

Freeland House and Lodge

Enter and View Report



March 2025

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Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to thank all the people we spoke to and heard from, and all staff at the Freeland House and Lodge, Witney for their support and contribution to the Enter and View visit.

1. Visit details

1.1 Details of Visit

Service Address	Freeland House and Lodge Wroslyn Road, Witney OX29 8AH
Service Provider	Minster Care Group
Date and Time	January 14th 2025, 10am to 1pm
Status	Announced
Authorised Representatives	Amier Alagab, Philip Baker, Jaz Kundi
Contact Details	Healthwatch Oxfordshire, Office 1 Cypher House Bampton Business Centre South Weald Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2AN T: 01865 520520

1.2 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 service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

2. What is Enter and View?

As the local Healthwatch for Oxfordshire, we have statutory powers under the Health and Care Act 2012, and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to carry out **‘Enter and View’** visits to local health and care services.

Under this legislation, Enter and View visits can be made to any premises where health and social care is publicly funded – such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

Through an Enter and View visit we collect evidence of what is working well and identify how patient experience could be improved. We use what we hear and see on the day of our visit to report to providers and others with recommendations to inform change for health and care services we visit.

2.1 Purpose of the visit

- To observe how the facility operates and provides its services.
- To collect views from patients, volunteers and staff on services.
- To identify ‘Best Practice’ and highlight any areas of concern.
- To report what we see and hear to improve the quality of health and care services.

2.2 Strategic drivers

- Healthwatch Oxfordshire initiated a series of planned Enter and View visits to care homes in Oxfordshire to assess the quality of life for residents from the perspectives of residents, care staff, and relatives. The visit to Freeland House and Lodge was part of this programme.
- These visits were planned and implemented in 2024 – 2025.

3. Summary of findings

Please note that these findings reflect our observations and the experiences shared by residents and staff during the day of our visit:

Freeland House and Lodge is situated on the outskirts of Witney and on the edge of the Cotswolds, with views of the surrounding countryside.

Signage and information

- Clear directional signage was provided from the main road to the entrance of the care home.
- The lack of signs outside the care home building made identifying the main entrance and reception difficult.
- The main reception area/the lounge of the care home was calm and had a welcoming environment for visitors and residents with tea and coffee freely available.
- The care home had clear visible signage internally, ensuring that residents and visitors could navigate the space with ease.
- There was a 'you said, we did' notice board showing the home's commitment to listening to the views of its residents
- There was a Care Quality Commission (CQC) report on display.
- Information about staff teams and leaders together with details of activities and entertainment on offer for residents was available in multiple locations throughout the care home.
- There was no welcoming sign at the main reception area or at the entrance of the house.
- We did not see any translated materials and information about interpreting service.

The general environment

- We were welcomed by the care home manager and the admin staff.
- We were asked to sign in before entering the care home. A temperature detector was displayed at the entrance for visitors to check before going in.
- The buildings were well maintained, featuring some impressive rooms in the original house, along with newly designed spaces in the Lodge. Additionally, cleanliness was consistently upheld to a high standard in each area.

- We observed residents comfortably enjoying the communal lounges while watching TV, this area provided a warm and inviting space within the care home, fostering opportunities for recreation and social interaction among the residents.
- The bedrooms had en-suite wet rooms and were beautifully decorated to a high standard, enabling residents to enjoy both comfort and tranquillity.
- The care home has placed suggestion boxes in various areas, equipped with paper and pens for residents and visitors to use.
- The steps leading to the main garden were not properly levelled.

Residents and staff feedback

- We spoke to eight members of staff and seven residents on the day of our visit.
- Residents expressed their appreciation for the staff and highly valued the care and support they received.
- Most of the residents we spoke to were unaware of how to lodge complaints, provide feedback or make suggestions. However, they expressed a willingness and ability to communicate with staff when necessary.
- Residents highly valued the efficiency and quality of the laundry service, appreciating the timely way their clothes were laundered.
- Residents generally feel able to raise concerns with the staff team verbally or during their care plan meeting.
- All staff members wear name badges, which is a positive practice that fosters a transparent and person-centred environment within the care home.
- The care home is overseen by a dedicated team of staff committed to providing exceptional person-centred care, working diligently to make this vision a reality.
- All members of the care team we spoke to were foreign nationals with a good command of English.
- The strong staff to resident ratio in the care home reflects superior services, enhancing safety, quality of care, and overall resident satisfaction.
- Staff feel supported in their career development and professional training. Several staff were pursuing further NVQ qualifications to enhance their skills.

