



## Enter & View Report

Name of service:	Ruskin Lodge Care Home Swinburne Road St Helens WA10 6AW
Date & time:	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 11am
Authorised Representatives:	Kath Inkpen, Rita Chapman
Support team members:	Gail Aspinall
Contact details:	Healthwatch St Helens 0300 111 0007

### Acknowledgements

Healthwatch St Helens would like to thank the staff and guests at Ruskin Lodge Home for their valuable time and hospitality during this visit.

### What is Enter & View?

Part of the local Healthwatch duty is to carry out Enter & View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health & social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices and dental surgeries. Enter & View can happen if people tell us there is a problem with services or, equally, if services have a good reputation so we can learn about them and share good practice from the perspective of the people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter & Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues; however any safeguarding concerns which arise during a visit will be reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If, at any time, an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable with they should tell their lead who will inform the service manager, ending the visit.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

## **About the service**

Ruskin Lodge provides respite to Pilkington's past employees, their families, and the wider community. Welfare support is provided by Pilkington family trust and the welfare team that are based at St Helens Chamber. Other services are subsidised by Pilkington family trust welfare department. Celebrations are scheduled to commemorate Pilkington's two hundred year anniversary this year. Ruskin Lodge was purpose built and celebrates it's thirty fifth anniversary in June this year. The Lodge is owned by the Pilkington family trust and several members of the family work as trustees. It was reported that there is a good relationship between management and trustees. Referrals are from the Pilkington welfare officer and recommendations from the general public.

To engage with residents and staff

- To observe care at the point of delivery
- To identify good working practice
- To identify areas for improvement

This was an announced visit, arranged with the manager a week beforehand.

## **Methods used**

Observations made by the visiting team might be based on instinct and not on something that is visible or measurable.

## **Summary of findings**

Situated on a quiet road in the Dentons Green area of St Helens, Ruskin Lodge has good signage from the road. The outside of the building is well maintained and the grounds are well kept. There is a car park at the front, which had a number of minibuses parked up. The amount of the buses was due to the day centre members. The day centre runs three days a week and there are usually between twenty five to thirty beneficiaries. They are picked up, enjoy fun activities, have lunch and are then taken home in the minibus.

The front external doors are secured via an electric panel near reception. The visiting team were asked to sign in by the receptionist. There was a decorative balloon display in the reception, commemorating the

anniversary of Ruskin Lodge. The reception has lots of natural light due to the vaulted ceiling and skylights. On the foyer walls there are various insurance certificates and a staff board with name, photograph and job title. The whole building was spotlessly clean and there were no unpleasant smells anywhere. The whole of the building was beautifully decorated in the Pilkington corporate colour scheme, promoting a warm and welcoming experience upon entering. The walls were decorated with old black and white photographs of St Helens from yesteryear, which the deputy manager explained often starts conversations. There are quite a few large, impressive artificial plants placed around the building, which promote a feeling of wellbeing. There is a VAC slide mounted on the wall on the landing. There was a suggestion/comments box and a defibrillator in reception.

The manager, Sam, was on leave and so the visiting team were greeted by the deputy manager, Jane Williams who started at Ruskin Lodge twelve years ago, initially as a team leader. She has recently been promoted to deputy manager. Jane informed the visiting team that her mum had a stay here and enjoyed the experience. Jane answered lots of questions and then escorted the visiting team around the building. The lounges are spacious with one of the lounges hardly used. This is a shame because the room was spacious, is beautifully decorated and has a large ornate fireplace.

### **First impressions**

The Lodge overlooks playing fields and gives the impression of a high quality hotel! Ruskin Lodge has two storeys, with bedrooms on both floors. Bedrooms are numbered one to twenty, but has no number thirteen, therefore a total of nineteen bedrooms, all ensuite, complete with wet room. There are three double rooms that can accommodate couples. Beds are either divan or profile beds (for pressure sore issues), depending on the guests' needs. There are seven bathrooms. Guests with dementia usually have bedrooms on the ground floor. Carpeted throughout, the Lodge has a very comfortable feel about it with furniture in good condition, with chair covers a mixture of fabric and wipeable materials. Some rooms have been freshly decorated. Guests usually stay for one or two weeks.

Each bedroom has a plain door with a number. There are no personal effects to individually identify rooms due to the short stay of the guest.

Each guest has their own key to their room with staff having a master key.

### **Staff**

There are currently eight care assistants, two shift leads during the day and two in the evening. There is no nurse on the premises. The care assessor, Phil, assesses the guests needs. All care staff are currently female. There are a number of agency staff used at the moment until completion of the staff restructure. Three agencies are used, one for employing senior staff and the other two for care staff. The deputy manager explained that the quality of staff is admirable from these agencies.

