

Ferndale Mews Care Home

Enter & View visit

17 September 2025



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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 those expectations were met.

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

Our trained staff and volunteers visit services to see them in action and to listen to what people tell us about their experiences. We are not inspectors – we visit as independent observers to understand what works well and where things could be better.

Before visiting Ferndale Mews, we sent a short pre-visit questionnaire to the manager and invited staff and relatives to complete online surveys. The responses have been used in preparing this report.

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.

This visit was part of Healthwatch Halton's statutory Enter & View programme.

The aim was to:

- Learn more about the service and how it supports residents.
- Highlight what appears to be working well.
- Identify any areas where improvements could be made.

Our Enter & View visits are not designed to identify safeguarding issues. If concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in line with Healthwatch safeguarding procedures.

No safeguarding concerns were identified during this visit.

Methodology

The visit involved:

- Observing the physical environment of the service.
- Speaking with residents, staff, and the management team.
- Reviewing any information or materials displayed to the public.
- Taking notes in a non-intrusive manner and feeding back general impressions.

Enter & View Visit Report

Care Home: Ferndale Mews Care Home, St Michael's Road, Widnes WA8 8TF

Registered Provider: Landona House Limited

Manager : Violet Jowett

Healthwatch Halton Enter & View Team:

Dave Wilson, Jude Burrows

Date and time of visit: Wednesday 17 September 2025, 10:15 am – 12:20 pm

Disclaimer

Please note that this report is related to findings and observations made during our visit.

The report does not claim to represent the views of all service users, only those who contributed.

Initial Impressions

Ferndale Mews Care Home is situated on St Michael's Road in Widnes, within a residential area close to local amenities. While there are no directional road signs, the home itself has a clear sign outside. Parking was easy, with several spaces available including disabled bays.

The main entrance is to the side of the building and may not be immediately obvious to first-time visitors, as a neighbouring care home, Ferndale Court, has a more prominent frontage. Parking at the home was straightforward during our visit, with several spaces available including a small number of designated disabled bays. Entry to the home is secured by a doorbell system, and visitors are asked to sign in on arrival.

The manager, Violet Jowett, welcomed us warmly, and hand gel was available via a wall-mounted dispenser.

The reception area included feedback opportunities with both a QR code and freepost paper forms, plus a suggestions box. The most recent **CQC rating (Good)** was clearly displayed. The manager's office is adjacent to reception.

Inside, there was a comfortable seating area where residents were enjoying drinks while music played. An *Employee of the Month* display featured photos of staff chosen by residents and visitors.



Manager Feedback

Violet spoke openly with us about the home and the people who live there. She told us that since the service became part of Landona House Care Group, there has been a stronger focus on person-centred care and more support from the regional team.

She told us about the improvements being made around the home, explaining that the new provider has already funded redecoration and further refurbishment is planned. The home was fully occupied on the day of our visit, with 34 residents supported by 38 staff.

Staffing levels were described as good overall. There are 13 staff on duty during the day and five overnight, including registered nurses on both shifts. Staff receive regular supervisions every two months and annual appraisals. Violet also told us that training

is a strong focus, with staff completing mandatory topics such as hydration, pressure care (*React to Red*), infection prevention, and the *Dip or Not to Dip* urinary infection course.

She explained that the home has good links with local health professionals, including GPs from two surgeries, the Vision Call optical service, LLAMS and the audiology team. Access to dental care can be difficult, especially for residents with dementia, and this remains an area of challenge across the sector.

Violet also discussed some practical issues facing the home, such as the difficulty getting X-rays done at the Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre, which means residents often need to go to A&E instead. She told us that communication with local hospitals can also be slow at times, particularly around discharge paperwork.

Falls are monitored closely, with 21 recorded in the six months before our visit – a slight increase on the previous period. Violet explained that this reflects residents' changing needs rather than a fall in standards, and that each incident is reviewed through the *Radar* system with families and professionals informed.

Safeguarding procedures are well established, with three designated leads and staff training refreshed annually. The home also holds regular *Resident of the Day* reviews, six-monthly care plan reviews, and *You Said, We Did* updates to share feedback and actions taken.

Violet came across as open, approachable and committed to keeping the home safe, welcoming and continually improving for residents.

General observations

Ferndale Mews is split into two floors, each housing 17 residents. The home was at full occupancy (34 residents) on the day of our visit, 19 nursing and 15 residential residents.

The building was warm, clean, and homely, with music playing and personal touches such as resident photographs, artwork, and ornaments. Brightly coloured toilet and shower doors aid orientation, with blue toilet seats for contrast. Some corridors had white handrails that blended into the pale coloured walls; this could be improved for dementia friendliness. A few light fittings required repair.



There is a **hairdressing room** which was in use during our visit, and a **spacious garden** with seating, a greenhouse, and decorations.

The ongoing refurbishment funded was visible, with some areas showing fresh décor and others mid-upgrade.