4. Recommendations

- Install a clear and prominent sign on the main building directing visitors to Freeland House reception.
- Place a welcome sign at the main entrance to help foster a warm and inviting atmosphere for both visitors and residents, and make the space feel more approachable and friendly.
- Ensure residents are aware of the mechanisms they can use to give feedback and that the residents understand how their feedback is considered.
- The steps leading to the main garden require attention to their levelling to ensure safety and accessibility for all residents and visitors.
- Incorporating additional outdoor activities, to other destinations, would significantly enrich the quality of life for residents in the care home.
- It is recommended that translated materials and information about interpreting services be made available for residents and visitors. This will enhance accessibility and ensure that everyone can fully understand the services provided.

5. Service response to recommendations

Responses received by email on 05.03.25

Good afternoon,

As a management team we are always looking to improve our services and to make peoples stay and experiences with us better. We did not know what Healthwatch was before you visited. At first, we were reluctant because of confidentiality/GDPR rules. However, your visit has enlightened us about other Sectors in the Healthcare Service that are able to support homes in making people's experiences better.

The proposed visit email was a little nerve wracking for us here at Freeland House due to the wording, it did make us a little uneasy to begin with. We are, however, very happy with the overall report.

- **Install a clear and prominent sign on the main building directing visitors to Freeland House Reception.**

Prominent signage will be put in place for the main building helping to foster a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

- **Ensure that residents are aware of the mechanisms they can use to give feedback and that the residents understand how their feedback is considered.**

We regularly invite residents and families in our meetings as well as surveys at Freeland House and the Lodge, we share experiences especially what we have done well and what we could have done better. We share lessons learnt and an open discussion of what can we improve and the action we have done.

- **The steps leading to the main garden require attention to their levelling to ensure safety and accessibility for all residents and visitors.**

Our Maintenance Team have since added new concrete steps out towards the rear gardens for the safety of Residents and Families alike.

- **Incorporating additional outdoor activities, to other destinations, would significantly enrich the quality of life for residents in the care home.**

We regularly organise trips out during the better weather, including trips to Western Super-Mare, Bournemouth and various Garden Centres. We also take those Residents who cannot travel in the work car to the local pub for lunch and to the garden centre here in Freeland. Clients are also taken out with their relatives on a regular basis, again though this is dependent on the weather. We also offer regular weekly trips into Witney Town centre. During the summer months we also

take residents to Bourton on the Water and have various summer themed parties and BBQs in the gardens here.

- **It is recommended that translated materials and information about interpreting services be made available for residents and visitors. This will enhance accessibility and ensure that everyone can fully understand the services provided.**

Each room in Freeland House has a Statement of Purpose, Terms and Conditions of Residence and a Service User Guide in them. We will provide copies in our reception area so that visitors can access them at any time, this will include complaints procedure. We also have the Complaints Procedure on the wall in reception and next to the manager's office.

Thank you to you and your team for visiting us. We are delighted to have shown you our beautiful home. We have always welcomed comments and feedback and ensure that we aim to always improve our services and make people experience better. I am happy that you have witnessed what works well and your recommendation / suggestion will be acted on as soon as we possibly can.

