eat with their visitors, and a number of different lounge areas. When we visited there were 35 residents. The building had been the residence of Mr and Mrs Speirs who had bequeathed it to the Engineering Workers Union as a care home. On March 1, 2010, it was purchased by Greensleeves Care who have built additions to the original floorplan.

HWK has not previously visited Speirs House. The last Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection was undertaken in January 2024 (published March 2024) which rated the home 'requires improvement' in the areas of safe and well led. ([CQC report](#))

The enter and view visit to Speirs House was conducted as part of HWK's series of announced enter and view visits to local care and nursing homes taking place between April 2024 and March 2025.

These visits are focused on three specific areas: living environment; residents' mealtime experiences; and activities provided. More information about enter and view and the HWK enter and view programme can be found on the [Healthwatch Kingston website](#).

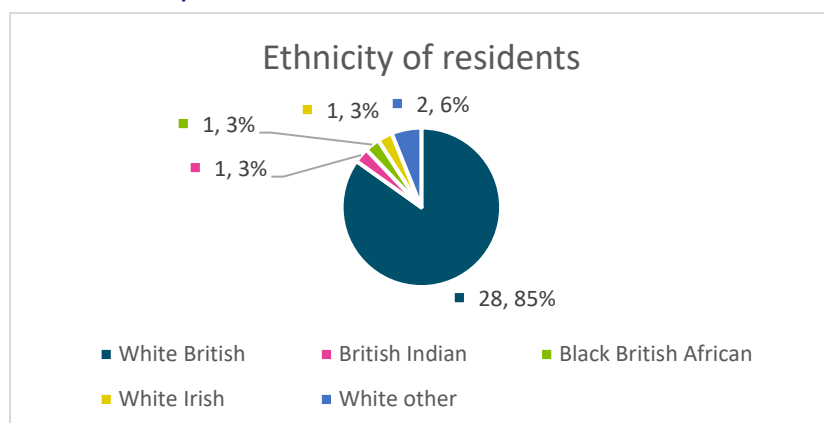
Overall, HWK authorised representatives concluded that Speirs House was a well-run home with caring staff and strong leadership from the manager. The residents and relatives we spoke to told us that they were happy with their environment and with the care given to them or their loved one by the staff. The staff also expressed that they liked working at Speirs House.

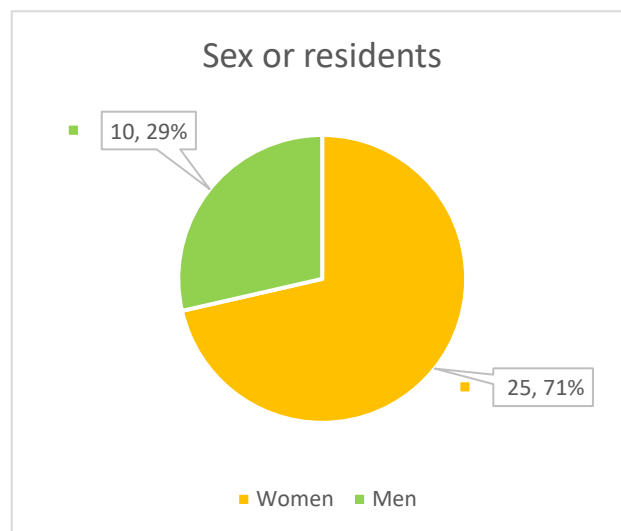
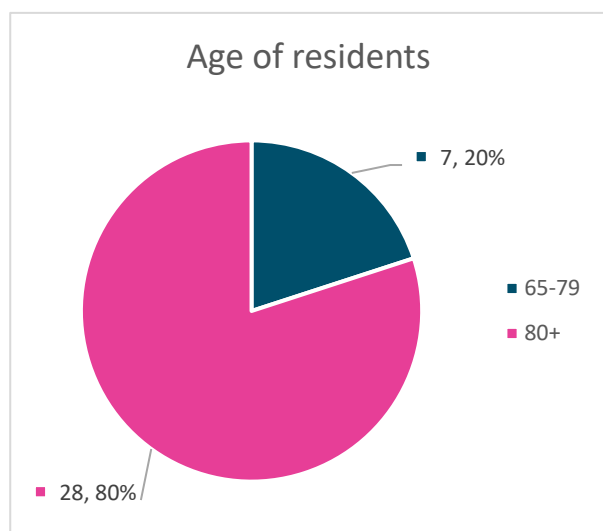
Our visit was from 11.30am – 3.30pm and we were able to observe the lunchtime meal and some activities.

