



Eachstep Blackburn, Infirmary Road, Blackburn, BB2 3LP

Enter and View Report

Tuesday 24th June 2025

10.30am

healthwatch

Blackburn with Darwen

DISCLAIMER

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

Contact Details:

Address: Eachstep Blackburn, Infirmary Road, Blackburn, BB2 3LP

Phone: 01254 266480

Website: <https://parkhomesuk.co.uk/care-home/eachstep-blackburn/>

Staff met during our visit:

Stacey Butler (Manager)

Date and time of our visit:

Tuesday 24th June 2025

10:30am

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen Representatives

Liam Kershaw-Calvert (Lead)

Katie Merry (HW Staff)

Liz Butterworth (Volunteer)

Michelle Livesey (Volunteer)

Miebaka Adikibi (Volunteer)



Introduction

This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services and obtain the view of those people using the services. The representatives observe and speak to residents in communal areas only.

This visit was arranged as part of Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen's Enter and View programme. The aim is to observe services, consider how services may be improved and disseminate good practice. The team of trained Enter and View authorised representatives record their observations along with feedback from residents, staff and, where possible, residents' families or friends.

A report is sent to the manager of the facility for validation of the facts. Any response from the manager is included with the final version of the report which is published on the Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen website at www.healthwatchblackburnwithdarwen.co.uk

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to thank Stacey Butler, together with staff, residents, and visitors, for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

General Information

Eachstep is privately owned by Park Homes. The home has a maximum capacity of 64 service users. There were 7 vacancies at the time of our visit, with two pending admissions.

The last CQC rating is Good (2024)

Information obtained from carehome.co.uk states that the home provides care for people from the ages 65 and above of who are affected by old age and dementia.

Methodology

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on Tuesday 24th June 2025.

We spoke to 7 residents, 8 staff and 4 relatives, where possible within the constraints of the home routine, people's willingness, and ability to engage and access to people in public areas. Discussion was structured around four themes (Environment, Care, Nutrition and Activities) designed to gather information concerning residents' overall experience of living at the home.

The team also recorded their own observations of the environment and facilities.

Our role at Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen is to gather the views of service users, especially those who are seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service. It is not our role to censor feedback from respondents.

We use templates to assess the environment of a facility and gather information from respondents, to ensure that reports are compiled in a fair and comparative manner.

Observations were rated on Red, Amber, Green scale as follows:

Green = Based on our observations and the responses gathered we would consider the experience of this home to be good.

Amber = Based on our observations and the responses gathered we consider the experience of this home to be need of some improvements.

Red = Based on our observations and the responses gathered we would consider the experience of this home to need significant improvement.

Summary:

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen made an announced visit to Eachstep Blackburn care home on Tuesday 24th June 2025.

Upon arrival, representatives were welcomed into a clean and comfortable environment. The care team demonstrated professionalism and kindness in their interactions, showing a satisfactory level of attentiveness to residents' needs. Staff expressed feeling supported by management and spoke positively about teamwork and communication, with one staff member stating, "We work as a team" and "we support each other." Training opportunities and flexible working arrangements were highlighted as strengths.

The home features many facilities such as a dedicated cinema room where residents can enjoy films together, a hairdressing salon, a sports area decorated with Blackburn Rovers memorabilia, a reminiscence area and an indoor garden provides a calm and sensory environment, with plants and flowers cared for daily by one of the residents.

While it was difficult to speak to many residents due to advanced dementia, relatives shared positive views about the home and the overall atmosphere. One relative said, "they look after mum so well." Family members expressed satisfaction with the care provided, appreciating the openness of staff and the welcoming environment that encouraged family involvement.

Mealtimes were well managed. The quality and variety of food received praise from several residents, with one stating "Lovely was that, thank you." However, the menu board did not reflect the meal choice the residents had.

The activities coordinator was enthusiastic and offered a range of engaging activities, which residents and relatives appreciated. Many enjoyed social opportunities and the chance to take part in group sessions.

The atmosphere was warm and inclusive, with positive interactions observed between staff, residents, and visitors throughout the visit.