Manager
Freeland House

6. Report:

Methodology

We follow Healthwatch England guidelines for Enter and View visits. The steps below summarise the process:

- **Plan:**
 - Appoint an Enter and View lead for the visit.
- **Communicate:**
 - Inform the provider of the visit, and relevant details including the purpose, date, time, estimation of how long it will take, how many people will be carrying out the visit, and the name of the lead person.
 - Prepare visit posters including the purpose of the visit, time and date, and dispatch these to the provider for display, so that people using the service are clear why the visit is taking place.
 - Include information about how members of the public can contact Healthwatch Oxfordshire if they are not able to when the visit is taking place.
- **Prepare:**
 - Prepare resources such as surveys and questionnaires.
 - Identify any requirements for special support necessary to facilitate the visit such as access or security. This must be done before the visit, as you may be refused entry.
 - Meet with the service provider before the visit.
- **Report:**
 - On completion of the visit a draft report is shared with the service provider requesting comments on factual accuracy and responses to any recommendations within 20 working days.
- **Follow up:**
 - The final report is published on Healthwatch Oxfordshire website and shared with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and service provider.

The visit took place from 10am to 1pm on 14th January 2025, with three authorised and trained Enter and View representatives, including one lay member.

During the visit, the team had the opportunity to observe the daily operations of the care home, assessing the overall environment, including cleanliness, comfort, and information displays. They also engaged in conversations with residents and staff.

Service background

Freeland House and Lodge is part of the Minster Care Group portfolio, with a philosophy centred on promoting excellent physical, mental and emotional health through compassionate care delivered by a team of highly experienced staff.

Freeland house is a big building with a new extension, The Lodge (48 rooms) adjacent to the main building.

On the day of our visit, there were 51 residents in the main building, and not many at The Lodge.

Before entering the care home, we were each required to sign in. The wearing of face masks was optional.

The home provides the following services:

Primary care categories

Dementia, older person care, respite care and younger adults.

Care types provided

Dementia nursing care, dementia residential care, nursing care, for a maximum of 111 service users.

Dementia care types

Mild dementia

Moderate dementia

Advanced/complex dementia

Care Offered

Alzheimer's

Other Care Provided

Own GP if required

Palliative care

Physiotherapy

More details about the care home can be found on their website by following the link below:

<https://minstercaregroup.co.uk/>

Medical support

The care home provides comprehensive support to residents. Nurses and assistants were diligently attending to the residents' needs, administering medication and carrying out other caring duties

There is a GP service twice a week, and dentist as per regular appointment.

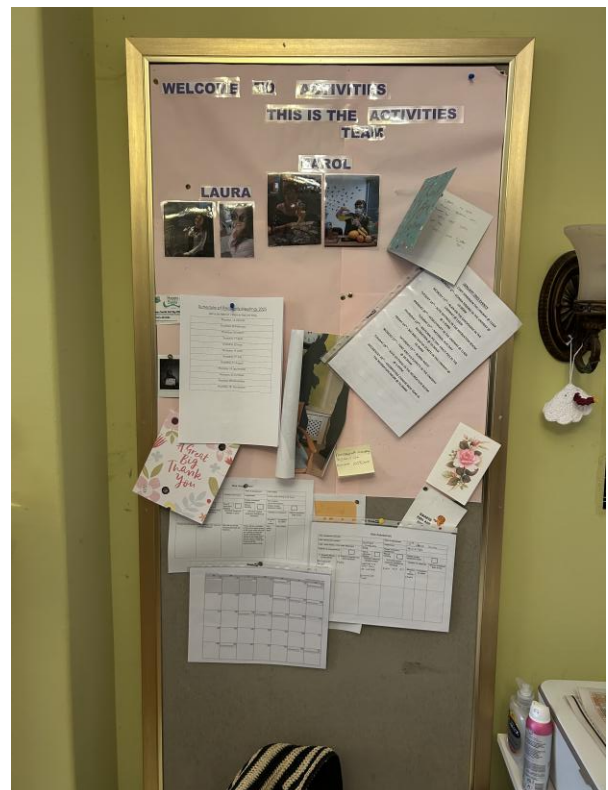
Activities

During our visit to Freeland House and Lodge, groups of residents were gathered in various lounge areas, engaging in indoor activities.

There was a dedicated activity coordinator who facilitated a variety of engaging activities for the residents. These activities included morning coffee and catch-up sessions, where residents could socialise and connect with one another.

The care home has a spacious and beautifully landscaped garden that offers a peaceful environment for residents. Residents can enjoy the garden's natural beauty and admire stunning views from the comfort of their own rooms.