## 3 Demographics

At the time of our visit the home had 35 residents, 2 (5%) of whom were funded by RBK. Speirs House has no RBK block contract beds.

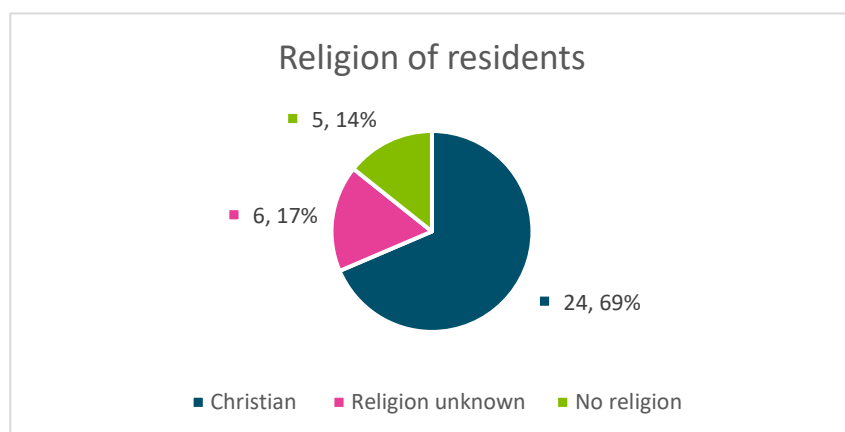
28 (80%) of the residents were White British; 1 (3%) was Asian/Asian British: Indian, 1 (3%) was Black/Black British: African; 1 (3%) was White: Irish; 2 (6%) were White any other White background; and 1 (3%) was Any other ethnic group; and 1 (3%) was Asian /Asian British: Chinese.





7 (20 %) residents were aged 65 to 79 and 28 (80%) is 80+. There were 25 (71%) women and 10 (29%) men currently resident.

24 (69%) of the residents were Christian, 5 (14%) had no religion and for 6 (17%) their religion was unknown.



All (100%) were heterosexual / straight. All residents could speak or communicate in/via English.

There were no residents with medical or dietary requirement.

Residents at Speirs House were living with a number of different health issues: among those resident during our visit 25 (71%) of the residents had a physical or mobility impairment and 18 (51 %) had some form of dementia. The home has 69 staff and at the time of our visit had been fully staffed for five months and no agency staff were used.



## 4 Living Environment

Speirs House is spacious one-storey building with purpose-built extensions onto a mid-Victorian large residential home creating good facilities for the residents to live in and to enjoy. At the time of our visit the manager of the home had been in post for two years and was responsible for a number of initiatives within the home to create better facilities for the residents' use. One example of this was the creation of a cinema/venue for entertainments in a large room which had previously been used as a storeroom.

All the shared spaces within the home were bright and airy, all the residents' rooms looked out onto the garden or courtyards, and all had en-suite facilities. There were a number of communal areas that residents could use for a change of scenery or to entertain guests. Rooms in the original building had large fireplaces and were decorated with a 'country house' theme. Our visit was very soon after Christmas and the decorations were still in place. We were told these were designed with subtlety in mind.

The large garden at the front of the house was in the process of being landscaped to provide residents sensory enjoyment from the visual aspect, as well as the scents from the plants and different textures.

### 4.1 What worked well

- The relatives we spoke to told us they had purposely visited that day as they wanted to share their experiences with us. All had positive comments to say about the home, and especially about the impact of the manager over the last two years, and of the support they got from her during difficult periods relating to their loved-one. The theme that arose from many of the comments was that the home values and supports the families of residents.
- Relatives told us that they are given a fob to allow them access in and out of the home to avoid out needing to wait for the door to be answered. We

were told that this was implemented after feedback from relatives and carers at a meeting. This was told to us as an example of how relatives and carers are consulted and listened to.