Based on the criteria, the Enter and View Representatives gave the home an overall score of:

Green

Enter and View observations

Pre-visit and location

Eachstep Blackburn is part of the Park Homes and we were able to easily find details about the home.

Prior to our visit we took the opportunity to view the home's website. Representatives observed the website had sufficient information for the home and Park Homes group and even featured the option to chat online with the Managing Director of Park Homes. However representatives found the website to be lacking an individualized touch to Eachstep Blackburn, the focus was more on Park Homes in general rather than the home specifically. The home did have a tab on the website that featured a well-made video which gives a virtual tour of the home. The quote from a relative was also a nice touch.

Before the visit, we contacted the home by telephone to advise them of our visit, and we followed this up with a letter and a poster inviting interested parties to come and speak to us. Our initial contact with the home was very positive. And on arrival, we saw the poster that we sent displayed.

The home, situated on Infirmary Road is signposted clearly and is easy to find.

The location is convenient for local facilities with a shop close by, a community centre as well as local places of worship. Blackburn town centre is minutes away by car and there is a regular bus service on Infirmary Road. The care home is situated approximately one mile from Blackburn town centre, which is convenient for amenities.

Green

The external environment

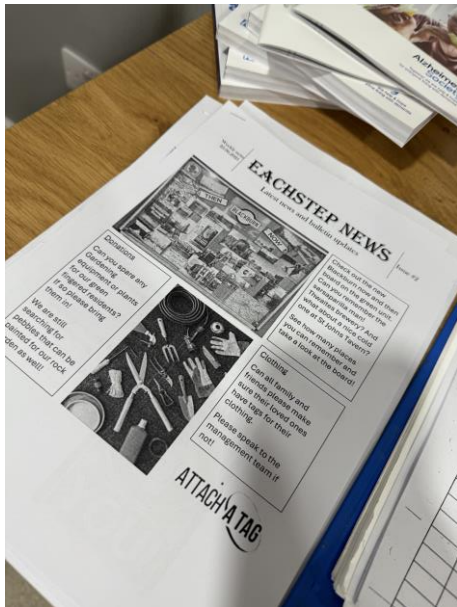
The external environment is a large well used space with grounds featuring a couple of large trees and planting. The grounds are well maintained with shrubs and flowers by the entrance. Representatives later discovered one of the residents tends to the flowers daily.

The home has ample car parking and disabled parking facilities. The main entrance is situated at the bottom of a slight sloped hill but is clear and has a footpath alongside the car park that leads directly to the doors.

Green

The internal environment/reception

We were met by staff before needing to ring the bell, it was very clear the staff were expecting us. The manager was very welcoming and invited us to sign the visitors book.



The reception on arrival was bright, well-lit and welcoming. There was lots of information about the home, leaflets about dementia, “a what’s on” display, a “you said, we did” board and a stack of the “Eachstep News” a weekly newsletter published by the home.



We were informed that the home is split into 3 floors. The ground and middle floor focuses on residential dementia with 16 residents on the ground and 21 on the middle. The top floor is general nursing and

dementia nursing and has 20 residents. Representatives split off into groups to ensure each floor was covered.

Green

The observation of corridors public toilets and bathrooms



The corridors observed were clean, well-lit with bright decorations. Each floor had different activity themed rooms and the corridors matched with that. On the floor by the cinema room, the corridor was decorated with movie posters and film related decorations. The sports area was decorated with Blackburn Rovers theming with framed signed shirts and a large image of the football stadium printed onto the wall. Representatives found this to be a nice touch.



The reminiscence area on one corridor was well done and it was clear that a lot of thought and care had gone into its decoration.

In one corridor, a resident had their bedroom door open and was playing their TV very loud, and other rooms had noise coming from them, it was quite overstimulating, particularly for residents with dementia.

The residents’ doors are all personalised with their names and an image they like e.g. flowers, musical notes,

motorbikes, which makes the rooms stand out in the corridors and gives each room an individuality. The bedrooms observed when walking past open doors appeared to be large, clean and bright.