Each room is designed to make the most of the beautiful views, allowing residents to enjoy the calm and beauty of their surroundings, which creates a peaceful atmosphere.



Activity board



The garden



Activities

Mealtimes

During our visit, we had the opportunity to observe lunchtime in the dining room, where a warm and welcoming atmosphere was evident. Many residents were seated together, enjoying their meals in a social and communal environment that encouraged interaction and connection. Meanwhile, other residents opted to have their lunch in the comfort of their own rooms, demonstrating the home's flexibility in catering to individual preferences and needs. The food served appeared to be well-prepared, nutritious, and balanced, supporting the residents' overall health and wellbeing.

The dining room itself was well equipped with good facilities, creating a comfortable and accessible space for residents to enjoy their meals. Additionally, the staff played an active role in ensuring a positive dining experience.



The menu

Staff were attentive and supportive, assisting residents as needed and ensuring that everyone was provided with their meals in a timely and respectful manner. The combination of quality food, a pleasant dining environment, and dedicated staff support highlighted the home's commitment to creating an enjoyable mealtime experience for all residents.



The dining room

Resident movement and safety

Residents are not confined to specific areas and are encouraged to move freely throughout the home. They have the autonomy to explore different parts of the facility, either independently or with the assistance of staff if required. This freedom of movement fosters a sense of independence and choice, allowing residents to feel more at home and less restricted.

Staff members are always available to provide support when needed, whether helping residents navigate the home or accompanying them on walks to ensure their safety. This approach reflects the home's commitment to creating a positive and enabling environment where residents can maintain their independence while feeling supported and secure.

Complaints and communication

The manager proudly highlighted her "open-door policy," emphasising that residents and staff are always welcome to approach her with any questions, concerns or ideas.

By maintaining an open-door approach, the manager cultivates a supportive environment that encourages open dialogue and mutual respect.

During our conversations with residents, many expressed that they felt comfortable approaching staff members or the manager to discuss any concerns or issues they might have. However, it was noted that some residents were not familiar with any formal complaints' procedure. While verbal communication with staff appears to be effective, the lack of awareness regarding an official process for raising complaints may limit residents in escalating concerns in a structured and documented manner if needed.

The environment

The building offers a spacious and thoughtfully designed environment, ensuring comfort and accessibility for residents. The lounge area, stood out with its bright and airy atmosphere, creating a pleasant space for relaxation and socialisation. Resident rooms are generously sized, each featuring ensuite facilities with a shower, providing privacy and convenience for daily living. The cleanliness and organisation of the home were evident, especially in the lounge, which was impeccably maintained and furnished with comfortable seating to enhance residents' comfort.



The lounges

The care home includes a dedicated hairdressing unit, which was being used during our visit. This provides residents with convenient access to grooming services, contributing to their overall wellbeing and selfcare routine. During our visit, we observed the laundry service in full operation. The service appeared well-organised and efficient, ensuring that residents' clothing and linens are properly cleaned and maintained to a high standard.



The hair salon



The room

Information on display

The care home featured a variety of information displayed across key areas in each building, including in its waiting area.

