



Enter and View Woolston House

Semi Announced Visit
21st January 2026



What is Enter and View?

Part of Healthwatch Warrington's remit is to carry out Enter and View visits. Healthwatch Warrington Authorised Representatives will carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families, and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation so that we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand. Healthwatch Warrington's Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Warrington's Safeguarding Policy, the Service Manager will be informed, and the visit will end. The local authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

Details of the Visit

Details of Visit	
Service Address	Woolston House Long Barn Lane, Woolston, Warrington WA1 4QB
Date and Time	21 st January 2026 10:30 – 12:30 PM
Authorised Representatives undertaking the visit	Lisa Fidler Jim Sinnott Norman Holding Dot Holding

Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Warrington would like to thank the Registered Manager, staff and all the residents for their co-operation during our visit.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report is related to findings and observations made during our visit on 21st January 2026. The report does not claim to represent the views of all service users, only those who contributed during the visit.

Who we share the report with

This report and its findings will be shared with the Manager of Woolston House, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Healthwatch England. The report will also be published on the Healthwatch Warrington website.

Healthwatch Warrington's details

Address:

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Healthwatch principles

Healthwatch Warrington's Enter and View programme is linked to the eight principles of Healthwatch, and questions are asked around each one.

- 1. A healthy environment:** Right to live in an environment that promotes positive health and wellbeing.

- 2. Essential Services:** Right to a set of preventative, treatment and care services provided to a high standard to prevent patients reaching crisis.
- 3. Access:** Right to access services on an equal basis with others without fear of discrimination or harassment when I need them in a way that works for me and my family.
- 4. A safe, dignified and quality service:** Right to high quality, safe, confidential services that treat me with dignity, compassion, and respect.
- 5. Information and education:** Right to clear and accurate information that I can use to make decisions about health and care treatment. I want the right to education about how to take care of myself and about what I am entitled to in the health and social care system.
- 6. Choice:** Right to choose from a range of high-quality services, products and providers within health and social care.
- 7. Being listened to:** Right to have my concerns and views listened to and acted upon. I want the right to be supported in taking action if I am not satisfied with the service I have received.
- 8. Being involved:** To be treated as an equal partner in determining my own health and wellbeing. I want the right to be involved in decisions that affect my life and those affecting services in my local community.

Purpose of the visit

The visit was semi announced and was part of the ongoing work programme of Healthwatch Warrington.

Details of the service

Woolston House is a 'care home'. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing and/or personal care as a single package under one contractual agreement dependent on their registration. Woolston House is a care home with

nursing care for adults living with complex mental health needs, dementia, neuro-disabilities and physical disabilities.

Provider Service and Staff

Care home has 40 beds (time of visit 31 were occupied)

Kylie Radcliffe is the home manager (in post 6 months)

Woolston House is part of the Exemplar Health Care group.

The home has a multitude of staff including:

- Home Manager
- Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM) (role vacant at time of visit)
- Unit managers
- Registered Nurses
- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Senior Health Care Assistants
- Health Care Assistants
- Office manager
- Life Skills Co-ordinators
- Maintenance team
- Administrator
- Housekeeper
- Domestic team
- Cooks
- Catering Assistant

Resident Voice



Visitor and staff voice:



Results of the Visit:

First impressions

Signage leading to the home was clear and visible. There is on-site parking available; however, on the day of our visit the car park was very full. This was partly due to staff training sessions taking place on site, which may have impacted capacity. The grounds surrounding the car park and entrance were pleasant, tidy and well maintained.

Entry into the building was secure. The reception area was clean, bright and welcoming. A staff board was displayed, although it was incomplete and missing key members of staff, including the Home Manager. There were a number of good general information boards in the reception area. A monthly activities board was also present, but this was blank at the time of our visit.

Well-led

Authorised Representatives were greeted by the Home Manager, Kylie, who provided an overview of the home and a full walk-round of the facility.

Staff we spoke to reported that there were good opportunities for training and confirmed that a structured programme was in place. During the visit, we observed both new recruit training and additional staff training taking place on site.

Staff told us they enjoyed working in the home and felt well supported by both the on-site management and wider area teams. Staff also reported that they felt comfortable raising concerns with management should they need to.

The home endeavours to use minimal agency or bank staff but when necessary and possible uses the same agency staff members. Agency staff are given an induction. Staff observed during the visit were wearing identification badges. A full-time Physiotherapist is based on site to work directly with residents.

Some residents shared concerns regarding staffing levels at times, particularly due to the number of residents requiring one-to-one care.