As the bedrooms are ensuite with a wet room shower, representatives found the number of public toilets and bathrooms sufficient for the number of residents. The bathroom was observed was clean, bright, dementia friendly and spacious, with an adapted bath fitted with a seat.

Green

The lounges, dining area and other public areas

The home offers a variety of creative, themed spaces for residents. These include a cinema located on the first floor, where five residents were observed watching a film during the visit, and an indoor garden situated on the ground floor. At the time of the visit, the sensory room on the top floor was undergoing refurbishment.

The lounge areas were noted to be clean, bright, and benefitting from large windows that provided pleasant views. On the ground floor, the lounge is connected to a dining space and a small kitchen area with a service bar, where juice is readily available for residents. Representatives observed relatives helping themselves to refreshments, indicating that they felt comfortable and at ease within the home.

Seating in the ground floor lounge was arranged informally, with some chairs positioned to face the large windows and others arranged for television viewing. A large, dementia friendly clock displayed the correct time and date. All areas of the ground floor were clean, and the overall atmosphere was calm and welcoming.

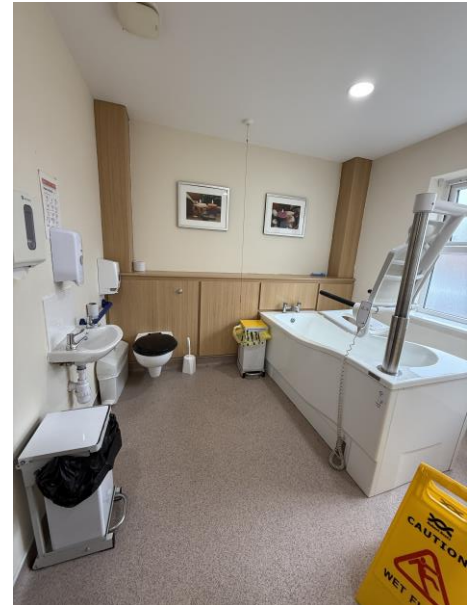
Upon arrival, eight residents were present in the ground floor lounge. One resident was having breakfast, five appeared to be sleeping, and three were spoken to by a representative. Due to the residents' dementia, engagement with the specific questions posed was limited. However, all appeared comfortable, and content based on their responses and presentation.

Green

Observations of resident and staff interactions

Staff and resident interaction were good with staff promptly responding to residents when called. The residents said the staff are good and are happy with the service.

One resident was noted to be particularly quiet sat reading a newspaper. When a representative asked how they were, the resident became vocal about "getting out



of this place.” When asked about their working life, they replied that they “hated work” and did not enjoy anything in their life. Staff were observant. During lunchtime, that particular resident tucked into their meal and appeared to enjoy it.



Another resident was in the garden room at the end of the main corridor, wandering around but quite content. When a representative left the room to go back to the main lounge, the resident followed them. It was clear the staff were aware of the resident’s need to wander. Staff informed the representatives that as the day progresses, that particular resident becomes more in need of support and arrangements are in place for one-to-one supervision. It was good to see that the resident’s individual needs were being met and especially facilitating the freedom to wander as they choose.

A representative met with the activity coordinator who works full time. She works Sunday to Thursday and finds that working a day at the weekend gives her a chance to interact with visitors. She showed representatives the activity room which is an impressive area with facilities for lots of activities. The enthusiasm from her was equally impressive. It was clear she takes a keen interest in all of the residents and tries to tailor activities to suit individual needs. She is very mindful of individuals having the right to join in with activities or not, stating “you get to know what they like and don’t.” The supplies were all neatly stored and labelled on a shelving system, half were in matching containers, while the rest were in a selection of cardboard boxes. The cardboard ones being moved into wipeable matching containers would be better suited to their use.

She explained that some of the residents were in the cinema room watching a film. She is also creating a year scrap book with photographs of events and activities. This includes a recent VE day celebration party.

They have a walking group each week, usually on a Wednesday and weather dependent (representatives noted a poster for this in reception). They have short local walks, for example along the nearby canal where the residents enjoy watching geese. If they are going further afield, they can access a minibus via Dial-a-ride. The walks involve a small number of residents, so the coordinator is mindful that all residents have the opportunity to benefit from her role.



