

Enter and View the Report

Talbot House

16th April 2025



Healthwatch Staffordshire

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Report on Enter and View Visit Undertaken by Healthwatch Staffordshire on 16th April 2025

Service Visited:

Talbot House Residential Care Home
28 Talbot Street, Rugeley, Staffordshire, WS15 2EG
01889 570527

Authorised Representatives undertaking the visit:

Christine Sherwood & Kelly Moss

Image of Talbot House



Care Home website: www.talbotcarehome.co.uk

The Service:

Talbot House Care Home has a capacity for 22 beds, rather than the registered 25. Currently, some rooms are left empty as renovations are underway, with further plans to add en-suite facilities in three additional rooms, pending planning approval.

The 22 rooms vary in size but are currently designated for single occupancy. Rooms that previously allowed for shared residency are not utilised at full capacity unless they are occupied by couples. As these rooms become available, the home plans to renovate them to better showcase and upgrade the facility. In the future, the home will accommodate a total of twenty residents in single bedrooms without en-suite, along with five larger rooms equipped with en-suite bathrooms.

Opened in 1989, Talbot House is located near Rugeley Town Centre, an area historically known for its coal mines and power station. We are unsure of the property's purpose before the Gupta family purchased it in 2003, but it appears to be a Victorian home, situated close to Brereton. The home is located on Talbot Street, close to the town centre, which hosts various businesses including pharmacies, grocery stores, markets, local cafés, and churches. The home also benefits from nearby public transport links that connect Rugeley to multiple locations, including Stafford, Cannock, and Lichfield, as well as train stations that provide access to Birmingham and London, among other destinations. It is conveniently located near Cannock Chase and major roads like the A51.

The surrounding area features a mix of primarily older buildings with a few new constructions. Talbot House Care Home is situated near local nurseries and schools. Owned and operated by Grov Ltd, this care home was the first acquired by the organisation, which now owns a further six homes primarily located in the North of the UK, providing care to individuals aged 65 and over who require residential assistance and personal support.

The home boasts a warm and homely atmosphere, decorated and furnished to a comfortable standard. The small, unique reception area features a beautiful brown wood three-story staircase and is enhanced by regal blue tones and white paintwork. One lounge has pastel walls, while another is adorned with calming green tones. The comfortable furnishings in the main areas create a welcoming environment with a contemporary and cosy touch.

Purpose of the Visit:

As part of the Healthwatch Staffordshire's responsibilities, authorised representatives will carry out Enter and View visits to health and social care premises to assess how they are managed and to make recommendations for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 empowers authorised representatives to observe service delivery and speak with service users, their families, and carers at locations such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies. Enter and View visits may be conducted based on reports of issues with a service, or to learn about and share examples of services that are performing well. These visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues, but any concerns that arise will be reported in accordance with Healthwatch Staffordshire's safeguarding policy, and the visit will be ended if necessary. The local authority safeguarding team will also be informed.

Methodology:

Was to engage with and speak to:

- The Manager & the Deputy about various aspects related to how the facility is operated, such as the number of staff employed, the number of vacancies, and the recruitment processes. Also, discuss staff training, induction, staff meetings, shift patterns, care planning and reviews, and complaints procedures.
- Engage with residents about their care, do they feel safe, whether they are happy with the care provided, whether there are enough activities & plenty of stimulation, do they feel they have a choice and are listened to. What is their experience of being treated with dignity and respect? Is there plenty of choice regarding food and drink?
- Communicate with available relatives about their satisfaction with the care provided to their relatives or loved ones. Feedback will be obtained during the visit and via the QR code displayed on a poster in the home a week before our visit date, the frequency of communication with staff, and whether the relatives are comfortable in reporting any concerns they may have.

- Interview staff regarding staffing levels, training, management support, and development opportunities.
- Conduct observations of the environment and interactions among residents, staff, managers, and visitors at all levels.

Physical environment:

External

Talbot House is located on a small side street off a main road in Rugeley town, conveniently situated near both Stafford and the borders of Lichfield. The building was purchased in 2003 by Mr. Gupta and has since been updated to provide care home facilities. The home is like a Tardis and over the years, the family has extended the property, creating a spacious dining area, additional downstairs lounges, and more bedroom and bathroom facilities. The building has rooms spread over three floors, with some areas boasting a modern appearance and comfortable furniture, contributing to the homely atmosphere.

The fixtures and fittings in some areas are of high quality, reflecting a commitment to creating a welcoming environment. The building is surrounded by a mix of older homes and is conveniently located near the local town, pubs, and various businesses. A local service regularly visits the home that supports individuals with learning difficulties, which helps to boost a strong sense of community. Additionally, events such as fairs, celebrations, and community invitations enhance engagement and provide enriching experiences for the residents. Many local businesses also contribute by donating to the home, helping to raise funds.

Both the Manager and the Owner are committed to using local services and collaborating with community businesses to enhance residents' quality of life, support the community, and improve overall well-being. At the rear of the building, there is visitor car parking. The building features a new prominent sign that is visible from the main road, with the entrance located at the front.