Staff turnover is low with some staff being at Ruskin Lodge for many years, the longest being employed there for twenty nine years. Vacancies are usually created due to retirement. Staff morale was reported to be a bit unsettled at the moment due to the changes that are being implemented. However, the deputy manager explained that there is an open door policy and any queries or worries a staff member may have, the door is always open. Staff have regular supervisions and a yearly appraisal. There are no current schemes such as 'employee of the month'. The Lodge arranges award ceremonies where everyone receives an award and staff are invited to attend away days.

Staff wear uniforms with carers in grey, shift lead workers in navy blue, agency staff in purple and management and admin staff are dressed smart casual. Staff were engaging and clearly enjoy their work.

### **Staff training**

New staff receive a training pack. This is a comprehensive package including information, advice and a training list. Training consists of online 'click learning' as well as inhouse physical training. It is at the discretion of the managers when a member of staff can work on their own. Self-development and training is actively encouraged. There is an inhouse recruitment culture where possible.

### **Recreation & leisure**

There is no activities co-ordinator employed at the moment, but the deputy manager is keen to employ someone in the near future. It was

noted that there were books, games and puzzles dotted throughout the building. The day centre attendees were playing bingo. They looked very happy and they were obviously enjoying what the Lodge offers them. Day trips are common with places visited such as Boundary Mill, Bury market and pub lunches. The day before the visit, the Lodge had a saxophone player entertain the guests, with everyone joining in the fun wearing hats and playing inflatable saxophones! There are no current fund raising events planned but companies do visit the Lodge, selling things such as clothing or books. Visiting times are open and visitors are able to take along well behaved pets. Ruskin Lodge has positive links with the local schools and children attend for concerts etc. It was reported that there is a great relationship between the guests and the children.

### **Smoking Policy**

Ruskin Lodge has a strict no smoking policy. Staff are not allowed to smoke on their shift, even on their breaks. Guests may smoke in the outside smoking area. Staff can supervise guests in the smoking area if necessary. Cigarettes are kept in the guests' rooms, unless they request them to be kept locked away in a drawer.

Alcohol is allowed in the Home, as per risk assessment for each individual. Some guests have medication that would not allow alcohol to be consumed. Non-alcoholic beverages are available to all if there are any celebrations or special events.

### **Food & refreshments**

The dining area was spacious and the tables arranged into two sections. Guests residing at the Lodge dine on the round tables, whilst day centre individuals dine on the oblong tables. This is to simplify mealtimes. All the tables were laid out nicely with a small vase of flowers on each table. Guests are encouraged to eat in the dining area but there is no problem if they wish to dine in their room. Staff are trained to help if an individual needs help feeding themselves. A 'good morning' drink is served at 7am, breakfast between 8am and 10am, lunch is at 12.30pm, dinner at 5pm, supper at 8pm and a 'goodnight drink' served at 10pm. As well as this, snacks and drinks are available throughout the day and at 10am fruit salads and biscuits are served.

There are two cooks and two kitchen assistants during the day and four in the early evening. The menu is devised by the manager and kitchen staff. The menu is rotated on a four week basis. Guests are asked what meals they would like for the day in the morning and if the guest doesn't want the menu option, then an alternative can be provided. All dietary requirements are catered for and cultural evenings are sometimes planned, these, however, receive mixed reviews from the guests. Lunch was being prepared when the visiting team were in the kitchen and the food looked delicious!

### **Privacy & dignity**

All bedrooms are furnished and have a TV provided. Most rooms (unless stipulated, have a telephone). There is an information pack in each room. There is also a safe and a lockable medicines box in each room. Guests can take in personalised items should they wish, to make their stay homely. Some of the guests are regulars and many are friends, co-ordinating their stays at Ruskin Lodge.

The hairdresser visits every Tuesday between 9am-12pm. She is employed by Pilkington family trust. Lily, the receptionist will ask guests on the Tuesday morning who would like a hairdresser appointment and produce a list for the hairdresser, other simple beauty treatments are also available, including manicures. Every hair appointment costs ten pounds regardless of the appointment. A podiatrist also visits. However, no podiatrist is affiliated with the Lodge, but business cards are available upon request. This is a privately paid for service.

Spectacles are usually already marked for identification purposes and guests manage their own dentures, hearing aids etc. They are stored in their room. If a guest needs to go to hospital, a family member is contacted and contingency plans are usually in place for this.

There is a memory tree with heart shaped messages from guests, and some returning guests check that their heart is still on the tree!