She also takes time to visit residents who prefer to stay in their room weekly if she can.

The coordinator stated that she feels very well supported by management and can approach them for funding for activities and supplies for baking when the home grocery shopping is being done. She explained that residents like to bake and cook, especially baking. They have a slow cooker for making stews as well as an air fryer, mini baker and blender. The activities are risk assessed regarding safety for individuals.

The coordinator takes some of the residents to Ivy Street Community Centre on Mondays, one resident particularly enjoys this and attends with his wife.

A volunteer visits the home regularly with two pet therapy dogs, Buddy and Bonnie. This is enjoyed by nearly all the residents as well as relatives and staff.

The coordinator explained that although there is a timetable for activities, there has to be flexibility in relation to factors such as carers' priorities on the day, residents' choices and the weather if planning an outdoor activity.

Green

The Lunchtime Experience

On this occasion, representatives chose to focus on the experience of residents during the lunchtime. We evaluated the lunchtime as a social experience, the quantity and quality of the food, the interaction between staff and residents and the dignity afforded residents during this period. Due to the home having three floors, we witnessed lunch on two separate floors, representatives split into teams. To ensure the reporting is fair, this section will be split into ground floor lunch and first floor lunch. We were informed that lunchtime began at 12:30pm.

Ground Floor Lunch

The dining area was comprised of four tables, all laid with cloth tablecloths, coloured wipeable placemats, metal cutlery, salt, and pepper. Eight residents were seated here, while a further six chose to eat in the lounge area, where bed tables had been neatly prepared in advance with placemats and cutlery. Most residents were seated by 12:25pm.

Background music was playing on arrival and, while initially loud, some residents were observed singing along or tapping their feet. The television was also on but set to subtitles, and the music was switched off at 1:10pm. The overall atmosphere was calm and quiet, with little conversation between residents.



All residents were offered hand wipes prior to the meal, and staff were observed to be wearing blue aprons and practising good hand hygiene – washing hands and using gel. Orange or blackcurrant squash was served from jugs into plastic glasses, but tea and coffee were not offered during the meal.

A picture menu was displayed clearly in the dining room alongside a more detailed four-week menu plan. On this day, the picture menu indicated meat with salad as the main option, and spaghetti bolognese as the alternative, with sponge and custard for dessert. However, the meals served were either lamb hotpot or chicken with mixed vegetables and mashed potatoes, with gravy offered separately. Desserts offered were rice pudding, strawberry yoghurt, or ice cream. The inconsistency between the displayed and actual menu could cause confusion for residents, staff, and visitors.

The food was cooked on-site by two cooks and served from a heated trolley. A senior staff member



supervised a work experience student in portioning meals. Staff asked residents whether they would prefer lamb or chicken, and in one case, a carer showed a resident both plated meals so they could make a visual choice, which worked well. However, another resident was offered a meal without being shown an alternative, leading to some uncertainty. Special dietary meals were prepared and served first, with gluten-free gravy available.



Three residents required full assistance to eat, staff provided this with patience, though verbal interaction varied. Some residents required prompting, and one was offered a spoon when struggling with a knife and fork. Visitors were

observed assisting their relatives. One resident eating with their fingers was given a spoon without verbal encouragement and continued eating slowly, by 1:05pm a staff member sat next to them to assist.

As residents finished their main course, dessert was offered immediately while plates were being removed, which caused some confusion. Showing dessert choices visually, as with the main course, might be helpful.

Throughout the meal, staff demonstrated good awareness of residents' preferences, and dietary intake was recorded using the MUST tool, with any concerns addressed in review meetings and care planning. All residents enjoyed their food, and most plates were left empty.

Overall, the lunchtime experience was well managed, with notable strengths in table preparation, hygiene practices, and staff attentiveness. Minor improvements could be made in menu accuracy, drink variety, and consistent use of visual prompts for choice.