The front of the building features paved areas, planters, and a ramp for accessibility. At the rear, there is a green lawn area with a mix of

paving, plants, and landscaped borders, all enclosed with a large wooden fence for safety and security. Ample seating is available for residents and families to enjoy the outdoor space.

Internal

To gain access to the building, visitors must use a doorbell system. Upon entering through the front door, you will find a reception area that features a small reception desk. A staff member greets you at the door and provides instructions for signing in. Soft music plays in this area to create a pleasant ambience, and there is a notice board displaying important information, how to submit a compliment or complaint, and a prompt to complete feedback regarding your experience & other information such as fire drill procedures. You will also find a stairwell that leads to the three floors of the building, along with a display showcasing staff qualification achievements, such as NVQ's.

Inside, the reception is a coded internal door that provides access to the ground floor. On the right wall, past this internal door, you will see an image of a tree with inspirational quotes that residents have completed. Ahead of you is a long corridor leading to the bedrooms and bathrooms. To your right, there is a corridor that leads to the Manager's office, which is a large administrative office, and this is opposite a lift. Opposite the office, you'll find two communal toilets, and straight ahead from this corridor is access to the main hub of the home, which includes two lounges, a large kitchen, and a dining area. Adjacent to the dining room is a small medication room and a second stairwell equipped with a stairlift for accessing the opposite side of the building. The main lounge has high ceilings and plaster cornices which overlooks the rear garden, as well as a smaller lounge with a TV. This lounge has a beautiful window that faces the main road at the front of the building. Near the larger lounge is a notice board displaying various activities, including a Healthwatch poster and announcements of our upcoming visit, along with another board with photos of past activities involving residents.

Opposite the office, there is a large notice board showcasing staff images, names, and job titles, along with a smaller corridor wall displaying the 'Staff of the Month' recognitions.

The home consists of three bright, clean, and fresh-looking floors. The corridors feature wipeable flooring, while the stairwells are carpeted and accessible from both ends of the building, one on each side of the front of the building. Access to the stairwells is secured by a PIN code. A lift located opposite the office provides access to the upper floor.

Each floor is adorned with some pictures to aid visualisation and offer that home-from-home feeling of warmth. The corridors are spacious enough to accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility equipment; although they narrow on the upper floors, they can still accommodate essential access equipment. Some residential bedrooms are marked with a name or object that holds meaning for the resident, making it easier for them to recognise their rooms. Blue butterflies and forget-me-nots are used to indicate DOLs (Deprivation of Liberty) and dementia respectively

The lower floor is arranged in an L shape, comprising a dining area and kitchen facilities. At the back of the larger living room, there is an enclosed garden. The smaller lounge features a TV mounted on the wall above the fireplace. On the ground floor, the dining room is furnished with brightly coloured furniture and features a large window that allows plenty of natural light in. The expansive lounge opens onto the back garden and is adjacent to the kitchen. As you continue back along the corridor, you will find individual bedrooms. The upper floor is also organised in an L shape and accommodates additional bedrooms.

In the main lounge area, there is a menu which displays the meals offered at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. This menu follows a rolling four-week rota, ensuring that residents have at least two meal choices for each sitting, each day, along with a warm breakfast daily, mid-morning and afternoon snacks, and unlimited drink options. The meal planner takes residents' preferences into account when planning the meals.

The facility comprises twenty-two rooms spread over three floors, and each room includes a bed and bedroom furniture. Most rooms have the option to wall-mount a TV if desired. Some rooms are larger, providing ample space for additional belongings. Residents are

encouraged to personalise their rooms with personal items to enhance their sense of home. This can include any furnishings they wish to bring, making their space bespoke and unique.










Medication for all residents is administered by trained staff members and is securely stored in a designated medication room, except for topical creams, which can be stored in a locked wall mounted cabinet in a resident's room following a risk assessment.

Residents have the freedom to choose the colour and decoration of their rooms to make them more personal. The ground floor features areas where residents can comfortably meet and socialise. Relatives are also welcome to visit and engage in activities with their loved ones, which we observed multiple times during our visit. The lounges are decorated in pastel colours, creating a calm and relaxed atmosphere. During our visit, we witnessed staff engaging with the residents, including the manager painting residents' nails and evidence of various planned activities.

Image of Talbot House Activity Boards in Main Lounge area

Talbot House Care Home						
Activities Planner						
Month: April						
Year: 2025						
	1 st SEATED CHAIR EXERCISES	2 nd Arts and Crafts	3 rd Pamper Day & Hairdresser	4 th National Walk around things day	5 th One to One	6 th Nail Care Day
7 th Arts and Crafts	8 th SEATED CHAIR EXERCISES	9 th Fun Day/ Games	10 th Pamper Day & Hairdresser	11 th PET DAY	12 th One to One	13 th APRIL 13 NATIONAL SCRABBLE DAY
14 th Fun Day/ Games	15 th Easter Celebrations 11:00-12:00 singer and tea, coffee and cake	16 th Arts and Crafts	17 th Pamper Day & Hairdresser	18 th GOOD FRIDAY	19 th One to One	20 th Easter Sunday
21 st Easter Monday	22 nd SEATED CHAIR EXERCISES	23 rd Fun Day/ Games	24 th Pamper Day & Hairdresser	25 th NATIONAL PENGUIN DAY	26 th One to One	27 th Nail Care Day
28 th Arts and Crafts	29 th SEATED CHAIR EXERCISES	30 th Arts and Crafts	Activities Planner. These activities are planned from feedback from the residents and from the Planning Committee meetings. If there is anything that you would like to add to the activity's planner, please see Sarah or Aggy and they will arrange for this for you.			