Access to Services

Many residents are registered with Holes Lane Surgery for GP services however some remain with their own GP surgery. We were informed that the home is currently experiencing difficulties in accessing enhanced GP support. The home does not have a domiciliary dentist at present; however, some residents attend appointments at the dental surgery, and emergency dental treatment is available through Bridgewater. Podiatry and optician services visit the home on a regular basis.

The home benefits from having a full-time Physiotherapist on site who works directly with residents. Hairdressing services are available as required, generally once a month, and some residents choose to visit external salons or barbers. The on-site salon also offers a range of beauty treatments.

A varied programme of activities is available to residents, and the home has an excellent "You Said, We Did" board which is updated regularly to reflect actions taken from resident feedback. We were informed that the catering team is currently working with residents following requests for a wider selection of lunchtime options.

The home holds monthly resident meetings and quarterly family meetings. The Home Manager has an open-door policy, enabling residents and families to discuss any concerns or suggestions at any time.

Safe

The building was secure with controlled entry and an electronic sign-in system at reception. Internal unit doors were secure and operated via keypad or card-swipe access. Storerooms containing equipment or medicines were locked.

Perimeter fencing around the facility was in good condition. Fire alarm points were visible, and fire zones clearly identified. Rooms observed had alarms and a monitoring system for falls and movement; this system was also being trialled to monitor additional resident activity. Alarms could be heard throughout the building and in all staff areas. Alarm monitors located in corridors were seen being promptly responded to, with events cleared within short timeframes.

All fire doors were secure and operated by push-bar and keypad systems. Access to outdoor areas was safe, with ramp access and a range of soft and hard surfaces. Each unit had its own external area. Smoking shelters were provided and maintained.

Handrails were in place throughout the facility, though those in the dementia units would benefit from being painted in a distinctive colour. There is one lift available, and evac chairs and sledges were accessible for emergencies.

Bathrooms and toilets were adequate, equipped with alarms. Toilet seats across all units were not dementia friendly, as they lacked contrasting colour to aid visibility. Taps were appropriately marked with hot and cold indicators. Toilet doors in corridor areas were painted in distinctive colours. Medication rooms were locked.

Caring

Staff were observed speaking to residents using their preferred names, and there appeared to be warm relationships between residents and staff. Noise levels throughout the home were appropriate. Lounge areas provided quiet spaces, television lounges and activity areas.

Staff were seen taking time to talk with residents and support them to express themselves.

In Paddington and Appleton units (complex care), staff were observed spending meaningful time interacting with residents. The male unit (Paddington) had games, televisions and activities available.

In Walton and Rixton (dementia care), staff were engaging positively with residents, and several staff members were allocated to provide one-to-one support. Large face clocks were visible; however, clocks displaying both day and date would benefit the dementia units, which are being prepared for dementia accreditation. Flooring and décor in these units were neutral.

Responsive

Main corridors featured a variety of tactile surfaces and themed areas, with many pictures and paintings. A well-equipped sensory room was available for residents to relax in.

The home currently has one full-time Activity Co-ordinator, with recruitment underway for a second. A weekly and monthly programme of varied activities is provided.

The home has strong links with local organisations. GP access is available, and some residents remain with their existing GP. Dental, ophthalmic and podiatry services visit regularly. Various styles of comfortable seating were available throughout the home.

Activities provided include:

- Craft classes
- Exercise classes

- Therapy pony visits
- Walks outside
- Attendance at community events
- Regular musical entertainment
- A variety of games
- Days out (including farm visits) — though these can be challenging to arrange, the home does have its own transport
- Film showings
- Therapy sessions
- Quizzes
- An incubator project to hatch and raise chicks

Staff reported that arranging age-appropriate activities for the younger residents can sometimes be difficult.

Hairdressing facilities are available, with a hairdresser attending monthly.

Residents told us there were plenty of activities to participate in. They felt able to speak to staff and management about concerns and noted that they have resident ambassadors who speak on their behalf both locally and at regional company meetings.

Regular meetings are held with staff, residents and families to discuss food, activities, care and any concerns.

Food

Residents spoken to were very happy with the quality, variety and portion sizes of meals provided. Residents are involved in the development of new menus.

Dining areas were clean, bright and tables were set in preparation for lunch. Residents could choose to eat in the dining rooms, lounge areas or in their own rooms.

Menus were displayed in each dining room in both written and pictorial formats. There were three meal choices each day, with alternative options available if preferred. Residents confirmed that if they requested something different, this was accommodated.

