

# **healthwatch**

## **Cheshire West**



**Enter and View Report**

**Heathercliffe**

**Residential Care Home**

**Helsby**

**29 September 2025**

## Contents

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Report Details                          | Page 3  |
| What is Enter and View                  | Page 4  |
| Methodology                             | Page 5  |
| Findings                                | Page 6  |
| Recommendations and what's working well | Page 19 |
| Service Provider Response               | Page 20 |

## Report Details

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Address</b>  | Heathercliffe Residential Care Home<br>Old Chester Road<br>Helsby<br>Frodsham<br>WA6 9NP |
| <b>Service Provider</b>   | Sarah Turner   |
| <b>Date of Visit</b>  | 29 September 2025  |
| <b>Type of Visit</b>  | Enter and View with Prior Notice   |
| <b>Representatives</b>  | Jem Davies<br>Tricia Cooper  |
| <b>Date of previous visits<br/>by Healthwatch<br/>Cheshire West</b> | 25 June 2018   |

This report relates to findings gathered during a visit to the premises on specific dates as set out above. The report is not suggested to be a fully representative portrayal of the experiences of all the residents, friends and family members or staff, but does provide an account of what was observed by Healthwatch Cheshire Authorised Representatives (ARs) at the time of the visits.

## What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch Cheshire is the local independent consumer champion for health and care services, forming part of the national network of local Healthwatch across England.

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, local Healthwatch have the power to carry out Enter and View visits as part of their scrutiny function. This legislation places a duty on health and social care providers to allow Authorised Representatives of Healthwatch to carry out an Enter and View visit on premises where health and social care is publicly funded and delivered. This includes:

- Health or care services which are contracted by local authorities or the NHS, such as adult social care homes and day-care centres.
- NHS Trusts
- NHS Foundation Trusts
- Local authorities
- Primary medical services, such as GPs
- Primary dental services, such as dentists
- Primary Ophthalmic services, such as opticians
- Pharmaceutical services, such as community pharmacists.

The list of service providers who have a duty to allow entry is set out in section 225 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and supplemented by Regulation 14 of the 2013 Local Authorities regulations.

At Healthwatch Cheshire, the Enter and View programme is conducted by a small team of staff and volunteers, who are trained as Authorised Representatives to carry out visits to health and care premises.

Following an Enter and View visit, a formal report is published where findings of good practice and recommendations to improve the service are made. These reports are circulated to the service provider, commissioner, the CQC and relevant partner organisations. They are also made publicly available on the Healthwatch Cheshire websites:

- [www.healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-view](http://www.healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-view)
- [www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-view](http://www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-view).

## Purpose of the Visit

- To engage with residents, friends and relatives of the named services and understand their experiences.
- To capture these experiences and any ideas they may have for change.
- To observe residents, friends and relatives interacting with the staff and their surroundings.
- To make recommendations based on Healthwatch Authorised Representatives' observations and feedback from residents, friends and relatives.

## Methodology

### **This Enter & View visit was carried out with 'Prior Notice'.**

A visit with 'Prior Notice' is when the setting is aware that we will be conducting an Enter & View visit. On this occasion an exact time and date were not given.

Prior to the Enter and View visit the service was asked to display both the letter announcing our visit and a Healthwatch Cheshire poster in a public area. The service was also asked to share surveys amongst residents, friends and relatives. Members of the Healthwatch team visited the service prior to the Enter and View visit to deliver paper copies of the surveys.

To enable us to check that there are no health outbreaks at the premises that would prevent the visit taking place for infection control reasons, this Care Home was made aware that we would be coming on the morning of the visit.

## Preparation

In preparation for an Enter and View visit the Authorised Representatives who will be carrying out the visit conduct research that involves reviewing:

- The latest CQC report from a routine inspection of the service

- Any previous Healthwatch Cheshire Enter and View reports
- The Care Home's information held on the Carehome.co.uk website
- Entries on social media platforms
- Comments held on Healthwatch Cheshire's feedback centre
- Information received by Healthwatch Cheshire as a result of undertaking surveys.

On the day of the visit the Authorised Representatives hold a briefing to discuss findings from their individual preparation, and decide as a team how they will carry out the visit, and any specific areas of focus based on this prior knowledge.

## **Heathercliffe**

Heathercliffe is an independently owned residential care home. The home is in a rural location within beautiful countryside and is easily located using satnav.

The home has 21 bedrooms, and has capacity for 22 residents. All rooms are ensuite with toilet and basin, whilst one room also has a bath.

