

Enter&View Report

Willows Care Home

17th June 2026
10am – 12:00pm



DISCLAIMER This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff, visitors and individuals who met members of the Enter & View team on that date.

Contact Details

397 Midgeland Road, Blackpool, FY2 9NS

Person In Charge on day of visit

Maxine Bosley

Jessica Padgett

Healthwatch Blackpool Authorised Representatives

Tom Crowther

Vanessa Lett

Sharon Hird

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackpool would like to thank residents and staff for making us feel welcome during our visit to Willows Care Home.

General Information

- The home is owned by Living Developments Group.
- The home has 26 rooms with en suite facilities and one room being double occupant
- At the time of the visit, there were 26 residents occupying Willows Care Home.
- The latest CQC inspection and review rated this home: Outstanding.
- There is a top up fee for the home.

Announced Visit

What is Enter and View

We have the statutory right to carry out 'Enter and View' visits which allows trained authorised representatives of Healthwatch Blackpool to enter those premises where health and care is provided, to observe the nature and quality of the services. These visits are an opportunity to collect views directly from patients and to observe the environment and the quality of the service provided.

The visit was part of our programme of Enter and View visits to healthcare facilities in Blackpool. The aim of the visit was:

1. To find out about residents' experience of the home in relation to:
 - Daily Life
 - Quality of Care
 - Activities
 - Involvement of Residents
2. To identify examples of good practice
3. To highlight any issues or concerns from residents and any ideas for improvements



Resident Feedback

Healthwatch Blackpool engaged with **5** residents during the visit. It is important to note that residents within the home had varying levels of capacity. Healthwatch representatives had numerous conversations on the day of the visit and below is some feedback directly relating to the home and resident feedback.

Daily Life

Healthwatch Blackpool were informed that daily life at the home was varied and was very much shaped by the resident. Residents are free to choose how they spend their time with meal times being a specific structure. They can choose if they would like to spend time in their rooms or in the communal areas where they can watch television or take part in activities. Maxine and Jessica highlighted resident choice with emphasis on being able to choose their own meals and activities.

Residents spoke positively about daily life at Willows Care Home with the options to choose activities that match their interests like painting and socialising in the lounge. Residents have the flexibility to spend time in their rooms and don't necessarily have to join with activities which highlights daily life at the home can vary according to individual preferences.

"Would like to paint every day-lost knack of painting."

"Brought up to be a loner- I spend time in my room."

"I like it because there is something for everyone here and if you don't want to join in you don't have to."

"I go down to the lounge and we have a laugh."





Quality of Care and Staff Manner

Willows Care Home primarily provides residential care as well as end of life support. They also support residents with dementia and work closely with the district nurses and Trinity Hospice to ensure a holistic approach is provided throughout. At the time of the visit, there were no residents needing 1/1 support from the staff. Maxine told the team that staffing levels are consistent over shift patterns with usually 1 senior and 3 carers across the morning, afternoon and night. There is also an activities coordinator, housekeeping and maintenance staff as well.

Residents were complimentary about their quality of care and staff manner. Staff were described as “lovely,” “really good,” and “heroes.” The care was described as brilliant with no faults to be found. However, one resident highlighted issues with maintenance that had been raised with staff members at the home. Another resident highlighted struggles with the acceptance of living in the care home on a long-term basis.

“Lovely, all lovely.”

“Staff quite good.”

“Okay no choice and I have lived here for a while. Not happy because I’ll be here for a while.”

“Contented with life.”

“Door not a good fit. I can see the light because of the corridor sensors and it wakes me up but I have told the staff. My door also won’t lock and maintenance are aware.”

“They’re really good (the staff). The staff are heroes.”

“The care is brilliant, I can’t fault it.”





Activities

Maxine told the team that there is an activities coordinator who works full time to facilitate the activities at the home. There is scope for them to change and develop based on residents interests, for example bingo is particularly popular at the home. Events such as the World Cup or Pride month can influence the activities with flag making, arts & crafts as well as baking. The home has knit and natter groups as well regular visits from local schools and churches.

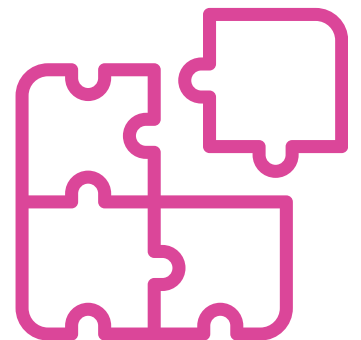
Residents spoke about enjoying activities like painting and craft sessions as well as opportunities to spend time in the garden throughout the summer period. However, one resident said they now struggle with their mobility so it will be important to ensure they can still take part in activities they enjoy.

"I like painting."

"Used to enjoy being out in garden but now can't walk."

"I do take part in the activities, we like to get out in the garden when the weather is good."

"Do craft sessions."



