

healthwatch

Cheshire East



Enter and View Report

The Willows

Mobberley, Knutsford

22nd June 2026

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Report Details

Address	The Willows Faulkners Lane Mobberley Knutsford WA16 7AR
Service Provider	Methodist Homes for the Aged
Date of Visit	22 June 2026
Type of Visit	Prior Notice
Representatives	Jodie Hamilton Jem Davies
Date of previous visits by Healthwatch Cheshire East	11 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
- 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.

The Willows Care Home

Short overview

The Willows Care Home is a residential and nursing home, which specialises in dementia and palliative care, whilst also offering short-stay respite care set in the peaceful village of Mobberley near Knutsford. The home is operated by Methodist Homes for the Aged and aims to provide personalised individual care to residents to help them maintain their independence, wellbeing and sense of purpose.

Residents and Relative's feedback

Prior to our visit The Willows Care Home was provided with surveys for both residents and their relatives. We received two resident surveys and two surveys from their relatives. The feedback gathered through these surveys has been used to inform this report.

Findings

Arriving at the care home

Environment

The Willows Care Home is easy to locate, with clear signage from the road. It is purpose built and has recently celebrated its 31st anniversary. The building is in a good condition, well maintained and has a clean and welcoming appearance. There is a small car park available for staff and visitors, with other parking nearby. The reception area is easy to identify and there is an outside shaded seating area with flowers. The home was very secure, requiring entry through an automatic door with a bell system.

Upon entering the care home, the reception area was clean and tidy. Visitors are required to sign in using a paper visitors' book. There was a wide range of information available, including guidance on staff using mobile devices for digital care plans while respecting privacy, details on joining the people's panel, and advice not to visit if experiencing symptoms of illnesses such as flu, COVID-19, or norovirus. Additional information included how to make a complaint or give feedback, activity schedules, dementia support, Carehome.co.uk review cards and local parish council news and events.

Just off the reception area, there is access to the home's chaplain service. As part of its care, The Willows offers a dedicated chaplain who supports residents by carrying out services and taking part in activities within the home. This includes regular church services and helping residents with their emotional, spiritual, and religious needs.

Healthwatch representatives were warmly greeted by care home staff and introduced to the Deputy Manager, and later the Manager, both of whom responded to a series of questions about residents' care, treatment and experience at the home. The responses provided are referenced throughout this report alongside observations made by Healthwatch staff

during a tour of the home which provided us with an opportunity to observe daily life within the care setting.

Treatment and care

Quality of care

When asked about the quality of healthcare services provided at the home the Manager told us they have a very good relationship with Annandale Surgery in Knutsford. The link GP visits every Monday afternoon as a minimum and more frequently if needed. Residents can remain with their existing GP, however, to have access to a visiting GP they must choose to join the linked surgery. The home uses Boots Pharmacy in Macclesfield, however the GP has its own pharmacy which helps out when needed.

The Willows has four intermediate care beds, which help residents who have recently been in hospital in their transition back home.

In respect of hospital care we were told that primarily the home uses Macclesfield Hospital but often have patients from Wythenshaw and Stepping Hill hospitals as well as some further afield. The home described admissions and discharges as mainly positive, however there have been occasions when residents have been discharged without the relevant equipment to support their needs such as continence pads. Should this occur Healthwatch were told that the home will try and quickly source some, but it can be distressing for the resident. They further stated that, whilst it's quite rare, there have been occasions where residents have been discharged with unmet needs in relation to pressure sores and tracheotomy support. To address this staff will go to hospital to carry out an onsite assessment to ensure needs are met and there is a smooth transition of care.

On a more positive note the home is supported by a number of visiting health professionals including speech and language therapists (SALT), diabetes nurses, dieticians, community mental health team, epilepsy

nurses, Parkinsons nurses, physiotherapist, occupational therapists and district nurses. The home has previously struggled with accessing dental care for residents however they have recently made links with a local dentist who has begun to provide treatment. Robert's Opticians regularly attend and provide named glasses for residents who need them. A chiropodist also visits the home every six weeks.