.Image of meal choices at Talbot House

Talbot House Care Home								
WEEK 3 MENU								
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	Breakfast	Porridge Selection of Cereals Eggs, Bacon etc. Toast & Preserves or Pancakes	Porridge Selection of Cereals Eggs, Bacon etc. Toast & Preserves or Pancakes	Porridge Selection of Cereals Eggs, Bacon etc. Toast & Preserves or Pancakes	Porridge Selection of Cereals Eggs, Bacon etc. Toast & Preserves or Pancakes	Porridge Selection of Cereals Eggs, Bacon etc. Toast & Preserves or Pancakes	Porridge Selection of Cereals Eggs, Bacon etc. Toast & Preserves or Pancakes	Porridge Selection of Cereals Eggs, Bacon etc. Toast & Preserves or Pancakes
	Optional Extra	Cheese on Toast	Cheese on Toast	Cheese on Toast	Cheese on Toast	Cheese on Toast	Cheese on Toast	Cheese on Toast
	Lunch Option 1	Staffordshire Lobby & Warm Roll	Braised Steak and Mashed Potatoes and Veg	MINCED BEEF HOT POT	Beef Lasagne with Salad & Garlic Bread	Steamed Salmon, Mash, Veg & Parsley Sauce	Beef Stew and Dumplings with Veg	Roast Lamb Dinner with all the Trimming
	Lunch Option 2	Cheese & Onion Pie with Chips & Peas	Fish Pie with Veg	Omelette with a choice of your filling	Chicken Kiev, Chips & Beans or Salad	Sausage, Chips & Beans	Faggots, Chips or Mash and Peas	Prawn Cocktail Salad
	Dessert Option 1	Chocolate Orange Sponge	Chocolate Chip Sponge & Custard	Apple Crumble with Custard or Ice- Cream	Mixed Fruit Sponge with Custard	Toffee Apple Crumble with Ice- Cream	Jam Roly Poly and Custard	Home Made Fresh Fruit Cheese Cake
	Dessert Option 2	Semolina with Sultanas	Blancmange and Cream	Strawberry Gateau	Angel Delight	Chocolate Rice Pudding	Fruit and Cream	Jelly and Ice-Cream
	Dinner/ Tea	Soup of the Day, Sausage & Beans on Toast, Selection of Sandwiches	Soup of the Day, Boiled Egg Salad, Selection of Sandwiches	Soup of the Day, Cheesy Crumpets, Selection of Sandwiches	Soup of the Day, Corned Beef Hash, Selection of Sandwiches	Soup of the Day, Cheesy Oat Cakes, Selection of Sandwiches	Soup of the Day, Cheese & Tomato Omelette, Selection of Sandwiches	Buffet Tea
	Fork Mash/ Easy to Chew	Cheesy Omelette & Baked Beans	Scrambled Egg on Toast & Tomatoes	Soup of the Day	Creamy Mushroom & Mash	Poached fish with Mash & Parsley Sauce	Cheesy Mash & Beans	Macaroni Cheese
	Dessert	Fruit & Cream or Ice-Cream	Yoghurt and Cream	Home Made Cakes	Fruit Scones with Jam & Cream	Home Made Victoria Sponge and Ice- Cream	Arctic Roll	Home-made Cakes
<p>Refreshment Trolleys through the day will include Tea, Coffee, Milkshakes, Juices, Biscuits, Cakes, Crisps, Yogurts, Jelly & Rice pudding pots and Fruit options.</p> <p>Trolley times will be at approximately 10:30 & 14:30 however there is a hydration station in the dining room that has drinks and refreshments available 24-hours a day.</p> <p>Refreshment Trolleys in the evening and night time will include Tea, Coffee, Milkshakes, Hot Chocolate, Horlicks, Juices, Biscuits, Cakes, Crisps, Yogurts, Jelly, and Rice Pudding Pots and Fruit Options.</p> <p>Trolley times will be approximately 19:30 however other drinks will be supplied throughout the evening upon request. There is also the Hydration Station that has drinks and refreshments available 24-hours a day.</p> <p>Cakes are home-made, in house each day. Vegetables (Veg) will generally be seasonal.</p> <p>Soft/ Easy to Chew Diets/ Fortified - These are tailored to the needs of each person or to order (mashed/de-skinned). Residents on these diets can choose from the menu above in the format of Fork Mashed, Soft and Easy to Chew, blended (pureed) or Fortified. We also welcome you to request meals that are not on the menu for that day. Please advise the staff of any food allergies or preferences you may have. Your Cook will be happy to cater for any special requests.</p>								

The facility includes an on-site hairdressing service, although it is currently out of use due to the need for upgrades and renovations. The home arranges mobile services from a chiropodist, optician, and dentist as needed. Each floor features multiple bathrooms: one floor has a bath with a manual chair hoist to assist residents, while another has a spacious wet room designed for ease of use.