Upstairs Area

Seventeen residents live on the upper floor. Eight were seated together in a lounge area, listening to music.

Another two rested in a nearby seating space. The dining room was nicely laid with flowers and napkins, but the pictorial menu on the wall showed was out of date and displayed the wrong menu items. A printed text version of the menu was available.

Bedrooms featured display boxes beside the doors showing photos and keepsakes, giving a personal feel.

We noted one toilet seat was loose and required fixing.



Downstairs Area

The ground floor mirrored the upstairs layout. We saw staff offering drinks and checking on residents, with friendly, patient interactions. One resident was assisted to put on her glasses so she could watch television, which she clearly enjoyed.

Another lounge at the end of the corridor was bright and inviting, with plans to convert it into a calming sensory room in future.

Some corridor areas were awaiting re-decoration and lighting repairs.



Staff and Activities

We met many staff during our visit around the home. All were in uniform and wore dementia-friendly name badges. Staff interactions were warm and respectful; alarm calls were answered promptly.

We spoke with Katie, the Activity Coordinator, who explained how her role had evolved as residents' needs changed. She adapts daily sessions to individual abilities and preferences, from arts and crafts to one-to-one conversations. We observed her gently supporting a resident who became upset by taking a calming walk with her.



During our visit we also observed a carer kneeling beside a resident to help them drink – a thoughtful, person-centred approach demonstrating dignity in care.

Residents and Family Feedback

We spent time speaking with residents and their families to hear about their experiences.

Residents we spoke with were generally positive about the home. One woman listening to Beatles music said, *'I like it here. The staff are nice.'* She mentioned that her hearing aid was missing, and we informed the manager about this during our visit. Another resident, proud of her freshly styled hair, said she was happy and that staff were *'nice girls.'*



One visitor told us about their mum who was a resident at the home, *'She has been at Ferndale Mews for almost two years now... I visit a couple of times a week and I've always found the care provided to be good. They keep me updated regularly and I've always found the staff to be helpful and caring with Mum.'*

Another visitor said his wife had lived at the home for 17 months and was *'very happy'*. He praised staff as *'dedicated and professional'* and described the home as *'first class.'*

Summary

During our visit we found Ferndale Mews to be a warm, caring and supportive environment. Staff demonstrated professionalism and compassion in their interactions, and family members we spoke with expressed confidence in the care provided.

The home appeared well led, with open communication between the manager, staff and families. In particular, the refurbishment work, infection-control measures and safeguarding systems reflected a clear commitment to ongoing improvement.

Areas where improvements could further enhance quality include:

- Updating signage and handrail contrast for dementia friendliness.
- Keeping menus and noticeboards current.
- Completing minor maintenance works such as lighting and seating repairs.
- Ensuring Healthwatch Halton and Advocacy Hub information is clearly displayed.

Overall, we observed a positive and caring atmosphere where residents appeared settled and comfortable. Staff were friendly, attentive, and seemed to know the residents well. The home's leadership was open to feedback and already making a number of improvements.

The recent investment from the new provider, along with the commitment of the manager and staff, means the home is well placed to keep improving and maintain good standards of care.

Recommendations and suggestions

Based on what we saw and heard during our visit, we've suggested the following actions that could help further improve residents' day-to-day experience experience.

1. Continue refurbishment work, prioritising lighting repairs and dementia-friendly contrasts on handrails and doors.
2. Ensure pictorial menus and noticeboards are updated daily.
3. Make Healthwatch Halton and Advocacy Hub information visible in communal areas.
4. Display a copy of the complaints policy in rooms and provide to families proactively.
5. Introduce more sensory and reminiscence spaces as planned to support wellbeing.
6. Ensure regular review of family communication systems (Resident of the Day, meetings, *You Said We Did* board).
7. Continue monitoring falls data to identify trends and share learning with staff.

Service Provider Response

We have read through the report, and we confirm it to be accurate.

Actions:

Updating signage and handrail contrast for dementia friendliness. – This has been discussed with the team and maintenance and is currently on-going with the current home improvements, handrails to be painted in contrasting colour, also resident's bedroom doors currently being painted as per residents' choice to aid in helping them to identify their room.

Keeping menus and noticeboards current. – These are now checked daily, during walk rounds to ensure they are current.

Completing minor maintenance works such as lighting and seating repairs. New light fittings have been ordered, awaiting delivery.

The home is currently undergoing home improvements with, with view to purchase new furniture and flooring and plan of creating x 2 sensory rooms, one on each community.

Ensuring Healthwatch Halton and Advocacy Hub information is clearly displayed – This is now displayed within the home.

Could I also take the time to say thank you so much for how you and your colleague conducted the visit on the day, staff reported you were very professional and made them feel really comfortable thank you for your lovely feedback and the suggested recommendations we are working through these.

Violet Jowett, Home Manager, Ferndale Mews

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Halton would like to thank the manager, staff, residents, and visitors at Ferndale Mews Care Home for their warm welcome, time, and openness during our visit.



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