When Healthwatch asked the Manager what we should see during our visit they told us *"caring staff who know the residents well and what their needs are, lots of activities such as music and quizzes and including a religious service, which takes place every Tuesday."*

Residents were asked in the surveys what they felt was the best thing about life at The Willows, the responses received were positive and stated the standard of care, activities and food were the best things. One resident stated *"The Willows is not just a care home – it's a community. That is what the staff have built."*

Relatives were also asked what they felt was the best thing about their loved one's life at The Willows. Their responses highlighted an appreciation for the care provided and praising the staff for being friendly, kind, professional and approachable.

During Healthwatch's visit we observed many residents in the communal area of both sides of the home participating in activities and socialising. All residents appeared well cared for, dressed appropriately, and ready for the day, with good personal hygiene. During the visit, no call bells were heard, suggesting that residents' needs were being attended to promptly.

The home also provides additional facilities, including a salon where a hairdresser visits once a week. Residents can have their hair and nails done, helping to support their wellbeing and independence. The home administrator explained that they aim to make the salon feel more like an enjoyable experience rather than just a service.

Privacy, dignity and respect

All residents who responded to the survey reported feeling well cared for, safe, respected and confirmed they have privacy. Their families stated that they believed their loved ones are cared for and their dignity is maintained.

The Manager told us privacy, dignity and respect are incredibly important within the home, stating all staff are trained in dignity. They explained that several of the residents are neuro diverse and staff are very good at knowing and supporting what is important to each individual. We were told *“what causes them the least stress and anxiety we follow.”*

All the interactions between residents and staff Healthwatch observed during our visit were positive, patient, respectful and friendly. Activities were happening in both communal lounges, with a chaplain service in one lounge and a quiz in the other. Both sessions were well attended, and residents appeared engaged, involved, and enjoying the activities. The chaplain is very present throughout the home and clearly has a good relationship with both residents and their families.

During our visit Healthwatch did not see any personal or confidential information on display.

The manager told us they have numerous resources to support residents making choices such as pictorial menus, large print information and white boards. *“We work closely with The Blind Society to understand how best to support residents.”*

Understanding residents' care plans

It was explained that residents' care plans are digital and are reviewed as a minimum every month and more frequently if required. Residents and their families, alongside staff, GP, health professionals and the chaplain all contribute to the plans. We were told that the home has a 'resident of the day' and this usually focusses on the care plan they also ensure that all aspects of home life are incorporated e.g. catering and maintenance.

Relationships

Interaction with staff

When asked about the relationship between staff and residents, the manager told us *"It is really good, they know the residents very well. It helps that a number of our staff have been here for a long time. We have been recognised nationally by MHA for individual staff and the home as a whole. All these nominations and awards come from residents and their families. Residents see the staff as their friends and it is not uncommon for staff to come in on their day off and take the resident for a walk."*

All the residents and their relatives who completed the Healthwatch survey said they had a good relationship with staff and appreciated how caring they were. We were told that family and friends of residents often comment on how calm the home is whilst still lots going on.

Members of staff who interacted with Healthwatch appeared happy, friendly, and approachable. While being shown around the home, we observed warm and friendly interactions between staff and residents and their visitors.

The manager told us that the home holds Relative meetings every three months; these are held on Teams, as it enables more people to attend and distance is no barrier.

All staff wear name badges and, if appropriate to their role, a uniform.

In respect of agency staff, we were told the home uses them occasionally, usually for holiday cover and it always uses their preferred providers. They tend to be staff who have previously worked there and know the residents. All agency staff are fully briefed about the likes and dislikes of all residents to ensure minimum disruption to them. Training for agency staff is managed via their profiles and maintained by the agencies, ensuring staff are up to date with the required competencies.

Connection with friends and family

In surveys residents told us they keep in touch with family and friends in the main by visits, phone calls and using their tablets, such as iPad. There are no set visiting times at The Willows, however while there are no formal restrictions around meal times, families tend to avoid meals times unless their relative has their meal in their room.

In the event of an infection outbreak, the home contacts Infection Control for advice and follows the guidance provided. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is made available for visitors. It was explained that most visitors would choose to postpone their visit under these circumstances.