At hydration stations, juice jugs were appropriately labelled and dated.

Effective

The home was clean and bright with high ceilings and wide corridors. Outdoor areas included both soft and hard surfaces, with easy access.

Bedrooms observed were spacious, well decorated and bright, each with en-suite bathroom facilities. Residents were encouraged to personalise their rooms. En-suites contained a shower, sink and toilet, with privacy ensured via a door.

Residents' rooms were numbered and doors displayed a mix of names and photographs. Bathrooms off main corridors were large, wheelchair accessible, clean and equipped with hoists and alarms.

There were an extensive monthly programme of activities and an informative noticeboard displayed in reception. Communal areas included lounges of various sizes, offering a range of seating options.

Conclusion

The home provides a warm, welcoming and well-maintained environment where residents generally reported feeling safe, supported and cared for. Staff interactions observed throughout the visit were positive, with staff taking time to speak with residents and encourage engagement. The home offers a varied programme of activities, and residents spoke positively about the opportunities available to them. The "You Said, We Did" board demonstrates the home's commitment to listening to residents and acting on their feedback.

The environment is bright and spacious, with good access to outdoor areas and a range of communal spaces to support resident choice. Relationships between residents, staff and management appeared strong, and the Home Manager's open-door policy has helped promote communication and trust.

Some areas for development were identified, including improving dementia-friendly design features, updating the activities board, and reviewing staffing levels due to the number of residents requiring one-to-one care. However, overall, the home fosters a positive and supportive atmosphere where residents feel valued, involved and part of the community.

Recommendations

Recommendations made from findings

1

We recommend that you display the Healthwatch Warrington poster in the reception area, which will offer an independent choice for the residents or family to feedback.

2	We recommend continuing to review staffing levels, particularly where one-to-one support is required, to ensure adequate cover at all times.
3	We recommend that handrails are painted in dementia units in a contrasting, distinctive colour to aid wayfinding.
4	We recommend installing dementia-friendly toilet seats across all units.
5	We recommend introducing clocks showing both day and date in dementia units.
6	We recommend keeping the monthly activities board updated so it accurately reflects the current programme.
7	We recommend reviewing car-park capacity and visitor parking arrangements to improve access for visitors.
8	We recommend sourcing and planning more age-appropriate activities for younger residents and to consider additional staff training to support this.
9	We recommend keeping the staff board up to date in the reception area.

Provider Comment

Thank you for sharing the report. It is a clear, comprehensive, and very positive account that captures the visit and your observations extremely well. We particularly appreciate the balanced way in which the report reflects the atmosphere of the home and the day-to-day experiences of those who live and work here.

The inclusion of feedback from residents, staff and visitors provides valuable insight and helps to present a well-rounded and authentic picture of the service. It is encouraging to see their voices reflected in the report, as this highlights the relationships, care and support that are central to the home.

We are pleased that the report recognises the welcoming environment and the efforts of the team to provide person-centred care. The observations included accurately reflect the culture within the home and the commitment of staff to maintaining a safe, respectful and supportive setting for residents.

Thank you also for the time you spent with us during your visit. Your approach helped create a relaxed and open atmosphere, which allowed residents and staff to engage comfortably throughout the inspection. We appreciated the opportunity to share our practices and for you to see the service in action.

It was a pleasure to host you, and we are grateful for the professional and constructive nature of the visit. We look forward to continuing to maintain and further develop the high standards highlighted in the report.

In relation to the recommendations, I would also like to provide an update on the actions taken so far:

1. Healthwatch poster is now displayed. We also sent this out to all staff by message.
2. Staffing levels will continue to be reviewed regularly and will also be reassessed whenever a new resident is admitted ensuring appropriate staffing is maintained.
3. Our dementia accreditation is progressing well. Staff are continuing to complete the required training and the relevant resources and materials have been ordered.
4. As above.
5. We have ordered day, date and time digital clocks for the units.
6. We have also ordered four activity boards (one for each unit). These will include both pictorial and written information, displaying activities, dates and times.
7. An email has been sent to Estates to review the parking arrangements. In the meantime, we are able to use the church car park next door during weekdays. This information has been shared with all homes when the training room is in use.
8. Resident meetings have been held to gather residents' wishes and feedback, and we have purchased a number of new games aimed at younger and more able residents.
9. The staff board was being updated, as we have ordered a larger board for reception that will include all departments. In addition, separate "Meet the Team" boards will be displayed on each unit.

I hope this update is helpful.

Kind regards,
Kylie



Committed
to quality

healthwatch
Warrington

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