The Manager has expressed that the home's primary focus, along with the owner's, is to provide a highly personalised, bespoke service for each resident while promoting their overall well-being. They have assembled a dedicated team to fulfil this mission, emphasising that their motto is to *"always treat residents like you would want your own family members to be treated"*.

The Manager believes that the business owners share the same vision and commitment to ensuring this service is the best it can be in Staffordshire, aiming to elevate the standards of care in the area. Recently, the Manager and team were honoured with an [Award for Leadership in Care](#) in recognition of their outstanding work, and they

take great pride in this achievement. [LIC AWARDS 2024 WINNERS: Innovation in Care Homes, sponsored by Ontex](#)

The Manager mentioned that whenever he requests items for the residents, the owners make every effort to accommodate these needs or make improvements to the home to enhance the residents' experiences. Recently, significant funds have been invested in upgrading floors and painting the interior of the home, with no expenses spared to ensure the comfort and care of the residents.

Management:

Upon arriving at the residential home, we were greeted by the Manager, who showed Healthwatch how to sign in. One of the senior staff members also introduced herself and made us feel welcome, along with several of the residents. The Registered Care Manager has been with the facility since February 2023. He has a background in mental health services and working with the Elderly living with varying types of dementia. He started his career as a care assistant and worked his way up to his current position, having held most roles within a care establishment, including domestic tasks and handyman duties when needed. This gives the Manager insight/empathy and understanding towards each role. He has been in a management role since 2020. The Deputy Care Manager has also been with the home since 2023. The Senior Care worker we met has been at the home for 10 years and has progressed through the ranks during her time.

Currently, the home accommodates twenty residents, sixteen of whom are funded by the local authority, while the remaining four are privately funded. Occasionally, one individual attends the home for respite care. The remaining rooms are currently unoccupied.

The residential home plays a vital role in the local community, maintaining strong connections with a nearby learning disability service that allows its residents to engage in activities with the home's residents. The activity program is primarily managed by the staff, as the Activities Coordinator is currently unavailable. Activities are offered seven days a week, although the schedule is flexible based on the needs of the residents. Options include pamper

sessions, chair exercises, arts and crafts, and time with the Care Home Therapy dog "Teddy", who visits 3 times a week and is hypoallergenic, among other activities. The home also provides a wide selection of books and games, organises events for residents, such as visits from professional singers and day trips to pubs, Costa coffee and more and has a "wish tree," where residents can express a wish that the staff will try to accommodate.

Families are encouraged to participate and support their loved ones, with notice boards displaying the dates and times of upcoming events for easy access.

Talbot House is registered for residential care and can accommodate residents requiring dementia care, respite care, palliative care, and end-of-life care, with support from the District Nurses team and Advanced Health Practitioners. A local GP surgery conducts ward visits on a designated day, alongside the Registered Care Manager.

Complaints are typically addressed by the Registered Care Manager or the Deputy Care Manager, as they maintain an open-door policy. If necessary, the business owner may also get involved. Additionally, there is also a five-hour Administration staff member available to assist individuals. All staff members are encouraged to provide any feedback to the manager.

Staffing:

The residential home employs thirty-two staff members, including the Registered Care Manager, the Deputy Care Manager, and a part-time Administration Assistant. Each care shift has a senior staff member on duty, along with members of the care team who work during the morning and afternoon hours according to the needs of the service and the care being provided. These twenty-nine staff members are distributed across the three floors of the home. During the night, two staff members are on duty, with a Senior Carer, with an additional team member on call if needed. The home operates 24/7 with two different rotas for the care team. Shift lengths vary based on job roles; primarily, care staff work 12-hour shifts, with one post being a shorter 6-hour shift during the day and 12-hour shifts for the night staff.

Breaks are allocated throughout the shifts, lasting either 20 minutes or 40 minutes, depending on the hours worked.

The home has a good recruitment and retention rate, with most staff members staying long-term. Agency staff are never used, as the team works together to cover any shortfalls; the Manager is also known to cover various roles, including night shifts and bank holidays, if needed.

In addition to the care staff, there is one full-time head cook, one part-time cook, and two catering assistants who work on a rota system during core hours—one for 30 hours a week and the other for 20 hours per week. Every meal, including breakfast, snacks, homemade cakes, and pastries, is freshly prepared on-site, with plenty of fresh fruit and other snacks available. Additionally, four housekeeping staff members work during the day, covering all seven days of the week on a rota basis. There is also one activity coordinator who works 16–18 hours per week and one handyman who works 37.5 hours per week.

Each shift includes a senior member of staff who handles any issues and communicates with the on-call manager when necessary. New staff members undergo an in-depth induction program on-site, which includes mandatory training to equip them for their role. They are also expected to complete their Care Certificate if they have not already done so. Staff have access to online training through the IHASCO platform; however, this is going to be switched to another provider soon. A buddy system is used during their induction period to ensure they feel competent when joining the team.