The management shared that residents and relatives can raise a concern, make a complaint or provide feedback in several ways and they are encouraged to do so at the earliest opportunity so things can be addressed swiftly. They stated that the chaplain is an excellent advocate for the residents and will ensure their views and opinions are valued and acted upon.

When we asked residents if they knew how to provide feedback, raise a concern or make a complaint, all who responded answered yes and told us they were confident to *“speak with staff or the manager.”*

Relatives told us they were also aware and one confirmed *“I have spoken with the Manager on occasion.”*

These responses suggest that relatives and residents feel well-informed and comfortable in giving feedback when needed, and that there is a strong culture of openness and responsiveness at The Willows.

During our visit Healthwatch observed many family members visiting the home. Some family members also took part in activities, including joining the chaplain service with their loved ones.

Wider Local Community

The Willows has good connections with the local and wider community. Within the home there is a display board that promotes all activities taking place across the area. This includes weekly events such as lunch clubs as well as other activities for example jewellery making workshops and music festivals. The mobile library visits regularly and provides talking newspapers and large print books for residents.

The manager told us they have made some good links with the learning disability team in Congleton. They have arranged visits for some of their staff and clients to the home in order to help with transition of care from their setting to the home.

Everyday Life at the Care Home

Activities

The Willows employs a full-time activity coordinator who works alongside the chaplain to delivering and supporting activities for residents. The manager told Healthwatch *"it's important to understand that activities aren't just about having singers in, it's about filling the resident's day with things they enjoy, be it reading, quizzes, a little walk, holistic therapy. Whatever they enjoy it's our job to know and provide the opportunities for them."*

During the tour of the home, we observed a range of activities taking place across both communal lounges.

The home offers a variety of engaging programmes, including 'Love to Move' sessions, quizzes, cheese and wine tasting, home baking, arm chair exercise, French lessons, board games and themed events such as celebrations for special occasions, including World Cup screenings for which the home has been decorated, Blood Donor Day, and Father's Day.

Residents also enjoy relaxation sessions, music afternoons, and social celebrations.

In addition, the home actively encourages arts and crafts, with residents regularly participating in creative sessions. We observed artwork created by residents displayed on the walls, contributing to a homely and personalised environment. There were also Ladies' Day hats made by residents for Ascot. These hats can also be reused by residents on warmer days while sitting out in the garden.



There are regular opportunities for residents to go out on organised trips. Residents have been taken to places such as Shakerley Mere, cafés, and garden centres, which are all documented on the activity boards around the home. These boards display photographs of residents enjoying outings and activities, creating a positive and engaging atmosphere.

The home is fortunate to have access to a minibus, allowing residents to take part in regular day trips. For those who prefer to stay closer to home, residents can enjoy walks within the home's gardens. Additionally, there is a communal garden located across the road, featuring a scenic pond, wheelchair-accessible pathways, and seating areas for relaxation.

There is a local café nearby where residents can visit with their loved ones and enjoy refreshments in a different setting.

The home is well equipped with diverse and stimulating activities. On the day of the visit, residents appeared to be actively engaged and enjoying the activities available. This is further supported by the presence of multiple activity notice boards throughout the home, ensuring residents are informed.

Person Centred Experience

The manager told us that in order to provide a person-centred experience for residents it is vital that their voice is at the centre of all they do. They stated *“it all starts with the initial assessment, understanding the resident’s history, the basics, what’s important to them.”*

An example of this is they understand some residents like things in a particular way – such as how they start their day, to where they like to sit, to their table laid a particular fashion.

A particularly positive feature observed was a conversation prompt station called “Key to Me”. This consists of several keyring-style prompts designed to encourage meaningful interaction. Staff or visitors can select a keyring, sit with a resident, and use the prompts and questions provided on the cards to encourage conversation, reminiscence, and engagement.



Communal Areas

The home was observed to be clean, tidy, and well maintained, with no unpleasant odours noted. Domestic staff appeared to maintain a high standard of cleanliness throughout.

The corridors were wide enough to accommodate walking aids, and handrails were in place to support residents with mobility. There was also seating positioned in areas along the corridors, providing residents with the opportunity to rest when needed.