- Relatives told us that relatives' meetings are held every 6-8 weeks with formal minutes taken and subsequently distributed to all relatives.
- We observed the home was very clean, something that was also remarked upon by relatives.
- Staff told us that sensor mats are used on the floors in the residents' rooms to alert staff in case of falls, and that the home had recently invested in and were using crash mats.
- Through our discussions with the manager, we identified a strong desire that the home should constantly strive to make the day-to-day experiences of the residents a positive one, and to support residents in maintaining their sense of identity. Examples were supporting a resident in pursuing their interest in painting, and another in providing a bird table outside the resident's window.
- A monthly newsletter is produced, which other than updates about what has been happening at the home, features a resident and a staff member each edition. The manager told us this was another way in which the home worked to maintain the residents' identities.
- The doors of the residents' rooms had all been painted to look like street doors, and there were no pictures decorating the corridors so that they seemed more like streets.
- We were told that Speirs House provides excellent care. A relative told us of the amazing change in 'their' resident's health on entering Speirs House, from expecting to be called in to say a final goodbye, to feeling confident about visiting for some time to come.
- The home had a residents ambassador programme. Three residents served as residents' ambassadors with special responsibilities related to their previous working lives. The manager told us they meet with the



ambassador team every three months and hold one-to-one meetings to hear their feedback and ideas about enhancing the residents' experience based on the ambassadors' observations and conversations with residents. These meetings are arranged via email and minutes are distributed to all the relatives and residents.

- There are regular residents' meetings for all the residents of the home.
- The manager told us the home was committed to the Government Sustainability Policy. In Speirs House this is translated as a "bringing nature indoors" approach, including the use of real plants and other elements to create a natural environment and efforts made to ensure residents have good access to outdoor spaces and use them.
- We were told by a relative that the laundry service is excellent, and by another who mentioned that the resident's clothes are kept to a high standard.
- We were told by a relative that there is a good level of staffing and that it has been "pretty consistent" for a while. Separately, a staff member told us that they would like to be able to 'do more shifts', but that this was difficult as there were already many staff members.
- Staff told us they have good training opportunities, and that the manager encourages them to progress.
- The toilets available to all residents had blue toilet seats as contrast to the white toilet bowl.
- Signage throughout the home was clear.
- The hand sanitiser dispensers we tried were all working.
- All clocks we saw, displayed the right time and were large faced.
- Dates were displayed in Speirs House and were correct.

## 4.2 What could be improved

- A trip hazard was noted in the main lounge area caused by chairs when pulled away from the table dislodging the rubber strip between the carpet and the hard flooring. The manager told us this is an ongoing issue and needs constant repair.
- Residents' rooms look out onto internal courtyards. We noticed that it was easy to see straight into each of the rooms, compromising the residents' privacy.
- A relative told us that there was a system for families to use whiteboards to communicate any messages or notes to carers. This had been made difficult as there had been no whiteboard pen. The relative also told us they had not had sight of their relative's care plan. The relative was not sure how to have information added to a care plan.
- During our visit there was constant messages over a Tannoy regarding operation of the care home as well as staff carrying around radio transmitters. As visitors we found this to be very loud and intrusive. Staff told us that they got used to it. However, no resident mentioned it to us.

## 4.3 What we saw and heard

During our visit we took some photographs and spoke to four residents, seven relatives and seven staff members. We have captured some comments about the environment below.



"I love my job and supporting the home while learning new skills. I feel invested in." (Staff Member)

"It's not trying to be flashy with gimmicks or chandeliers. It's comfortable and cosy. I knew she would be happy here." (Relative)

"I wouldn't change a thing." (Relative)

"The manager runs the home well. She has brought this place on so much." (Relative)

"She (the manager) is very approachable." (Relative)

"...Really nice to come and visit – everyone is welcoming – I feel part of a community." (Relative)

"I respect the care manager; she does a great job. I feel content with where (my relative) is."

"I'm confident (my relative) is in good hands."