### **Hygiene & cleanliness**

At present the carers are responsible for cleaning bedrooms. Rooms are cleaned daily, usually when guests are having breakfast. Rooms are deep cleaned when a guest leaves. There are plans to hopefully recruit two housekeepers in July. There are hand gel sanitisers dotted throughout the building.

Night care staff take on the duty of the laundry as there are no permanent laundry staff employed. There was a lovely clean, fresh smell in the laundry room. Each room has a laundry basket with the room number attached. The laundry is done individually, for example, room one has the laundry collected, washed, dried, ironed and delivered then room two has the laundry collected etc. Due to the short stay of residents, clothing does not need to be labelled for identification purposes. Bedding and large laundry items are collected by a contracted company.

### **Safety & security**

Guests can come and go as they please unless DOLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) legislation is in place. Security cameras are installed in the corridors and cover all external doors. Some of the doors are alarmed, some on magnets and all rooms have sensor alarms. A fire alarm test is done every Friday, with ad hoc fire tests too. All fire safety equipment is serviced yearly. Cleaning equipment is stored in a locked room.

### **Access to care and medical care including the Red Bag Scheme**

The Lodge has a medical room where simple medical checks are undertaken and the medications are kept in a locked cupboard in this room. Medicines are distributed by a shift lead staff member. Ruskin Lodge does use the red bag scheme, which is a system of transporting information to and from hospital. Ruskin Lodge welcomes guests from all over the country. Anyone out of area is temporarily registered with Mill Street Medical Centre and Ashcroft's Pharmacy.

### **Are there any providers who are particularly helpful? If so, who?**

#### **What is it that you find particularly helpful?**

The district nurses are excellent and offer a fantastic service.

Phlebotomists, speech and language therapy team and the occupational therapists deserve to be mentioned as it was reported that one OT took time to show staff how to mobilise guests safely. The GP rota system is also very supportive.

### **Are there any providers you would like to receive support from? How is it they could improve their service offer?**

The deputy manager did not have any comment on this question, as she feels everyone does a good job.

## **Additional Comments**

The Lodge has a little shop which sells sweets and basic personal items such as shampoo, flannels etc. Care plans are recorded on the PCS computerised system. The process is smooth for residents leaving the Lodge to return home. All medications, clothing, DNR (Do not resuscitate) paperwork is packed up the night before.

Ruskin Lodge is very different from any other visit that the Healthwatch St Helens team have attended. A very positive visit and it is obvious that the staff at Ruskin Lodge are constantly aspiring to be the best, bringing in many new plans in the coming months. The visiting team spoke to a few of the guests who loved staying at the Lodge, with one having booked for Christmas! Guests were also very complimentary about their temporary 'home' and it's staff.

## **Recommendations:**

- Consider introducing a number of disabled bays in the car park.
- To continue with the excellent care provided and embrace opportunities to improve the Lodge further.

## **Response from Provider**

'Ruskin Lodge would like to thank Healthwatch St Helens for taking the time to visit our service and produce such a comprehensive and positive report.

We are delighted that the visiting team found Ruskin Lodge to be welcoming, clean, well-maintained and providing a high standard of care and support to our guests. It is particularly pleasing to receive recognition of the dedication and professionalism of our staff team, the positive atmosphere within the Lodge, and the quality of the services and activities available to our guests.

We appreciate the positive comments regarding our relationships with healthcare professionals, our commitment to staff development, the quality of our catering services, and the warm environment we strive to create for everyone who stays with us.

In response to the recommendation regarding disabled parking provision, we will review the current layout and capacity of our car park to assess the feasibility of introducing designated disabled parking bays. We recognise the importance of accessibility and will consider this recommendation as part of our ongoing service improvement plans.

We are grateful for the acknowledgement that Ruskin Lodge continues to seek opportunities to develop and enhance the service. We remain committed to providing safe, person-centred, high-quality respite care and will continue to build upon the strengths identified within the report.

Thank you once again to Healthwatch St Helens for your valuable feedback and for recognising the hard work and commitment of our staff team.'

**Ruskin Lodge Management Team**

## **HwSH will share Enter and View reports, as appropriate, with:**

- The provider
- Healthwatch England
- The Care Quality Commission
- Commissioners
- St Helens Council Quality Monitoring Team
- The public
- St Helens Council Safeguarding team

## **Disclaimer**

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date stated. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experience of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

It is important to note that Healthwatch St Helens approaches Enter & View from the community perspective and its remit is very different from organisations such as the Care Quality Commission and local authority Quality Monitoring Team.