Green

First Floor Lunch

Lunch was served at 12:50pm. One resident was noted to have been seated in the dining room from 11:55am. She remained alone in her wheelchair for over 40 minutes before the meal began, positioned facing a wall with no interaction or activity. A relative later arrived to assist them with their lunch.

While residents were sat at the table awaiting their food, a bag with a strong odour was carried out of the kitchen area, which meant that ten minutes before the meal began, the dining room had an unpleasant smell.



The menu displayed on the wall was incorrect for the day. The choice offered was chicken or hot pot, each served with vegetables and potatoes. Dessert was rice pudding. The halal meal option consisted of vegetables in a bolognese and chilli sauce, layered with potato and cheese. Meals were personalised for residents who required it, with pureed portions provided for softer diets.

The dining room contained five residents, with two receiving assistance to eat. Eight residents were in the lounge, three of whom required assistance.

Relatives were present in both rooms, helping to feed their loved ones. Staff were also attentive in supporting residents who required help.

Prior to service, residents' hands were wiped with cleaning wipes. Those who required bibs were given them. Portions were generous, and some residents were unable to finish their meal. Residents were offered extras if they wished. One resident declined their meal, and staff set it aside for later. When asked what would happen if they declined another meal, the staff member said they would do a fortified milkshake. Blackcurrant juice was offered as the lunchtime drink, with more juice provided after the meal.

One resident commented regarding what their meal that they "don't get to know till it comes." We observed that residents were shown plated meals on arrival of



the food and could choose between them. Staff walked around with the tray of food, asking if meals was good and offered seconds.

Staff interactions were warm and respectful. One resident who felt too warm in the dining room was moved to the lounge for dessert. Another resident, after finishing their main course, remarked, “Lovely was that, thank you” to which a staff member responded by offering more food. A staff member leaving at the end of their shift took the time to say personal goodbyes to residents, which was appreciated.

Overall, the lunchtime was calm, comfortable, and well organised. Meals were tailored to residents’ needs, assistance was provided appropriately, and staff engagement was positive. Minor improvements could be made in ensuring menu accuracy, maintaining appropriate dining room odour, and providing activities or interaction for residents waiting for extended periods before the meal.

Green

Overall ranking of the lunchtime experience: **Green**

Additional information

One of our representatives noted that during their time on the top floor speaking with residents and staff, there was a constant noise of buzzers and beeps. No one addressed the constant noise which was loud. When the representative asked what the beeps were for, they were told it was a feed for a resident, but nobody appeared to do anything. There was also a resident who was calling out loudly for help from their bedroom. The representative was unaware if any staff dealt with them.

Feedback from residents

Representatives found that the level of dementia made conversations difficult with many residents in the home. However, residents seemed happy and comfortable.

Environment

“My room is lovely. I love it here.”

“Room is okay, but I’d rather be home.”

“Ok.”

Activities

“There are activities if you want to join in.”

“I don’t talk much.”

(Healthwatch Representative observed residents both reading and being read to by staff)

Care

“Staff are really good, but some can be a bit off.”

“Ok”

Food

When speaking about food, a few residents mentioned about wanting to give management a list of meals they would like as they would like more variety. Some residents did not appear to know what food they were having until it arrived.

“Food is same as anything else.” (Would not change it)

“It’s ok, but I’m fussy and don’t eat much.”

“I want my own home.”

Relatives and friends’ views

How do you feel about the service?

“It’s been unsettled when the manager was moved to another home, due to this move, I had to contact the area manager. Luckily, the manager is back now, but I just don’t understand why she went anyway as it caused a lot of uncertainty.”

“I love it here, I feel like my mum has been looked after well and she is happy here. I couldn’t ask for much more really.”

Do you think that you are kept informed about your relative e.g. Health and future care plans?

“Yes, the staff on this floor are wonderful and if the manager has to ask me anything and wants my opinion, she will call me.”

“Oh yes, they are always good at keeping me updated.”

Do you know how to make a complaint if you need to?

“Only my recent experience about having to speak to the area manager but that all got resolved.”

“I don’t know really, I suppose I would speak to staff and the manager if I had any concerns.”

Are you aware of the social activities at the service and do you feel welcomed to join in?