	MORNING			AFTERNOON	
Mon Hairdresser	Knit & Natter	Art/Craft	Lunch	Keep Fit to Music	Singalong
Tue Manicures	Memory Challenge, Quiz, Rebus Puzzles		Lunch	BINGO	Active Games
Wed Manicures	Art/Craft	Table Games	Lunch	Keep Fit to Music	Active Games
Thu Hairdresser	Table Games	Table Games	Lunch	World Cup BINGO	Singalong
Fri	Keep Fit	Table Games	Lunch	Active Games	Active Games Singalong Happy Hour





Food

Meals are provided through the **Apetito menu system**, which is prepared and served by staff using a regeneration oven. The home operates a four-week rolling menu with a strong emphasis on resident choice, ensuring meals can be tailored to individual preferences, dietary requirements and allergies. Residents are offered a variety of options throughout the day, including breakfast, a main meal at lunch and a lighter evening meal with flexibility available. Regular food tasting sessions are also held to introduce new dishes and gather residents' feedback.

Residents were generally positive about the food provided at the care home. Many residents appreciated the variety and choice available, with options offered at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Breakfast was particularly enjoyed, with one resident specifically mentioning porridge as a meal they enjoy. Although some residents described themselves as a “fussy eater” or commented that the food can be reheated, they still felt there was usually something available that they liked.

“Difficult to feed but always find something I like and get choice.”

“I enjoy my breakfast especially porridge.”

“Very military- fresh frozen and warmed up but it is alright.”

“2 choices for mains, 2 choices for puddings but not complaining.”

“Sometimes I can eat the food sometimes I can't. It isn't because it isn't nice, its because im a bit fussy, but there is choice I can have anything for breakfast.”





Resident Involvement

Willows Care Home promote questionnaires every 6 months which gives resident, family members and staff the opportunity to give feedback about the home. On the signing in/out iPad, it gives a chance for general feedback which is then flagged to Maxine. There are regular review meetings with residents giving them opportunities to give verbal feedback. The home promotes an idea called 'Resident of the Day' which allows staff to check in on residents to ensure they are happy and comfortable.

Residents highlighted they feel comfortable sharing feedback with staff as they are "lovely," and "easy enough to talk to." This highlights the open communication present at the home to ensure residents feel listened to and able to express their views.

"Definitely feel I can give feedback- staff are lovely."

"Feedback – staff are easy enough to talk to, they're really good."



Visits, Leave and Contact with Loved ones

The care home is flexible with visiting apart from protected times such as meal times. However, if family members want to visit out of hours, prior arrangements can be made to facilitate this. Residents can also go out with family members and the home arranges trips, for example a coach ride through the Blackpool illuminations which happens annually every December.

Feedback from residents suggests they are able to maintain regular contact with their loved ones and that visiting arrangements are flexible and well supported. Many residents reported frequent visits from family members who visit when they can and are also made to feel very welcome at the home.

"Do usually but gone away this week but they do live local."

"Family made very welcome."

"Daughter comes twice a week and my sister comes every Saturday to do my hair."

"Family visit from Warton Village."

"Visitors – my daughter comes twice a week and I go out to my grandsons on a Saturday."



Safety, Privacy and Wellbeing

Residents generally felt safe, comfortable and satisfied with their living environment. They valued their private spaces with one resident speaking positively about their view of the outdoor spaces. However, another resident did note that they wished their room was slightly larger.

"Love my room- lovely view of garden."

"Just wonderful."

"Could do with a bit bigger room."

"My room here is lovely."

"Oh I feel safe enough."

Oral Health

As part of the 2023–2028 Oral Health Strategy, oral health should be included in every care home's holistic assessment process, ensuring each resident's oral health is assessed and incorporated into their personalised care and support plan. Healthwatch Blackpool ensure that as part of our enter and view visits within care homes, oral health is discussed.

At Willows Care Home, they have an oral health care assessment and review regularly the residents care plan. The home has a oral health champion with staff and residents receiving sessions around the importance of maintaining good oral health care. Some residents have access to NHS dentists with attendance of appointments encouraged by the staff as well as attending the emergency dentist when needed.



Visit summary & observations

Pre visit

The visit to Willows Care Home was prearranged as per the Healthwatch Blackpool work plan. The home was notified via letter ten working days before the visit. The home was asked to display posters and to make residents and families aware of the planned visit. The visit was conducted in line with current infection prevention control measures.



First impressions

Willows Care Home is located on Midgeland Road in a quiet countryside setting but still close to local amenities. The exterior of the building is well maintained, with clear signage and a car park at the front of the home. Visitors enter through the main entrance, where Healthwatch Blackpool were greeted by Maxine, the registered manager and asked to sign in on an iPad.

The home can accommodate 27 residents with 26 rooms with one room being double occupant. Every room is equipped with a wardrobe and desk which includes an en suite and access to the outdoor garden or balcony. Rooms are personalised differently to each residents preferences with options to bring photos and decorate it how they like. The home is owned by the Living Development Group and has a top up fee but offers support when they can by reducing rates to increase accessibility.