Healthwatch would like to note that we received 15 completed surveys (10 from relatives/friends of a resident and five completed by residents). The comments contained in these surveys will be referred to throughout this report.

# **Findings**

## **Arriving at the care home**

### **Environment**

Heathercliffe is easily located and is well signposted on arrival. The home itself is a 'manor style' building within its own grounds and appears to be

well maintained. There is a small car park adjacent to the building for visitors and staff.



The home has a secure front door with a bell system to alert staff to any visitors. The reception area was clean and spacious with lots of information on display for residents and visitors, including the latest CQC rating of GOOD, food hygiene

rating and the complaints procedure. There was a printed list of all the activities that were taking place that month.



Healthwatch representatives were warmly greeted by the care home staff and were asked to sign the visitors' book. The Manager responded to a series of questions about the residents' care, treatment and experiences at the home; the responses to which are referenced within this report. A member of staff gave Healthwatch a tour of the home, providing an opportunity to observe daily life within the care setting.

Throughout the home the standard of decoration and cleanliness was outstanding. The furniture and decoration are in keeping with the style of the building and we frequently saw household staff ensuring the environment was tidy and free from obstructions so residents could move freely around the home either independently or with the help of staff.

The building is set over three storeys; residents use the ground and first floor, whilst the third floor is used by staff. There is a working lift and stairs for the convenience of residents.

## Treatment and care

### Quality of care

When Healthwatch asked the Manager what we should see during our visit they told us *“a warm, friendly fun and inclusive environment that keeps people safe, comfortable and respected. Care staff that are giving residents quality of life whilst acknowledging individual needs and capability.”*

All the residents we saw during our visit were well dressed in clothing appropriate for the time of day and appeared clean and tidy.

We observed patient staff engaging in a caring manner whilst still encouraging residents to move independently where possible. It was particularly pleasing to see that all staff, regardless of their role within the home, made time to speak with residents and provide assistance where required.

During our visit we heard one call bell activated and this was responded to immediately by a number of staff. Relatives and residents who completed the Healthwatch survey frequently mentioned the staff and stated:

*“the staff are very caring and kind”, “wonderful staff” and “mum is well cared for and respected, personal needs catered for”.*

When asked about the quality of healthcare services provided at the home, Healthwatch was told that they have a very good relationship with Helsby Health Centre and as a minimum a dedicated GP visits the home every week. This has ensured that the GP knows the residents and their families and provides continuity of care. Residents do have the option of remaining with their own GP, however due to the good relationship established with Helsby Health Centre they tend to move across. The home uses Holland Pharmacy in Kingsley and this arrangement works well. The Manager told us that the home does have a ‘hospital avoidance’ policy and wherever possible residents are cared for in the home, unless it



is in their best interest to go to hospital. All decisions are made with the support of clinicians, the resident and their families.

When asked about recent experience of hospital care we were told *“there was a lady from Warrington being discharged straight to Heathercliffe, we held a room for her and at discharge no medication was ready although the lady had been assessed. When the medication was sent it didn’t match the discharge paperwork. It was abysmal”*.

On a more positive note, the Manager told us they have a good relationship with a private local dentist who will visit the home when required. Furthermore, the home uses In-House Mobile Opticians in Warrington and all residents have annual eye tests. A hairdresser also visits the home on a weekly basis.

Other visiting health professionals include speech and language therapist (SALT), district nurses, physiotherapists, dieticians and community psychiatric nurses all of whom contribute to supporting the residents’ health needs.

## **Privacy, dignity and respect**

When Healthwatch asked how privacy, dignity and respect are ensured and promoted in the home, the Manager told us that staff are trained to a high standard to ensure these are always met and respected. She went on to explain that all staff have a three-month induction programme and then this is further enhanced with continual professional development and training. We were told that the home uses magnetic signage for doors, for example *“Family visiting in progress”* and *“personal care being given”*, *“All staff knock on doors before entering a room”*.

All residents who responded to the survey reported feeling well cared for, safe and respected and their dignity maintained. All residents felt they had privacy.

During Healthwatch's visit we observed residents taking part in activities, reading, going outside for a short walk with staff. All the interactions we observed were respectful and patient. There appeared an obvious warmth between all staff and residents.

We were told that Heathercliffe has large print documents and any other document can be published in large print. They have tried a hearing loop system for a very hard of hearing resident in the past but found it was not successful. The resident now uses Facetime with noise cancelling headphones when they contact friends and family.

During our visit we did not see any personal information on display.