"The garden is fantastic in the summer." (Relative)

"(The manager) created a relatives' committee which meets every 6-8 weeks. It's a formal, minuted meeting where we can raise any issue, and very good ideas have come out of these meetings." (Relative)

"Relatives have a fob for the front door – it saves staff time and registers who is coming and going." (Relative)

"Speirs House not only cares for my (spouse), but I feel like they care for me as well." (Relative)

"The home has a good atmosphere, and the carers are absolutely lovely... I have made some great friends." (Resident)

"The atmosphere here feels good." (Relative)

"It's always beautifully clean." (Relative)

"Care staff are lovely. Staff treat people/residents with respect. Staff treat residents as family." (Relative)

"It's not too big a home. It's a proper community. We all know each other." (Relative)

"Staff go the extra mile." (Relative)

"Staff are good – there's good teamwork, good cooperation and the management support and trust the staff." (Staff member)

"Training is very good. They are very accommodating to whatever training we require." (Staff member)



Images show (left to right) a door to a resident's room (others were green or red), the toilet with contrasting lid and seat, two examples of good signage, a large faced clock, the correct date on display, the area where the divide between carpet and hard floor that needs repair, the courtyard which could compromise privacy, and the front garden in the process of being landscaped.



## 4.4 Living environment recommendations

HWK living environment recommendations	Speirs House Care Home response
1. Find a permanent solution for the floor in the lounge area that keeps fraying to ensure that no hazard can be present.	Property team from head office will source a specialist permanent solution.
2. Review how privacy can be maintained for residents whose rooms overlook the courtyards.	Property team from head office will source a solution to offer privacy to residents with rooms that overlook courtyard.
3. Ensure there is useful information about residents' care plans for relatives, e.g. explaining who has access to them and the process for amending them.	Residents and relatives are being offered access to care plans. A robust process will be implemented to ensure all new residents and relatives have access to their care plans in the first 4 weeks. A sign- off process and tracker is in place to identify who has reviewed care plans.
4. Take measures to reduce the intrusion of the constant messaging of the staff carried radio sets.	Staff are being reminded to appropriately use the radios. They are useful to communicate with team and for efficiency. Ongoing review by management to ensure appropriateness of usage. The radios are used for staff to communicate their whereabouts and to ensure residents do not have to wait too long to receive care.

## 5 Mealtime experience

We observed lunch in the dining room, a large room with a wall of window out to the garden with areas off the room where residents can eat with their visitors if they wish to. We saw one resident use this area and another eat with their relative in the main area. We were told that residents can choose to eat in the dining room or can eat in their rooms. An area in another room is available for residents who would sometimes prefer a quieter meal experience.

Staff told us that the six bed-bound residents get priority at mealtimes and that five others require support to feed and another one is independent but requires prompting. We were told that residents have dietary passports which details their dietary requirements and that these are reviewed monthly or updated should the need arise.

Residents were shown menus in the morning to make their choices for the day. There were seven tables with an average of three people at each table. Music was played in the background.

### 5.1 What worked well

- The atmosphere in the dining room was calm and friendly. There appeared to be sufficient staff available to help all the residents needing support. Staff told us that four care staff helped residents to eat and that the nurses would also support residents. We were told that six residents ate pureed food.
- We observed a variety of adapted cutlery and cups being used according to the needs of the resident, including cups with two handles and grips for ease of use; bottles with straws; basic beakers. Some residents had yellow teacups.
- We were told by a relative that Speirs House included 'their' resident, who was PEG fed, in the communal dining experience. Adaptations had been made so that the resident could be brought into the dining room at



mealtimes to sit with other residents and that the resident enjoyed this. We observed this resident who seemed calm, and smiled during the meal.

- The room was spacious with room enough for wheelchairs, some of which were very large. The manager told us that the wheelchairs had been bought in the last two years to facilitate residents being able to be brought out from their rooms.
- Meals were served from a Bain Marie in the dining room which meant that food was served at a good temperature. This was confirmed by feedback from relatives.
- Residents and relatives told us that the food was very good.
- We were told that snacks were available on request, and sandwiches were kept in fridges and available to eat, covered and marked with their date of preparation.
- The day's menus were displayed on the wall of the dining room, and the lunchtime and supper menus were on each of the tables.

## 5.2 What could be improved

- Menus were displayed on the tables but there were no images of the food used. Staff told us that they explained which options were available.
- One relative said the food is very good overall, but suggested their loved one might prefer a more substantial meal in the evenings, as the meal is often lighter, and soup is frequently offered as a starter, which they don't like. Another relative suggested that bread and butter served with all meals would be a good development.
- One staff member mentioned that for those on a pureed diet the choice of food is more limited and that for those residents "there is no real choice."
- We were told by one relative that 'their' resident could be quite a fussy eater and did not generally like the food that was on offer. Although there were alternatives to be had, their relative forgot that this was so and so did

not ask for alternatives. The relative told us that the resident enjoyed fruit salad but often forgot it was available.