The home is arranged with all resident accommodation located on the ground floor, while the upper floor is designated for staff use. An emergency hoist is available within the home; however, it is not currently required.

There is regular training available for the staff at the home with access to E-learning on the "Your Hippo" system. There is a rolling programme of around 20/30 training sessions, for example training around moving and handling. The home found increased training around catheter care was necessary with it becoming more prevalent as well as further education around DNR CPR.



Environment and communal spaces

During the visit, Maxine and Jessica provided a full tour of the home and encouraged residents to speak to the Healthwatch Blackpool representatives. The main communal areas were observed to be very clean, tidy, and well kept.

The home features two communal lounges with access to a television in both as well as comfortable seating. There is a main dining area for residents with access to a snack and drink station as well as print out menus on each table. In the reception area, information packs and leaflets are provided outlining a range of support available in the area. There is a table with multiple photo albums detailing past events and pictures taken at the home. Willows Care Home has access to a large outdoor space with benches, tables and a herb garden that residents can maintain. At the time of the visit, residents were observed in the communal lounges relaxing, watching television or playing a game of dominoes. Some residents were also in their rooms or spending time in the dining area with staff members.

Observations of resident and staff interaction

Healthwatch Blackpool observed staff to be engaging and supportive to residents whether it be in the communal areas or in their rooms. With many of the staff members working there for a long time, it was a clear they had established a positive rapport with the residents. Both staff and residents were very welcoming and hospitable which contributed to a positive atmosphere through the home.

Challenges

Maxine and Jessica highlighted some of the challenges the home has currently been facing. The biggest challenge has been changes to district nursing services, which are now accessed through a central hub. This has reduced continuity and established relationships, with triage processes sometimes causing delays. The Care Home Support Team also no longer provides the same tailored support as their role has broadened across a larger scope. Despite these challenges, the home maintains a good relationship with the local GP and has access to the Rapid Response Team, and there has been no impact on residents.

Overall visit summary

Healthwatch Blackpool had a positive experience visiting Willows Care Home. Maxine, Jessica and the team were very warm and welcoming, and residents were very happy to engage with Healthwatch Blackpool representatives. Comments from residents and observations indicated that residents were pleased with the support they received and expressed positive views regarding the staff, quality of care, safety, and activities available.

Based on the positive experience of the visit and feedback received from residents, Healthwatch Blackpool have identified a few recommendations. It will be important to consider exploring additional ways to enhance both resident and relative experiences such as introducing a wider range of feedback opportunities for families and reviewing environmental factors including corridor lighting to minimise disruption to residents' sleep.

Overall, Willows Care Home has many strengths which are highlighted throughout this report. It will be important to continue building on the positive aspects of the home and maintain the supportive culture that the Healthwatch team observed. Healthwatch Blackpool would like to thank the staff and residents for accommodating the visit and for taking the time to speak with the team.





Recommendations

Observation/Feedback	Management/Provide Response	Action to be undertaken by/when?
Explore ways to reduce the impact of corridor lighting on residents' sleep, such as adjusting sensor settings or considering alternative lighting arrangements, while continuing to promote resident safety.	Thank you for highlighting this feedback. Resident comfort and quality of sleep are important to us. We will review the current corridor lighting and sensor settings with our maintenance team to identify whether adjustments can be made without compromising resident safety.	Review lighting and sensor settings with maintenance team by 31 August 2026. Monitor resident feedback on an ongoing basis and implement any suitable adjustments identified.
Consider introducing additional feedback methods such as monthly check-in emails, suggestion boxes in the main reception or feedback forms/cards to make it easier for relatives to share views.	We welcome this recommendation. The home already provides a QR code poster in the main reception area which enables relatives and visitors to submit feedback and suggestions electronically. This is promoted as part of our commitment to obtaining regular feedback. We will review whether additional methods, such as periodic reminder emails or paper feedback cards, would further encourage engagement from relatives, to complement our existing six-monthly surveys and review meetings. Action	Continue to promote the existing QR code feedback system. Review uptake and consider introducing additional feedback methods if required by September 2026.



Managers Overall Feedback

Were you happy with the Enter and View arrangements prior to the visit?

"Yes. The visit was well organised, with clear communication beforehand. The arrangements were straightforward, allowing staff and residents to prepare appropriately while ensuring the visit remained relaxed and welcoming."

Please use this space to outline any positives aspects of the visit?

"The visit was conducted professionally and respectfully. Representatives engaged positively with residents and staff, allowing everyone the opportunity to share honest feedback. We appreciate the recognition of the caring culture within the home and the many positive comments from residents."

Do you have any comments on staff conduct?

"The representatives were courteous, friendly and professional throughout the visit. They treated residents with dignity and respect and worked collaboratively with the management team."

Please use this space to outline any negative aspects of the visit

"There were no negative aspects of the visit. The process was well managed and constructive."

Is there any way in which Healthwatch Blackpool can improve?

"Overall, we were very satisfied with the visit. Continuing to share examples of good practice from other care homes alongside recommendations may help providers learn from each other and further improve services."