## Understanding residents care plans

The Manager told us that Heathercliffe has used digital care plans for several years and these are updated monthly as a minimum. We were told that residents and their families are involved in their care plans and this was confirmed by the responses to our survey when the majority of whom answered YES to the question. Additionally, relatives are invited to regularly review their loved one's care plans. Healthwatch spoke to one relative during our visit, who stated she is "absolutely involved in every aspect of any decisions made about him".

## Relationships

### Interaction with staff

When asked about the relationship between staff and residents, the Manager explained it is *"a very close and person-centred relationship. All members of staff work collaboratively, including housekeeping and care staff"*. During our visit we observed compassionate and caring interactions on numerous occasions. When a resident wanted to go outside, a member of the housekeeping staff volunteered to accompany them. They ensured the resident was appropriately dressed prior to going on a short walk. Whilst they were out walking, myself and other visitors observed warm interactions between them from a window.

All residents and relatives who completed the Healthwatch survey said they had a good relationship with staff and described them as “*amazing*” and “*very caring*”.

The Manager explained that staff have a very good close relationship with residents’ family and friends, “*They are friendly and familiar with each other. Many of the partners are involved in the home and often it continues once their loved one has passed away*”.

All staff wear a uniform appropriate for their role and should wear name badges to identify themselves. We saw lots of staff/resident interaction during our visit, all of which was warm, patient and respectful.

We were told that at present the home does not use agency staff, although they have done so in the past. We were told that should the need arise then they would request someone who has been to the home previously and was familiar with Heathercliffe.

## Connection with friends and family

In surveys completed by residents we were told that they mainly keep in touch with family and friends during visits and that staff will help them use the telephone or iPads if needed. All the relatives who responded to our survey told us they are warmly welcomed every time they visit.

Heathercliffe does not have set visiting times, however they do encourage protected mealtimes if the resident is eating in the dining room. Family and friends are asked not to visit after 8.30pm as a general guide. We were told visits can take place anywhere in the home: the garden, conservatory, the lounge and residents’ rooms.

The management shared that residents and relatives can raise concerns or provide feedback directly with staff and are encouraged to do so at the earliest opportunity. We were shown copies of 24 hours Report Sheets which covers both the day and night. Within the report is a section detailed Feedback/Complaints for the attention of the Manager to address

as soon as possible. The home's complaints policy is clearly visible in the reception area and each resident also have one in their rooms.

We were told that the home holds residents' meetings regularly and we were shown minutes and the things that the residents had requested. At present the home does not hold Friends and Relatives' meetings however we were told they are more than welcome to join the residents' meetings.

During our visit we observed one lady arriving for day care. Staff told us they have capacity for one person per day to attend from 10.30 – 17.30, this is possible seven days a week and is well used.

Healthwatch saw family visiting their relatives and those we spoke to were very complimentary of the care their loved one had received. They further went on to say how they had seen the wonderful care that staff had given other residents. They described the home as *"very well run, fabulous care"*. We asked if they knew how to raise a complaint and they told us that they would have no issues with raising it with the manager or any member of staff and have confidence that it would be taken seriously.

Other responses to our survey included:

*"It's not too big so it feels homely. The staff are very caring and kind. The home is well maintained and kind."*

*"The home is well maintained and kept lovely and clean. The food is fab".*

## Wider Local Community

The Manager told us that the home has a well-established relationship with a local primary school, and they are involved in the 'Ready Generations' initiative with them. This initiative explores the benefits of cross generational interaction and care. Each month five residents and five Year 6 children spend time together and build up relationships through activities such as gardening and painting. The residents will go to the school to watch plays.

Last year the home held their Christmas party at Helsby Social Club and invited Year 6 and the school choir. Relatives also joined in with the celebrations.

Other links include Frodsham Choir and a visiting brass band. Some residents also attend the local 'Singing For The Brain' group.

## Everyday Life at the Care Home

### Activities

Whilst Heathercliffe does not have a dedicated Activities Coordinator there is an extensive monthly activities schedule which the administrative staff and Deputy Manager deliver alongside care staff.

We were shown the monthly schedule which is prominently displayed and it appears varied and exciting. Some of the events listed are as a direct link to the minutes we were shown of the residents meeting e.g. Chair Golf and Fish and Chip lunches.

The various activities include arts, crafts, music, baking, jam making, gardening, exercises, darts and ball games. To add to the overall homely feel at Heathercliffe, activities such as 'Buffet Tea watching COUNTRYFILE' take place every Sunday. Afternoon tea with relatives has taken place in the dining room. Residents find out what is going to happen through verbal prompts and there is an activities timetable to look at. Care staff will support residents during these sessions.