External training opportunities are available in areas such as Manual Handling, Medication Training & Fire Marshal Training. Three residents and one of the relatives are also trained to be fire marshals. There is a six-month probation period for new staff, followed by a one-on-one session every 8 weeks to discuss future progression. Staff also have wellbeing sessions on Fridays with the Manager, and this opportunity is offered to residents and relatives on a Thursday. All staff members either hold Level 2 or Level 3 diplomas or are working towards these qualifications. Also, senior care staff are working to achieve level 5 NVQ if they wish to. The e-learning platform provides training

opportunities on various topics, including continence care, data protection, and whistleblowing

The company recognises staff contributions through incentives such as 'Employee of the Month'. The staff member will receive a gift and a recognition certificate that gets displayed in the Home, there is also a Christmas bonus designed by the Owner to reward employees and show appreciation, a personal note and gift from the Manager is also given. There are pay incentives if staff take on extra shifts, however staff never feel pressured into doing this. Additionally, a "Blue Light Card" offers discount codes for items and goods as another incentive for staff. Staff can also have an on-site meal for £2.00

The Manager organises social gatherings throughout the year, including Easter celebrations, garden and Christmas parties, as well as outings. Families are encouraged to meet with the management team at any time to raise concerns. They are also invited to monthly meetings with residents, which are well-attended. Minutes from these meetings are recorded and displayed in the lounge on the notice board for anyone to read. After this meeting, the Manager holds a staff meeting monthly to disseminate any actions or improvements from the residents' meeting to aid continuity.

The company implements bespoke care plans and can accommodate residents' personal cultural beliefs, if needed. Currently, no residents require this specific service; however, the Manager has reached out to local churches and community organisations to promote inclusivity. The Manager stated that they have supported residents in going to church. The local St. Paul's Church has established a contingency plan to assist the home in the event of an evacuation, offering its facilities should the need arise.

Care plans are documented electronically, with daily activities being recorded during each shift using a handheld device. This device alerts staff to complete specific tasks throughout the day, ensuring that the care plan is followed properly with visual notifications as reminders. This also has an alert to the senior staff members every 24 hours to look at hydration & nutrition. Handovers are conducted at the beginning of each shift for a minimum of 15 minutes to facilitate effective communication and continuity among staff members. These

handovers are recorded on paper and address any urgent matters that need to be communicated.

Talbot House is registered for residential care and benefits from various community services, including District Nurses and Podiatry, which supports end-of-life care. The facility offers a range of services, including dementia care, residential care, palliative care, and end-of-life support. It maintains a strong relationship with a local GP surgery, which conducts monthly rounds with the management team and makes in-person visits. The home benefits from positive collaborations with local pharmacies, and an Advanced Nurse Practitioner visits weekly to support the GP practice.

Staff Feedback:

During our visit, we spoke with five staff members, excluding the Manager, from different departments, most of whom had either worked for 10 years or were approaching that milestone. One staff member expressed, "I love my job." Others mentioned that they "felt fully supported by management and appreciated the open communication environment, stating they could approach management with any concerns". The staff also highlighted the ample training opportunities available, which are funded by the company or offered through free incentives and e-learning. Some staff noted that they completed some of this training in their own time.

Care staff commented that shift coverage is adequate, saying, "There is always a lot to do." One staff member mentioned, "It is nice later in the afternoon when you get a bit of free time to engage with residents and have a sing-along or a chat."

All the staff members we spoke to provided positive feedback about the home. It was described as having a "family culture," a sentiment echoed by residents, family members, and the management team. This was evident during our observations while completing our visit.

Additionally, we observed that all teams, from the kitchen staff to the care team and management, engaged with the residents individually. They demonstrated a caring, kind, and compassionate manner, and

they knew the residents extremely well, discussing their histories, likes, and dislikes.

Resident Experience:

During our visit, we spoke to four residents. A couple of them had been living in the home for several years, one was new and had only been there a few months, and another resident could not recall when they arrived. One resident mentioned that they were involved in their care planning and had it reviewed every few months, if there were no changes, and the family was involved. Another resident did not seem confident in their knowledge of their individual care plan. The other two residents were unable to provide a clear yes or no answer to this question; however, one stated that one vivid memory was the warm welcome they received upon arrival. The Manager had said, "Welcome to your New Home," and the resident felt it had always felt like home. They noted that there were plenty of activities and described the staff as "fantastic, more like sisters and family."

All the residents expressed that they felt safe, content, and happy with the staff, and they stated that the home goes above and beyond to treat residents with dignity and respect, "door rooms are knocked prior to entry" and permission is sought from a resident before any element of personal care or activity is done for the residents. One resident stated that they are "never asked to do anything" for the staff, even if they are short-staffed, and that they have always been able to "choose what they want to do themselves"

None of the residents complained about the food; everyone described it as "great." One resident went so far as to say, "Food is more than excellent," going on to say that they had the opportunity to contribute menu ideas, which the home tries to accommodate as best as possible. They shared their enjoyment of an amazing Spanish omelette and noted that if they didn't like something, they could inform a staff member or the cook, and their feedback would be taken seriously.