The home offers two communal lounges and two dining rooms, along with a variety of smaller areas where residents can spend time quietly, receive



visitors, or enjoy the environment comfortably. This provides residents with flexibility and choice in how they use the space.

The décor throughout the home was attractive and homely, with wall displays that act as conversation starters for residents and staff.

There are communal bathrooms on each floor which are modern and spacious and we were told these are well used by residents.

Residents and their families who completed the Healthwatch survey were positive about the décor, temperature and noise levels within the home.

Residents' bedrooms

Residents' bedrooms were observed to be of a suitable and consistent size, with some rooms being en-suite, including a toilet and bathroom, and a small number also having shower facilities.

During the visit, several bedroom doors were open, allowing us to see that residents had personalised their rooms to reflect their individual preferences and identities. Rooms included personal belongings, artwork, and furniture such as chairs brought from home, which helped to create a familiar and comfortable environment. One residents told us *"I love my room, it is my sanctuary."*



Outdoor areas

The care home offers a number of attractive and well-maintained outdoor spaces, providing residents with opportunities to spend time outside in a pleasant environment.

At the front of the building, there is a courtyard garden featuring flowers in pots and raised planters, creating a welcoming and colourful space for residents to enjoy.

To the rear of one of the communal lounges, there is a garden area that opens onto a local bowling green. The administration manager shared that during the bowling season, residents enjoy sitting outside to watch the games, which provides both relaxation and community engagement.





On the opposite side of the building, there is an additional garden space that has been developed with the support of external organisations, including Barclays and Astra Zeneca, who have contributed through charity work. This area has been designed by a former resident as a peaceful and relaxing space for residents, featuring a beautiful rose bush, seating areas, and both sunny and shaded spots to accommodate residents' preferences. The home view it as a wonderful legacy that the resident has left.

Food and drink

The Willows has its own chef and all meals are prepared from fresh at the home. It was explained that each meal has at least two options and the chef will always accommodate the wishes of the resident should they want something different.

When Healthwatch spoke with the chef they explained how they adapt care during hot weather. For example, they provide plenty of drinks and offer foods such as melon to help residents stay hydrated. On warmer days, they also serve a cold dessert at lunchtime instead of a hot one, showing consideration for residents in warmer weather.

The manager told us they cater for lots of different dietary requirements and have support from visiting health professionals to ensure all the residents' nutritional needs are met.



At the time of our visit the dining rooms were clean, tidy, and well presented. Menus were displayed on the tables, and the dining areas were fully prepared for lunch service. Football-themed decorations were displayed throughout the dining room in preparation for celebrations linked to the World Cup. Each dining room has a small kitchenette area from which meals are served.

Through our survey residents told us that snacks and drinks are available at all times. In the nursing unit of the home there is a 'snack station' for residents to help themselves, whilst in the dementia nursing unit staff will help residents to choose snacks and will offer them throughout the day.



Biggest challenges... The Manager told us that the rural location of the home can provide some challenge in staff recruitment, however they have recently overcome this by purchasing transport and employing drivers to collect staff to provide transport to and from work.

Biggest success to date... The Willows told Healthwatch that they feel their success is due to having long term staff and management. It provides experience and a calmness that exists across the home.

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:

MUST (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.
Restore2 (Recognise Early Soft-signs, Take Observations, Respond, Escalate)	A tool designed to help staff recognise when a resident may be deteriorating or at risk of physical deterioration and act appropriately according to their care plan to protect and manage the resident.

The Willows has engaged with the End of Life Partnership and have a good understanding of how to support residents and their families during this period of their lives.

Recommendations

- There are no Healthwatch recommendations at this time.

What's working well?

- Clean and spacious environment across the building creating a homely feel
- In-house chaplain has excellent relationship with residents and their families
- Good variety of activities and event taking place across the home

- Well maintained and accessible garden looking over countryside and a local bowling green
- Engaged and caring staff – Staff we observed clearly knew the residents well and understood their individual needs. The 'Key to Me' approach works well for staff and visitors.
- Meeting the challenge of a rural setting by providing transport for employees
- Excellent links with a variety of health and support services to meet the needs of the residents

Service Provider Response

The Manager Thanked Healthwatch for the Report on 10/08/2026