“Yes, they always welcome me to join in, I actually volunteer my time to come and spend time with residents who don’t leave their rooms.”

“Yes, they are really good at doing that, they have a walking group which is really good.”

Would you recommend this service to others?

“Yes, it’s not what it used to be when my Mum came a few years ago, but it’s still nice.”

“Absolutely, it was actually someone at my work who recommended it to me for my Mum.”

Any other comments?

“The staff are lovely.”

“They look after Mum so well.”

“I know she is being cared for and is safe.”

“I would not want her to be moved anywhere else.”

“I can visit when I want.”

Staff views

The staff spoken to appeared to all enjoy their work, stating that the managers are very supportive with an “open door policy.” Staff told us they had a staff meeting the previous day and that they feel they are able to raise anything. Staff stated that they know those to whom they would report any concerns. One staff member explained how she had concerns about a change in a resident’s condition and this was reported to management who dealt with it immediately. They have a staff WhatsApp group to keep everybody updated. Training is done both online and face to face. All staff we spoke with stated that they would recommend the home to family and friends.

Do you have enough staff when on duty to allow you to deliver person centred care?

“For the residents who need it, yes. We have plenty of staff.”

“Erm, I have 3 staff on the floor and myself as a team leader. If I had 4 staff that would work a lot better, I find it hard being able to make sure medicine rounds are complete when I have other tasks to complete.”

“Yes, I think we do.”

“Yes. Some of the residents need one to one care and this happens. We have 7-7 shifts.”

“We cover for one another, 4-day shifts, 4 staff. It’s demanding work and we usually have a set area. I left and came back within a week as I missed working here and everyone so much. We have everything we need to do the job and enough of it.”

How does the organisation support you in your work?

“There’s a lot of involvement with head office, if we want training we know where to get it. I feel very supported.”

“I’ve never really asked for flexible working so I wouldn’t know how that works, I feel like the training could be better, especially for the staff who don’t have nursing background as you can’t learn from online training - it needs to be hands on practical training.”

“Yes, it’s good.”

“Yes definitely. Training was online with Covid but now we have inhouse training and moving and handling is one to one. We have good support, and they are flexible around appointments like Doctors/Dentists.”

“We have flexible working to a point. They usually understand but you have to show proof of your request like doctors. We get training and training updates which is good.”

How do you deliver care to diverse groups?

“We offer options as to what they need but you wouldn’t treat anybody any different.”

“It would be the same, we wouldn’t treat them any different. We are all equal.”

“Treat them as one, treat them all the same.”

“We know all the residents well and what they respond to.”

“You get to know your residents.”

Are you aware of residents’ individual preferences? Where do you find this information?

“You get this in their care plan or just asking their preference and if not just ask their family or social worker. But everything is on PCS (Patient Centre Software) care plan. The staff log everything.”

“They have documents when they come into the home which we read, and we speak to the resident and family members about what they like and don’t like.”

“We have PCS, which is the Patient Centre Software, all the information is on there. I know what the residents like and dislike, you get to know them to the fine details of how much jam they like on their porridge.”

“You know your residents very well and what they like and don’t like. You change your way of dealing with them depending. I know who responds to what and I will find things that each person responds to and is relevant to them like newspaper articles to talk about, singing, football or health research. There are also the care notes to refer to.”

“You talk and be with them and get to know what their likes and dislikes are.”

Would you recommend this care home to a close friend or family.”

“Yes, I have a relative that is a resident.”

“Yes, I would.”

“From what other families tell me about other care homes in the area, I think I would yes.”

“I would recommend it here. It has its ups and downs, but I would recommend over others that I have seen.”

“Yes, I would now. Maybe not a couple of years ago but definitely now, yes.”

Any other comments?

“I come here to work happy and then when I go home, I’m buzzing. I really love being here and working with everybody. Every day is great, and I can help people which is what I want to do and pay back for everything people have done for me and my family.”

“We work as a team.”

“We support each other”

Response from provider

Healthwatch BwD received a response from Eachstep regarding changing the photo used on the front cover of this report. No further comments were given regarding the contents of the report.

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen

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