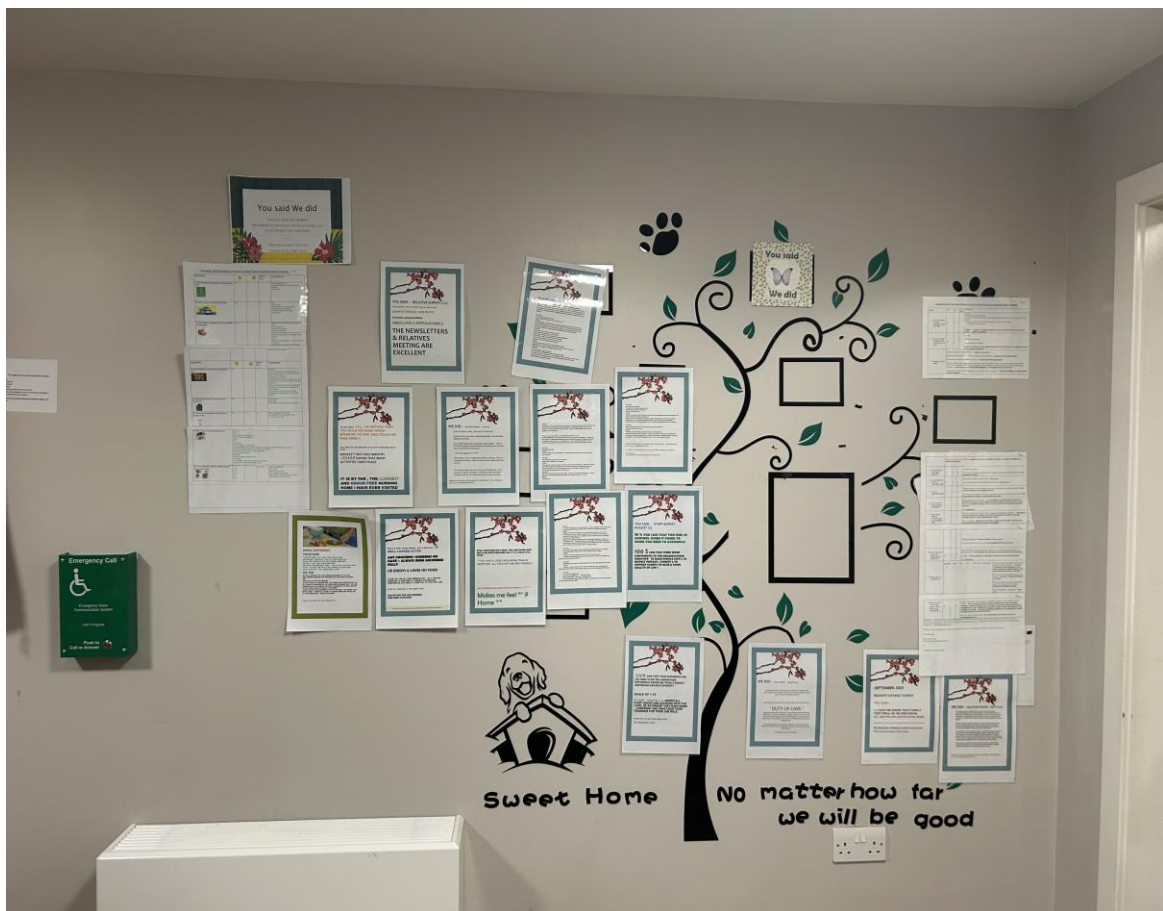
Noticeboards and displays were carefully placed throughout the care home, providing a variety of information. This made it easy for both residents and visitors to access important updates, resources, and notices.



CQC report

At the entrance hall, there was a range of useful information on display. We saw a Care Quality Commission (CQC) report, and carehome.co.uk review 9.5. There was also information for residents, including health and wellbeing.

The care home displayed 'You Said – We Did' noticeboard, highlighting its commitment to actively listening to residents' views and addressing their concerns. This initiative reflects a proactive approach to feedback, ensuring that some residents feel heard and that their suggestions or issues are translated into meaningful actions.



You Said – We Did noticeboard

While no information regarding the complaints process or methods for residents to provide feedback was observed on display, suggestion boxes for residents and family members were available in various locations throughout the care home. These boxes offer an opportunity for individuals to share their thoughts and ideas discreetly.



Suggestion boxes



Staff pictures



Health and safety board

The staff noticeboard currently not including much of information on display, which may limit the ability of staff to stay informed about important updates and resources that could enhance their work and communication within the care home.



Staff information



Residents thank you cards

Residents' feedback

During the visit, we spoke to seven residents to gather valuable feedback and insights about their experiences in the care home. This provided a better understanding of their perspectives and satisfaction levels.

When asked how they felt about living at Freeland House and Lodge residents informed us that:

'Comfortable place, lovely trees, good place for exercising, lovely country site.'

'They have to go long way to find a care home like this.'

'Pleased to be here, very kind people, feel independent.'

Residents told us that staff are:

'Top class, perfect and amazing staff.'

'All staff are friendly and approachable, always chatting and making fun.'