We were told by staff and residents that musicians and artists visit the home regularly to hold sessions with the residents. Residents that spoke to us on the day told us *"there is always something to do"* and *"there's lots going on, they had a party for my birthday"*.

It was explained to us that those residents who do not leave their rooms (this tends to be those receiving end of life care), one-to-one activities are provided. For example, hand massages, relaxation exercises, reflexology

and simply holding someone's hand which, we were told, helps them feel calm.

Heathercliffe celebrates birthdays and special events and residents told us this. They also acknowledge national days and we were shown the plans for their up and coming Nigerian day and Spanish day. This includes a special menu and arts and crafts.

A full schedule of activities is also emailed to friends and family of residents, many of whom mentioned this when responding to our survey.

Heathercliffe does not have its own transport, however on day trips they do use local taxis for residents; some of the recent trips have included Manley Mere and Cheshire Oaks. For those that enjoy walking, staff will support them walking to the local tearoom.

## Person Centred Experience

The Manager told us that in order to provide a person-centred experience for residents it is essential to *"find out about our residents, getting to know them and including them in their care. Regularly reviewing the care of our residents is important"*. To understand those needs each resident has a thorough assessment upon or prior to arrival at the home, including likes and dislikes. Once these have been established, care can be fitted around their needs. Heathercliffe does not have a 'resident' of the day, although if it is a resident's birthday they will ensure they have a lot of attention.

The home does not have any pets however we were told that friends and family will regularly bring in pets on their visits.

It is evident from the Healthwatch survey that residents and their relatives feel that their care is personalised. They told us: *"Excellent staff, beautiful environment, wide range of activities, fantastic food, personalised care"* and *"well cared for and respected, all my personal needs are catered for."*

## Communal Areas

When Healthwatch arrived at Heathercliffe, representatives were immediately struck with the presentation of the home. All areas we saw were clean, newly decorated and free from any odours. The home is decorated and furnished in keeping with the style and age of the building. Whilst buildings of this age can present challenges to residents moving around, the home has ensured that Heathercliffe has a lift, hand rails and, in areas where there may be a couple of steps to negotiate, discreet ramps are nearby to help.

The main communal areas are the lounge, the conservatory and the dining room. Additionally, both floors have small reading areas. All these are well lit, have appropriate seating and furnishings. Throughout the home we saw art work on display which the residents have all contributed to.



During our visit we saw residents use all the communal areas and they were happy to chat to us. Healthwatch representatives had a differing view regarding the temperature of the building.



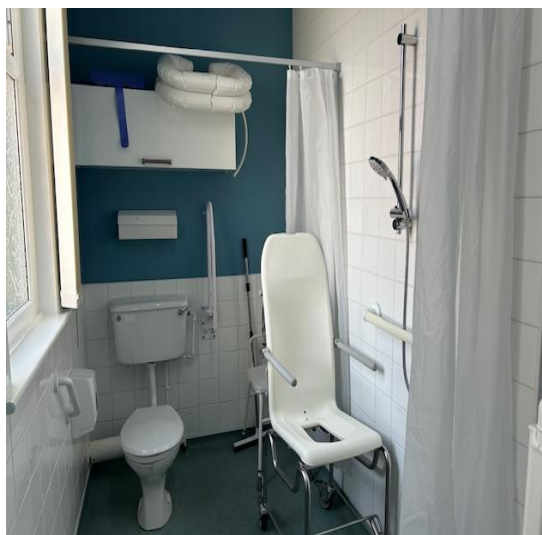
Whilst one felt comfortable, the other felt chilly in some areas and noted that the conservatory felt cold, possibly due to the air conditioning unit being on. On our survey, residents and their relatives all stated they were happy with the temperature of the building.

## Residents' bedrooms

During our visit we were shown a variety of bedrooms. Although they differ in size, every bedroom was spacious and personalised. As in other areas of the home each room is decorated to a high standard and all the furniture is of a high standard. All rooms benefit from natural lighting overlooking



green spaces, however some of the rooms at the front of the home were darker, due to the proximity of the wooded hill. In addition to their own toilet and washbasin, one of the rooms does have its own bathroom. We were told that residents really enjoy baths. There are two communal bathrooms which have both a shower and a bath.



The Manager told us they have one double room, that should couples wish to use they would be able to accommodate this. We were also told that residents are encouraged to personalise their rooms and we observed plenty of evidence of this.