### 5.3 What we saw and heard

During our visit we took some photographs and spoke to four residents, seven relatives and seven staff members. We have captured some comments about the mealtime experience below.



"It's amazing food, really very good, very varied, there's always a choice.

(The resident) loves the puddings" (Relative)

"The food is very good, and residents can have visitors for lunch."

(Relative)

"The afternoon tea is lovely." (Resident)

"(The food here) is extremely good." (Resident)

"My favourite dish is roast dinners." (Resident)

"Residents are given portions that are too big – we've raised it with the manager. Smaller portions with an option for seconds would be helpful." (Relative)

"(Relative) is unable to swallow so has to have a pureed soft diet. It is always nicely presented." (Relative)

"There is good communication between the kitchen and carer staff." (Staff member)





Images shown above (from left to right), the leek and cheese frittata, the apple crumble with cheese, both on the menu, and the fresh fruit salad, which was available, but not on the menu. Images shown below show the breakfast element of the daily menu displayed on the wall, and the lunch and supper menu, both displayed on the tables at lunchtime.

## 5.4 Mealtime experience recommendations

HWK mealtime experience recommendations	Speirs House Care Home response
1. Provide menus with images of the food available to help residents with their food choices.	Consultation meeting held with residents on the 19th of February to discuss the changes with menus. There will be 3 pictorial menu books to aid residents with choices. These will be kept separate from table menu signs to ensure there is no confusion and due to issues of space. Residents will be supported by kitchen and care staff to make choices.
2. Consider providing a different hot starter option on the menu for the evening meal.	Meeting held with residents on the 19th of February to discuss options and choices for starters.
3. Create a menu with the other options available to remind residents of the choices open to them.	More options will be made available to residents on the menu in addition to currently being offered. Menu renewal Spring and Autumn.
4. Offer bread and butter as an accompaniment to every meal.	Bread and butter have been added to menu on every mealtime. Residents will decide at the meeting on the 19th of Feb their preference, toasted or with butter
5. Offer more salad ingredients and advertise the availability of fruit salad.	Fruit will be taken around by staff to ensure safety. There are residents at risk of choking so fruit cannot be left on the table for residents to help themselves.
6. Provide more options for those on a pureed diet.	Pureed food choices are made from what is on the menu. Dysphagia guidance is used to provide a variety of

	<p>options for pureed food from desserts, breakfast, snacks, lunch. The home benefits from support from a dysphagia champion brought in by the company. All pureed food is made with the same food choices that are on the day. Same choices are given to residents on pureed food. Alternative options are available but have to be possible to puree. There may be limitations to providing pureed options and nothing can be done about this. The kitchen staff had support from the dysphagia expert 2 years who had worked through the pureed menus and guidance was provided that the kitchen staff use. The guide provides recipes for breakfast, lunch, dessert, snacks and soaking solutions.</p>
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## 6 Meaningful activities

Speirs House has two wellbeing/activities coordinators who between them work a four-week rota that is arranged so that there is a wellbeing/activities coordinator onsite for a five full day for and two half days for two weeks, seven full days for one week, and three full days and four half days for one week. Two activities were arranged daily from Monday to Friday and the activities timetable is circulated two weeks in advance to residents, and also to the relatives, allowing relatives to plan visits and join in with activities and events. The home has good facilities for providing a programme of activities with a large lounge and a dedicated 'cinema'/entertainments room, as well as outdoor space accessible to the residents, and a pamper room.

### 6.1 What worked well

- We were told that residents participate in deciding on activities and that these were discussed and planned with residents individually, or during the residents' meetings. Relatives also make contributions and give ideas. The residents and relatives are given 2 weeks activity programme in advance. These are also displayed in the home and at reception for relatives to pick on arrival to the home.
- Different relatives and residents told us that staff made an effort to include residents in the activities who may not be able to access them due to being bed-bound. One relative told us that the feeding schedule of one resident who was PEG fed was adapted to ensure their participation in activities,
- A resident told us that the 'current (activities) lady' is very good'.
- One relative told us they timed their visits to coincide with the bingo sessions to help their relative with the numbers, saying 'it gives time to be together'.



