

Stobars Hall

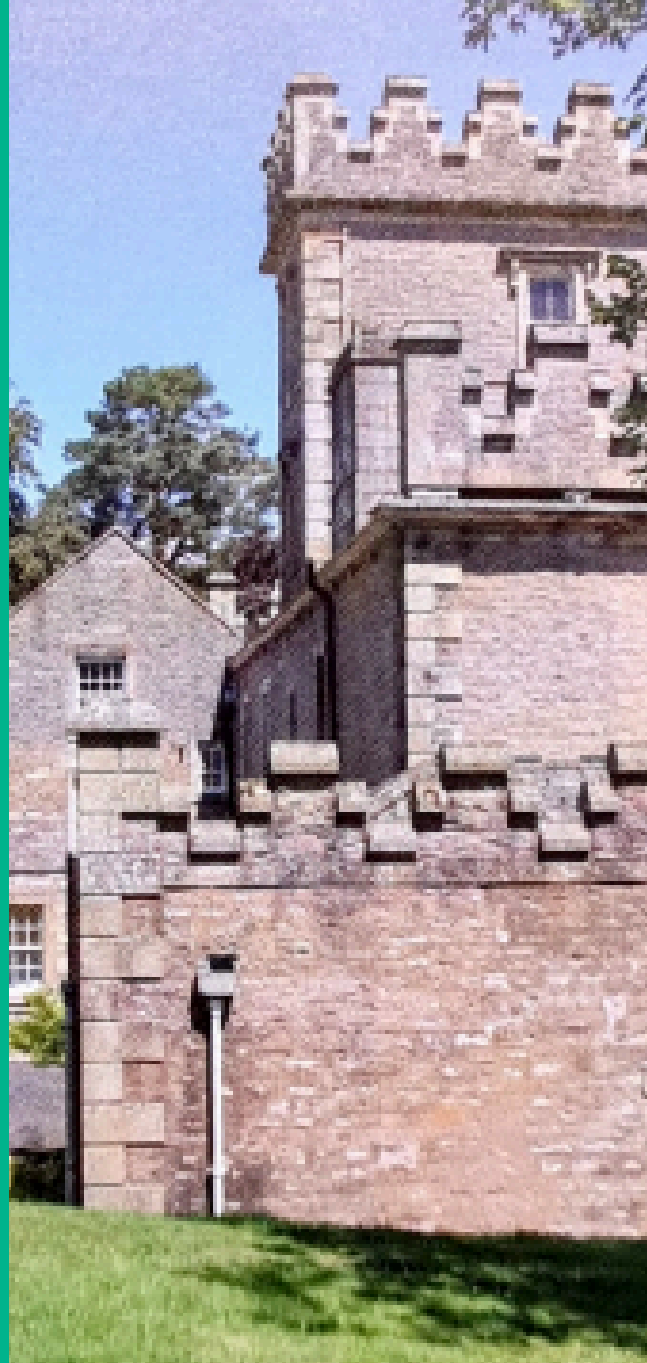
Enter and View Report

Wednesday 15th January, 2025



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Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness would like to thank the service provider, residents and staff for their contribution and hospitality in enabling this E&V project to take place.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed by members of the Enter and View team on this specific visit to the service. It is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed on this date.

Care Quality Commission rating

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected the home in September 2019. The CQC report, published on 14 November 2019 rated Stobars Hall as overall 'good'.

The home was inspected but not rated in January 2021 and February 2022. A review of the data available, undertaken in July 2023, found there was no evidence to reassess the rating.

If you are reading this report online, clicking [here](#) takes you to Stobars Hall's CQC page.

We spoke to...

36

**Residents,
relatives & staff**



People like living at
Stobars Hall...