One resident remarked on the variety of meal choices available and shared that the cook takes the time to sit down with them to discuss their preferences. We noticed light-hearted banter between the

residents and staff. The cook explained how meals are fortified, and the Manager mentioned that low-sugar meals are prepared for some diabetic residents. Additionally, one resident requires pureed meals and needs assistance, which is documented and accommodated within their care plan. Currently, no resident has specific cultural needs regarding food preparation; however, if any did arise, the home would be willing to accommodate them.

Residents indicated they would reach out to the Manager first, then staff, or family if they had issues or complaints; however, nobody had any negative feedback to share with Healthwatch.

Activities were also discussed during our visit, which we had the chance to observe. Residents talked about an amazing singer who had performed the day before and a pet therapy dog that visits the home. We learned about the [Wish Tree](#), where staff try to fulfil residents' wishes. One resident who loved the theatre had the opportunity to have a performance brought into the facility. Another heartwarming story involved a resident who did administrative tasks and was encouraged by the Manager to continue doing this, despite having an onset of dementia.

When asked what they would change, everyone simply responded with "[nothing](#)." Overall, the residents appeared content and happy with their environment, care, management, and life in general. A couple of residents mentioned that while they were happy living there, they would prefer to be in their own homes.

Many residents appreciated the autonomy they had, feeling heard and empowered to make choices about their décor, furnishings, entertainment, and meals, without feeling pressured to conform to staff decisions. They valued the absence of an institutional atmosphere. One resident took a playful approach to staff members using their mobile phones and was nominated by the Manager as the spokesperson for the residents as well as the "[mobile phone champion](#)."

If the resident noticed a staff member on their phone, they could ask them to put it away and would receive a light-hearted yellow card. If the same resident issued three cards to a staff member, they could

humorously report it to the Manager, jokingly suggesting, "Give them a ball and chain around the ankle," though they were pleased they hadn't had to resort to that yet.

Some residents still ventured out into the community on their own, while others went out with friends and family members. Several residents praised the staff for the activities and trips, stating that "nothing is ever too much trouble." All staff were regarded as "fantastic," and residents expressed gratitude for their work.

Every resident we spoke to had no regrets about moving to the home. They appreciated the sense of safety, the kindness of the staff, companionship, and the variety of activities available. During our visit, we observed plenty of activity within the small home, with families coming and going, residents laughing and smiling, and engaging with both staff and each other in a lounge. Some residents enjoyed watching TV and conversing with each other.

The Registered Care Manager informed us that he works on weekends and bank holidays and is available on-call. Audits on care plans are conducted every 28 days, and each shift has a senior lead available for staff, residents, and families to approach in the absence of management. Residents and staff spoke highly of the Manager, noting many positive changes and improvements across the board since he has been in post, and he clearly demonstrated during our visit how much he knew about his residents and their families.

Residents do not pay any additional fees for activities; the only expenses they incur are for hair care, toiletries, and some healthcare services, such as opticians, dentists and chiropodist visits.

Feedback from Relatives online:

Before Healthwatch visited Talbot House, we asked them to display our poster with a QR code a week in advance so that relatives who were unable to attend on the day could also leave feedback if they wished. However, we never received any feedback. *We asked the following questions, with some regarding demographics, but we have not included those in the report to keep the feedback anonymous.*

The completed survey was done by a relative or friend.

- Do Carers treat you with respect and dignity?
- Have you read and signed the support plan?
- If you were unhappy about your care, could you tell someone and who would you tell?
- Do you think the people who look after you would fix any complaints you had?
- Have your carers helped you stay active/engaged?
- Have your carers helped you stay in contact with friends and Family?
- Do you get to choose your food?
- Do your carers ask your permission before helping you?
- Do you have enough interesting things to do?
- Do your carers give you the information you need to help you make choices?
- Are there always snacks and drinks available when you want them?
- Do you feel safe?
- Do you think there are enough staff?
- Have your carers told you what to do if you feel unsafe or at risk?
 - Is there anything you do not like about your carers?
 - What is your favourite thing about your carers/living here?
 - If you could change one thing about your care, what would it be?

Regrettably, no responses were given, marking a missed opportunity that could have brought valuable insights.

Feedback from Relatives During visit:

On the day of our visit, we spoke with four family members and used the same questions from our online survey. Here are the results:

Family members expressed high praise and satisfaction regarding the home. Most felt they were actively involved in care planning and decision-making and appreciated the regular reviews of care plans. However, one member could not recall participating in a care plan or being aware of the complaint policy.

All family members described how they would approach the Manager with any issues or complaints, feeling confident that these would be addressed promptly and appropriately. They stated that their loved ones were encouraged to participate in activities and mentioned that the [food was good](#), with meals adapted to suit individual preferences. One family member noted that their relative had [gained weight since moving in](#), and they were pleased to find that meals were freshly prepared rather than preheated or processed.