- One relative told us that their loved one is now bedridden and has been for the last few months. They are hard of hearing, but staff make an effort to go in and talk to the resident now that they can no longer participate in many activities.
- Staff told us that carpet bowls was a popular activity, as was bingo and balloon tennis. Making sausage rolls had been the activity on the morning of our visit, but unfortunately, we did not manage to observe it but saw the sausage rolls being eaten. Relatives and staff also mentioned cheese and wine tasting sessions, jewellery making, and karaoke sessions.
- A relative told that the hairdressing salon is extremely popular, and that hairdressing happens every Thursday.
- A relative told us that, despite their relatives' severe physical limitations, they are included in activities. They told us that they felt it was clear that their relative enjoys being at Speirs House as they smile and look happy and that the home offers a lot of activities and celebrations.
- Staff told us that resident's' hair, nails, and shaving are done regularly. One relative told us that their loved one suffers from a skin condition, and whenever a carer notices a change, the staff ensure it is promptly checked by the local doctor.
- A relative told us that they had suggested placing a bird table outside 'their' resident's window, as they love watching birds. The manager had arranged this, and it has proved to be very successful for the resident.
- The cinema room is a popular 'venue'. There is a piano, and a bar and many entertainments happen there, including singing and quizzes.
- The home holds annual Mothers' Day lunches, a summer barbeque, a garden party, and Christmas lunch.
- A member of staff told us that a physiotherapist comes in on Monday and Thursdays for exercise classes. Some residents also do individual exercises.
- The home has a number of regular volunteers. One brings photographs of their travels and talks about the places they have been to. This volunteer

also brings in their dog to see the residents and is the 'official photographer' of celebrations and holiday events on behalf of the home. Other volunteers come in and sit and chat to the residents. The manager also brings their dog to the home twice a week.

- One resident told us they enjoyed craft activities which helped them with dexterity and allowed them to express their creativity. They enjoyed painting and had been able to take it up again. We observed them in their room at an easel. Some of their paintings were displayed in their room which, they told us, filled them with pride and joy.

## 6.2 What could be improved

- The activities board available in the lounge area needed updating and was difficult to read.

## 6.3 What we saw and heard

During our visit we took some photographs and spoke to four residents, seven relatives and seven staff members. We have captured some comments about the activities provided below.



"Last year, there was a trip on the river which was lovely. Kingston to Hampton Court Palace, with tea and biscuits." (Relative)

"My partner and I do circuits/walks around the garden." (Relative)

"(I've experienced) two very nice Christmas parties – the staff make a big effort." (Relative)

"Staff are great fun." (Relative)

"The staff help you choose colours and guide you through the process (of making bracelets)." (Resident)

"Most days are good (activities)." (Staff member)

"If you ask for it (resources, equipment etc) they'll accommodate it." (Staff member)

"There are lots of activities which are great and very varied."  
(Relative)

"The carers came in and make (my relative) laugh  
– (their) eyes are smiling and (their) face is  
relaxed." (Relative)



Images shown (left to right) the cinema room with large screen at one end, the bar area at the other end with counter for serving drinks and calling out bingo numbers or quiz questions, and the piano. The inside of the pamper room and the activities board in need of updating to be usable by all.

## 6.4 Meaningful activities recommendations

HWK activities recommendations	Speirs House Care Home response
1. Use the activities board fully so that the day's activities are easily seen and can prompt residents to remember what is available that day.	The activity coordinator and management will monitor the activities board to ensure it is fit for purpose and informative for residents and friends of Speirs House.

## 7 Next steps

This report has been shared with Speirs Care Home who have had the opportunity to check it for factual accuracy and respond to our recommendations. It has subsequently been shared with, KBC, CQC, the KCGB and other stakeholders. We have also shared this report with Healthwatch England and have published it on the HWK website. We have agreed with the management of SPEIRS Care Home the next steps to be taken in response to outstanding recommendations.



Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames

Suite 3, 2nd Floor, Siddeley House,

50, Canbury Park Road,

Kingston upon Thames

KT2 6LX

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

t: 0203 326 1255

e: [info@healthwatchkingston.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchkingston.org.uk)

 [@HWKingston](https://twitter.com/HWKingston)

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

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