...and they like the
food



Key points



3 OUT OF 4

Relatives feel informed about
their loved one's care



WHAT WE LIKED ABOUT STOBARS HALL



Person centered
care



Feels like home



Beautiful
grounds

7



Recommendations
were made

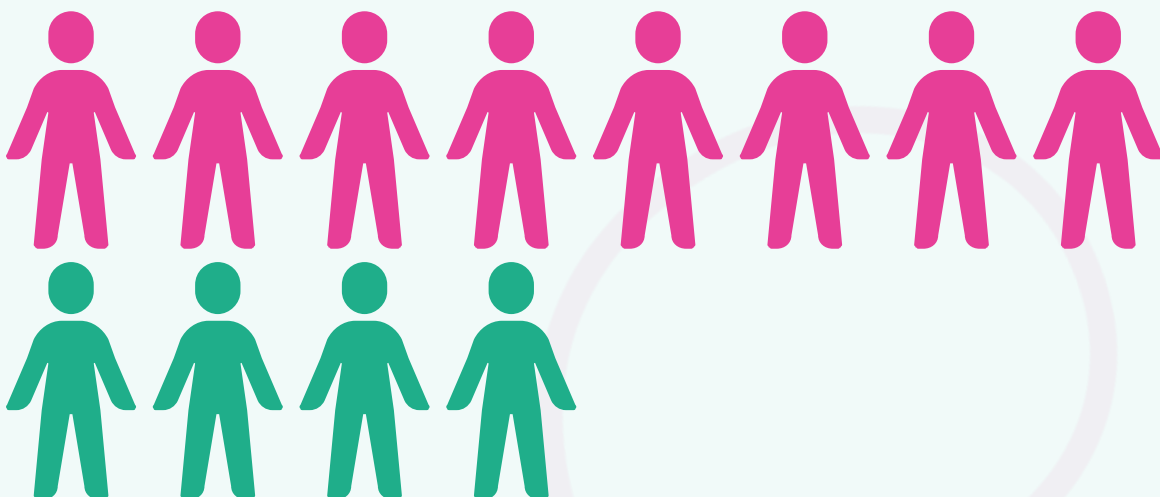
3



Recommendations
have been actioned

8 out of 12

staff say there are enough staff on duty



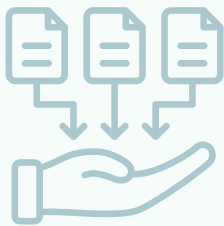


The entrance of Stobars Hall

About us

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness (HWW&F) is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services across the area. We listen to what people tell us about their experiences and share this feedback through reports and briefings with those who commission and run services – all to help make care better and improve health and wellbeing for everyone.

Authorised by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, our main activities are to:



Gather information on the quality of services in Westmorland and Furness, highlighting local issues raised by the public.



Make sure that health and social care providers are held responsible for their actions, and the services they provide.



Promote better, and more joined-up services for people who use health and social care in Westmorland and Furness.



Provide free information and signposting support to help people know about health and social care services and understand the choices available.

What is Enter & View?

As part of our work, we have the power to undertake 'Enter & View' (E&V) visits at health and care services, such as hospitals, care homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, and pharmacies.

Our visit to Stobars Hall was an announced E&V undertaken by representatives who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced.

The aim of an E&V visit is to gather views and experiences of those who use a service, their relatives and the staff, see the service in action and consider its quality. From this our authorised representatives gain an impartial view of how the service is operated and experienced by those in its care. Following a visit we prepare a report which outlines what has worked well, and make recommendations on what could work better.

The report is sent to the manager before being published to give them the opportunity to respond.

All reports are available to view at www.healthwatchwestfurn.co.uk and are also sent to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Healthwatch England, the local authority and NHS Integrated Care Board, and other relevant organisations. Where appropriate, HWW&F may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements.

Safeguarding

E&V visits are not intended specifically to identify safeguarding issues. If safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with safeguarding policies.

If at any time an authorised representative observes anything they feel uncomfortable about they will inform their lead who will inform the Registered Manager, ending the visit.

If any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer, they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

About the visit

Our authorised representatives carried out a visit to Stobars Hall, a residential care home in the market town of Kirkby Stephen, run by the Franklyn Group, on Wednesday 15th January, 2025.

Stobars Hall is a Grade II listed building on the National Heritage List for England, and has 14 acres of gardens and woodland overlooking the Eden Valley. Amenities such as shops and the bus stop are approximately half a mile away, in the town.

The building is a former mansion which can accommodate up to 38 residents in 24 single and 7 couples/companion rooms. At the time of our visit 27 residents were living there.

The following is a summary of the specialisms and services offered by Stobars Hall, as listed on their CQC page:

- Accommodation for people who require nursing or personal care.
- Caring for adults over 65 years.
- Caring for adults under 65 years.
- Those with dementia.
- Learning disabilities.
- Physical disabilities.

Our approach

We took a combined approach (quantitative and qualitative data) and gathered information through questionnaires and interviews (semi-structured and unstructured).

Separate questionnaires were designed for each of the groups (residents, relatives, and staff). Some questionnaires were completed prior to our visit and returned to us by the Registered Manager.