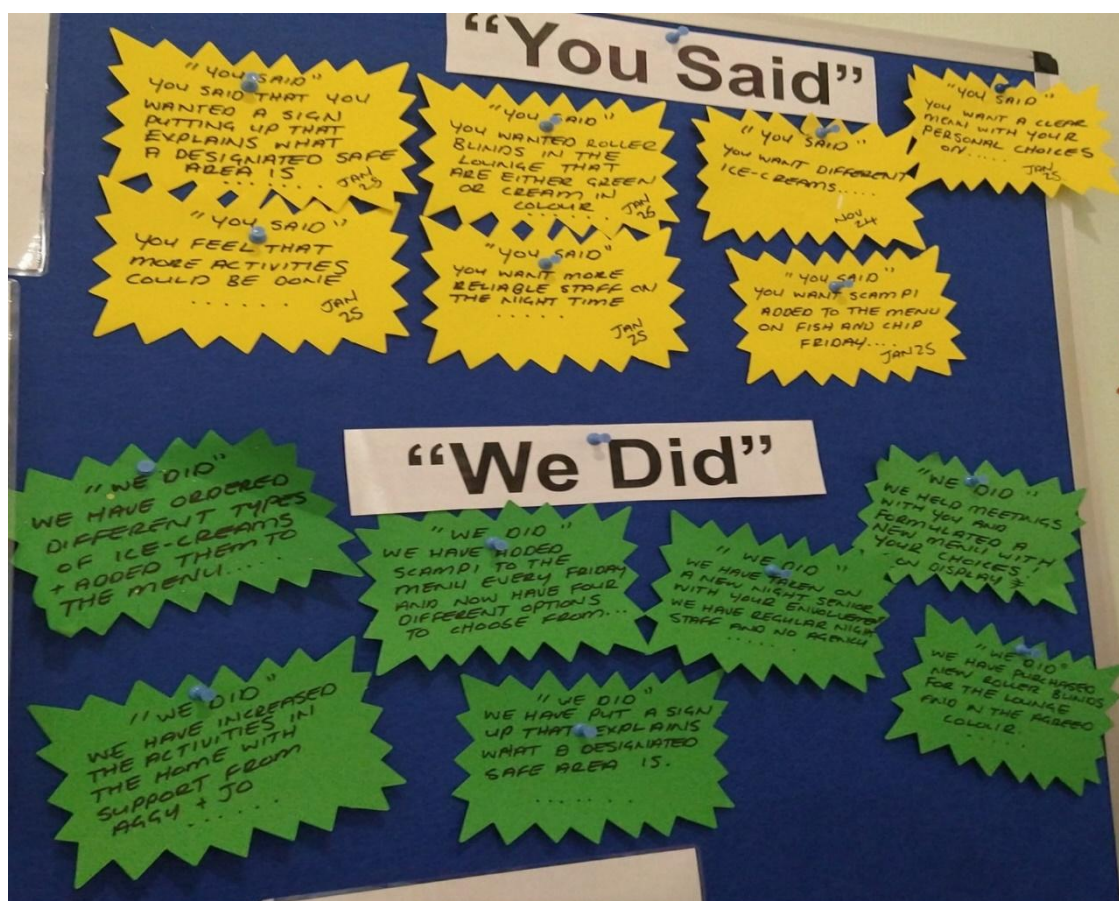
We were informed that staff always ask for permission before entering a room and inquire what support the resident would like, rather than taking action without consultation. Residents are encouraged to do as much for themselves as possible to maintain their independence, which exemplifies person-centred care at its finest.

Families described the management team and staff as ["going above and beyond"](#) and ["always willing to listen."](#) Every family member expressed relief and reassurance that their loved ones were well cared for and safe in this home. Comments such as ["I can sleep at night now"](#) and ["I'm not stressed and have some free time for myself"](#) reflected the trust these families have in the management and the staff. It was refreshing to witness the passion they have for the home and its Manager during our conversations.

Additionally, family members praised the improvements in décor and the overall functioning of the home since Dan, the Manager, took charge. They reported being kept informed through monthly meetings regarding new ideas and changes to the environment. One family member mentioned, ["I will receive an email or call if anything changes with my family member,"](#) which indicates they felt consistently in the loop. Another noted that their relative prefers not to make a fuss on their birthday, so staff congratulate them privately rather than publicly.

When asked what they would change, one family member expressed a desire for an en-suite but mentioned that this concern had been addressed with the provision of a commode. Another noted that activities have recently improved.

"You Said", "We Did" is the home's novel way of noting how resident feedback is at the heart of this home.



Summary:

Talbot House is a cosy facility located within a part-listed building. It has been furnished to a modest but homely standard and is presented internally as bright and clean. Many areas have been refreshed, including some paintwork, new wallpaper, and the replacement of French doors leading to the rear of the property. The furniture in the lounge is in good condition, with clean and comfortable seating. While the overall quality is functional, some areas appear a little tired in places.

The dining area is clean, featuring sturdy tables and chairs with ample space around them. There are no unpleasant odours within the building, and everything is in its place, with no tripping hazards.

However, the grounds at the front of the property need to be tidied up due to uneven slabs, weeds, and dried-up planters. In contrast, the rear garden is neat and accessible.