'Very well doing, always asking by my name, all are good, I'm trying to make them lough. Some of them have different accents but day by day I used to and all right.'

'Lovely staff, I'm trying not to disturb them, always trying to depend on myself, tiding up my room.'

'Wonderful staff, proud of them.'

Most, but not all, residents were happy with the food provided and told us:

'Food is really good, but not always getting what I like, they offer an alternative, no special discussion or plan for the required food, but they provide the menu with different varieties, we have to choose.'

'I like the food here in the menu, good choices of meal and sandwiches.'

'I also love fish and chips on Friday, yes some food I'm allergic to.'

'Sometimes getting cold food.'

We heard from some residents about the activities.

'Internal activities every day, I like to walk, play hockey and love the fresh air, not much outdoor activities at the moment.'

'Fantastic activity, I'm doing painting, bingo, not going out as I in wheelchair, doing knitting everyday now I'm making cardigan for one of the staff.'

'Once a week a singer is coming, we all are gathering at the hall.'

'Activities wise, I'm looking towards the arts and craft, plus wood watch and music, painting T shirts, less travel. Nothing really just I want my Christmas tree to put in my room.'

'Many activities – depends what you want to do. I love outdoor activity and playing games, ball but not tennis, I love walking and cycling, I want them to let me go out by bike.'

'I'm always taking part in the activity.'

When asked residents how they would make a complaint, share a comment, or offer a suggestion, residents mostly preferred to talk directly with the staff or manager. However, many residents were unsure about the exact steps for giving feedback and how they could influence decision-making.

When we asked residents about anything they would like to change, they said:

'Residents are happy about the care home and not recommending any changes.'

Staff feedback

On the day of our visit, we received feedback and comments from eight staff members, representing a diverse range of roles within the care home.

The staff members we spoke to held a positive outlook on their work in the care home and truly value their interactions with residents and their families. Their recognition of the significance of these connections and the appreciation they derive from them is truly encouraging.

The management has been actively fostering a learning culture and providing effective induction training for staff.

We heard that all staff members in the care home feel adequately equipped with the essential training necessary to support them in their roles. They have expressed that there are no barriers to accessing training opportunities.

We heard that all staff members in the care home feel they have received the basic required training to support them in their roles, and they mentioned that there are no barriers to training.

We heard from staff that there is a good teamwork and collaborative environment within the care home regardless of what job role is.

The staff in the care home are happy and engaged in their work, and they prioritise providing the best care possible to every resident. This unwavering dedication and commitment are essential for ensuring the wellbeing and satisfaction of the residents.

The current manager is open and welcomes suggestions and feedback from staff, consistently listening to their concerns and taking them seriously. This approachable leadership style promotes a culture of collaboration and trust, ensuring that staff feel valued and heard in their workplace.

Residents and individual needs

We inquired about how staff address the needs of residents, and it was clear that they are well-versed in the principles of person-centered care. This includes being familiar with everyone's care plans, providing options, and assisting residents in achieving their goals. Staff achieve this by getting to know each resident personally, engaging with their families, and through thoughtful care planning.

Staff told us:

'I have a good understanding of the care plans for residents we discuss this with residents' relatives.'

'Ensure the events and activities are very accessible.'

'Casual interaction with residents.'

How do staff promote residents' independence?

Some comments included:

'Individual capacity is assessed personally, and care assistance is offered and withdrawn as required.'

'Care plans is my reference point I support independence as appropriate.'

'I am very close with the family and friends of residents.'

What are the challenges staff raised?

We asked staff to tell us about any frustrations or challenges with their work.

Comments included:

'Working with people with dementia.'

'Some challenges behaviours among residents.'

'Communication with residents is very difficult sometimes.'

'Dealing with emergency care and outbreak of disease.'

What suggestions did staff make?

Staff suggestions included:

- Have a variety of food and a big screen so residents can watch movies together.
- Spending more time in the garden with the residents during better weather.

- To have monthly meetings with just care staff.
- More holidays – more than three weeks.



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To find out more about Healthwatch Oxfordshire please see www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

If you would like a paper copy of this report or would like it in a different format or language, please get in touch with us:



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