During our visit we spoke with

- Eight people living in the home
- Six members of staff, not including the manager, who provided us with a tour of the premises.

The face-to-face interview questions were the same as the questionnaires, but we were able to gain extra insight about certain aspects related to the interviewees' experience at Stobars Hall.

The interviews were complimented by observations, and were not recorded verbatim (notes were taken instead).

The data from both questionnaires and interviews were analysed and discussed with the HWW&F team, who then compiled a list of recommendations.

The table below shows the number of responses (received from residents, relatives and members of staff), and collection methods.

Questionnaires/ interviews	Residents	Relatives	Staff
Completed before visit	8	4	10
Completed during visit (with semi- structured interviews)	2	0	2
Unstructured interviews	6	0	4

Observations

In this section we summarise our observations from the visit, including excerpts of the conversation with the Registered Manager.

Location and external environment

Stobars Hall is set in beautiful surroundings and enjoys pleasant views. External areas are well maintained and available to all at the home.



Part of the outdoor area

Residents can sit outside and relax, watch birds (including parrots), squirrels, deer and other wildlife, or walk around the grounds.

The benefits of time spent outdoors have been proven to have a positive impact on individuals' physical and mental health, including those living with dementia. Stobars Hall's management team are actively looking into using their outside spaces as a shared space for the benefit of the community.

The home is not signposted from the road or entrance. On arrival it was observed that car parking spaces are limited. **(See recommendations.)**

We did not see any disabled parking spaces. **(See recommendations.)**

However, it was clear where visitors should report to, and the entrance to the home was secure: the front door was locked, and on ringing the bell the door was opened by a member of staff who asked for our IDs.

We were also required to sign the visitors' book on arrival and departure.



View of outdoor area

Internal environment

We were made to feel welcome by everyone we met during our visit. In general, the atmosphere was homely and positive.

Notices and information were up to date, including the Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness poster about our visit.

However, although members of staff's names and photographs were displayed in the entrance way, we noticed that staff were not identifiable through, for example, lanyards or badges. The members of staff with whom we spoke were identifiable only by job title. **(See recommendations.)**

Corridors, toilets and bathrooms

Communal areas were uncluttered and pleasant, with ample space for wheelchairs to manoeuvre.

Uneven surface warning signs were displayed in the necessary areas, and emergency evacuation sledges were in place.

One member of our team almost fell due to an uneven surface and, in our view, the signage needs to be made larger and more noticeable.

We noted that the carpet appeared worn from use in places. The home has two lifts and a stairlift (because one lift does not work). **(See recommendations.)**



Scuff marks on wall



Part of the stairlift



Worn out carpet



'Uneven floor' sign

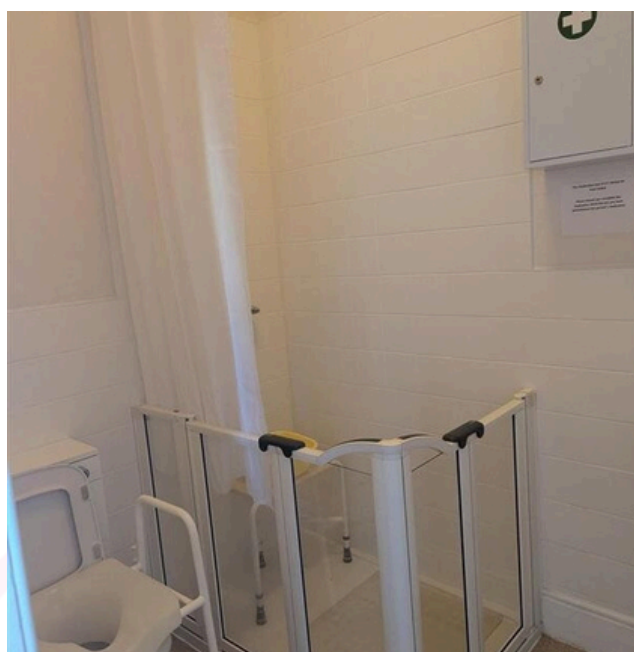
In the room of a resident with dementia, a laminate floor was laid instead of carpet to help make cleaning easier and prevent the smell of urine. The Registered Manager told us that this is not always a reflection of a resident having dementia. For example, only four of Stobars Hall's rooms are laminated, all others are carpeted as the manager said: "We believe it brings a more homely feel."

It is possible for residents with no continence issues to have a room that is laminated depending on what is available at the time.