## Outdoor areas

Heathercliffe is fortunate to be located in a beautiful surrounding with lots of trees and overlooking the countryside. The home has taken care to make sure the outside space is accessible and safe for residents. The gardens have raised pots which residents have helped plant up. We were told the gardens are used often and there was a variety of seating and a covered area so it may be enjoyed in all weathers.

The garden was secured with a gate and large trees. Staff told us that in the warmer months the resident will have lots of activities in the garden and they have giant garden games.





## Food and drink

The dining room at Heathercliffe is a warm, welcoming space which is maintained to a high standard. The tables are set and napkins are provided. As with the rest of the home, it was very clean and tidy and free from obstructions to allow the residents to move around independently or with support.



The Manager told us that all food is homemade on site and the home employs three chefs. Whilst visiting we observed lunch being served: beef stew followed by cake and custard. For residents who wish for an alternative or are on a softer diet there was quiche

available. However, we were told that the chefs would make something else if a resident preferred it. The food looked and smelt very good and all the residents we spoke to told us they really enjoyed the food. It was noted that there was an appropriate number of staff to assist any resident with their meal if required. We observed some staff taking trays with the residents' lunch to their rooms; it was reassuring that the food was covered to prevent cross contamination. The responses regarding food within the Healthwatch survey was described by numerous residents as "fabulous".

We were shown the weekly menu, which was varied and would appeal to most. It also showed the vast range of options for breakfast and supper, along with drinks and snacks scheduled throughout the day.

The Manager told us *"We will go around in the afternoon and speak to the residents about what choices there are for dinner. We do show some residents what's being served so they can make a choice at the time. We will establish residents' likes and dislikes, and any allergies they may have. Our weekly menus are seasonal and we're flexible with this depending on the weather. Our residents can choose where they would like to eat, and*

*their preference is logged on their nutritional profile. Staff will maintain a presence at every mealtime."*

Healthwatch was told there are unlimited hot and cold drinks and biscuits available throughout the day. Afternoon tea and cake is served at 3pm and there is a light supper around 8pm. *"We're not rigid with timings, we're responsive and flexible to residents' needs."* (The Manager). Upon our arrival at Heathercliffe, we saw tea and biscuits being served.

Healthwatch was told that the home has protected mealtimes in the dining room. However, relatives are free to join their loved ones in their room or if they wish to eat in the dining room staff will make the dining experience special for them and serve their meal before or after the normal lunchtime.

### Biggest challenges...

*"The lack of support from the local authority out of office hours. Although this has improved slightly."*

### Biggest success to date...

*"Being able to give residents dignity, love and respect at such a time in the lives."*

## Care Home Best Practice Initiatives

During Enter and View visits, Healthwatch observe which NHS care initiatives have been adopted at the care home. The three we focus on are:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>MUST</b> (Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool) | A tool used to identify adults who are malnourished, at risk of malnutrition(undernutrition), or obesity. It also includes management guidelines which can be used to develop a care plan. |
| <b>Restore2</b> (Recognise Early Soft-signs, Take   | A tool designed to help staff recognise when a resident may be deteriorating or at risk of physical  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Observations,<br>Respond, Escalate)   | deterioration and act appropriately according to their care plan to protect and manage the resident.  |
| <b>RITA</b> (Reminiscence /Rehabilitation & Interactive Therapy Activities) | A digital reminiscence therapy with user-friendly interactive screens and tablets to blend entertainment with therapy. It assists patients (particularly with memory impairments) in recalling and sharing events from their past through listening to music, watching news reports of significant historical events, listening to war-time speeches, playing games and karaoke and watching films. |

The Manager told us that the Home uses the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) to help identify and support residents with the support of visiting dieticians.

Heathercliffe has previously trialled a large interactive table but the residents did not enjoy it and preferred the traditional activities.

## Recommendations

- Consider adopting a resident of the day programme, where all aspects of the home e.g. care, food, activities and maintenance have an input to ensure all needs of the residents are being met in a holistic manner.
- Consider holding friends and family meetings, say quarterly, to give them an opportunity to feedback or raise concerns, separately from the residents' meetings.

## What's working well?

- Clear evidence of a well led home providing compassionate care.
- The offering of day care facilities.
- Excellent links with the local community.

## Service Provider Response

As of 11 December 2025, the Manager had not responded to our recommendations. However, we received the following response explaining why the home may have felt cold during our visit.

*"Windows are open whilst cleaning routines are taking place, coincidentally your tour of our premises clashed with the deep cleaning routines - it is fair to say that no residents were being assisted at that time so it is unlikely their comfort would have been compromised, we will however ensure Heathercliffe stays warm for all."* (Manager)