One of the front windows has a crack in the glass pane, and the wooden windows externally at the front could benefit from some sanding and repainting. Each individual room has a unique character and reflects the personality of its resident. Everything is very well-maintained, and if a resident wishes to bring in their own furniture, this request is accommodated with a fire-retardant spray applied to specific items once placed in the home.

The communal bathrooms are clean and tidy, with several having recently been upgraded and modernised. The environment is comfortable, featuring well-equipped communal areas and attractive furnishings. The standard of personal care is highly regarded by both staff and residents, as well as their families. All residents appear well-groomed and receive individualised care tailored to their specific needs.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards are included in residents' care plans and consistently adhered to. Staff members are aware of who is under DOLs, as a blue butterfly symbolises this designation. Additionally, the home maintains ReSPECT forms in individual files, which are reviewed by a GP every 12 months, or sooner if necessary. For residents with dementia, a purple flower code is used to help staff identify their needs quickly.

The quality of food is also noteworthy, as all meals are freshly prepared on-site, with nothing processed. The home often uses local suppliers and merchants. Residents appreciate the plentiful menu options and choices available. The on-site activities are well-received, encouraging participation from both residents and their family members. "Bingo" seems to be a huge hit.

Every detail has been thoughtfully considered. The home organises a variety of activities and events two months in advance. This allows time to see if family members can participate or if additional staff will need to be brought in for support. The Manager is also known for taking residents out to appointments. Two team members have

business insurance to facilitate this. If family members are unavailable, staff can provide one-on-one time for residents at an additional cost, adding a personal touch to the overall experience.

One example of person-centred support we witnessed was a resident who purchased artwork for their room, which the handyman then hung. Later, we were given a guided tour by the resident to showcase their new piece.

Additionally, the notice board contains information on how to provide feedback and make complaints. Residents receive a welcome pack that also includes information for families on how to raise any concerns.

We must also recognise the consistency and dedication of the housekeeping team. They maintain the daily cleanliness of the home, ensuring all rooms are deep cleaned, and laundry is washed and ironed before being returned to the residents.

Recommendations:

At this stage, we find it challenging to make recommendations regarding the care, as it appears to be exceptional and the true heart of the service, a true credit to all the Staff & management team.

However, we have identified a few areas where improvements could be made:

1. ****Communication with Families****: We recommend ensuring that residents' families understand when care plans are being reviewed.
2. ****Maintenance Issues****:
 - There was a cracked pane of glass in the unused bedroom that we viewed.
 - There was a patch of ripped carpet near the top of the stairs leading to the second floor.

3. **Office Condition**:

- The visitors' chairs in the office looked a little worn, with noticeable marks and stains.
- The office was cluttered with paper folders, which made it appear untidy. You might consider condensing these when time allows, to reduce the risk of a fire hazard from the paper content.

4. **General Building Condition**: Some areas of the building looked a bit tired, with slightly peeling wallpaper corners and chips on doors.

5. **Storage Stability**: There was a small set of storage drawers that appeared unstable due to a joint that had come apart.

6. **Community Engagement**: Reach out to the local school or nursery to encourage engagement. Some facilities conduct reading sessions with younger children and residents.

7. **Volunteer Support**: See if you can recruit a couple of volunteers to assist you.

8. **Lunch Presentation**: Consider using a show plate during lunchtime that presents two food options plated up for residents who may be forgetful; visual aids can sometimes be more helpful.

Overall, we suggest that the [award-winning Talbot House share it's exceptional practices with other facilities](#) to further enhance the relationships formed by the management team, staff, owners, and the local community. Everyone we spoke to, including residents, family members, and staff, appreciates the positive presence and impact this has had, making it a better place to live, visit, and work. We can only assume this is why the home has recommendations by word of mouth from the local community and does not have to advertise when there are room vacancies within the home.

We encourage you to continue striving to be the best care home in Staffordshire.

The management's ethos of avoiding the stigma associated with homes being institutions resonates throughout the facility. A true

testament to everyone involved is reflected in the happiness and faces of your residents. It did not feel like a clinical care home; instead, it embodied a home-like atmosphere, and the camaraderie among everyone was a pleasure to witness. We would like to acknowledge and commend the efforts of all the staff and congratulate them, as this represents what outstanding care should look like.

A quote shared during our visit by a family member:

'Fantastic, can't fault the staff.'

Feedback from the Home Manager or the Company Director.

It was a pleasure to welcome Christine and Kelly to Talbot House. We were very excited to show Health Watch around our lovely home and the residents were very excited to share their experiences with Christine and Kelly. We are all very happy with how the visit was conducted as it was very professional and friendly. We have taken the recommendations that have been made on the day and will work together with the residents and team to implement these recommendations.

We would like to thank Health Watch for their visit and welcome them back at any time!

Kind regards

Dan Feneysey – Home Manager

Healthwatch Staffordshire is thankful to the management, staff, residents, and families for the warmest welcome and hospitality shown to us during our visit.

Next Step

The report will now be published on our website for the general public to read, and copies will be forwarded to Talbot House, shared with Staffordshire County Council & Care Quality Commission (CQC), it will also be added to the next Healthwatch E-Bulletin.

Disclaimer, please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all residents, relatives and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of this visit.