We observed toilets and bathrooms which appeared clean, hygienic and well-stocked. All but three residents' rooms include ensuite facilities, in addition to communal bathrooms.



Ensuite bathroom – sink



Ensuite bathroom – toilet and shower

We noticed an unattended vacuum cleaner in one of the corridors, but cleaning was being carried out in the home during our visit.



Unattended vacuum cleaner



*Dementia clock on mantelpiece,
installed as a result of our visit*

Residents' bedrooms were personalised with items important to them; bedrooms doors had photographs and names of the residents.

All rooms have a TV and a remote call-bell system. However, we did not see any dementia-friendly signage, and there were no dementia-friendly contrasting-coloured toilet seats and grab bars. Our team also noticed that there were no dementia clocks placed in communal areas. **(See recommendations.)**

When asked about this, the manager said that some bedrooms have them.

Research has shown that these adapted digital clocks are 'friendlier' (easier to use) for patients with dementia and support orientation and independence.

(See recommendations.)

Lounges, dining rooms and public areas

All areas looked clean and tidy, except for some rubbish which we noticed under a cabinet in one of the lounges. Both single and double chairs (with modern patterns and easily wipeable) were available.

The dining room is quite small, but comfortable. Some bed-bound residents do not use it and the manager explained to us that residents staying in their rooms are served meals first, so more staff can be available to assist residents in the dining room later.

Nearly all the residents prefer their breakfast made by staff. There is a cooked option and buffet-style breakfast (cereals, pastries, toast, etc) which helps promote a sense of independence.

Fresh fruit was available from a bowl in the hallway for people to help themselves.



Table with fruit in the hallway

We noticed that the menu did not have a vegetarian option.

The manager explained that, at the time of our visit, there were no vegetarians among the residents, but vegetarian options will soon be included to address the dietary requirements of a new resident.

Our representatives tasted the food, which was good, but it was noted that the vegetables had become cold. (The manager acknowledged this and told us it was likely because we were served after the main lunch service.)



A tray of food

Staff seemed sufficient in number, they knew residents' names, and were attentive and caring.






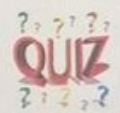









We observed that the manager also knew residents' names and backgrounds, even sharing that one of the residents will soon celebrate their 100th birthday.

The manager also told us that doors tend to be left unlocked and residents do visit his office sometimes, which he appreciates. He said:

“I get to spend more time with them.”

We were told that redecoration takes place often (on this matter, residents’ opinions are voiced and heard), and maintenance work is completed when required.

A range of activities are offered to provide exercise and entertainment, including armchair yoga, which was described as the favourite activity by some residents. A regular religious service is also held at the home. During our visit, a service was taking place and was well attended by residents.

Stobars Hall Activity planner						
Monday 13th January	Tuesday 14th January	Wednesday 15th January	Thursday 16th January	Friday 17th January	Saturday 18th January	Sunday 19th January
Make your dream come true day	International kite day	Hairdresser National Bagel day	Get active day	Al Capone day	Thesaurus day	Popcorn day
Armchair exercises	Kite Making	Bagels and coffee	Blondies baking	Heart bunting making	Sparkle day quiz	Sparkle Crossword
						
Tell me Game	Flying our kites outside	Rachel Mercer	2pm coffee afternoon	Armchair yoga	Scrabble	Sunday cinema with pop-corn
						
Activities are subject to change if needed.						
 FRANKLYN CARE LTD We're here to help you live well						

Poster showing weekly activities

A hairdresser visits the home weekly and does residents' hair in a space other than their room.

| "It's like going to the hairdresser for them"

The home has a Reminiscence Box for residents, to stimulate memory through objects or pictures (for example, ration cards).

Finally, for non-verbal residents, hearing-impaired residents or residents with dementia the home has produced picture mats: this way, residents can point to a card expressing the need they have, or have a limited conversation. Visually impaired residents (we were told) are provided information verbally.

Residents were seen to receive person-centred care.



Fire extinguisher



Secure lock

General observations

During our visit, residents seemed to enjoy their time at the home.

We observed a resident with a walking frame who went for an independent walk outside, another one who just had a haircut, some attended the in-house church service which is held monthly and involves singing.

Most of the residents we met were dressed well and appropriately. However, we noted that one resident had extremely long fingernails. The manager told us that this resident refuses to have their nails cut, and that: "They always say it is 'how they like them'."

They looked well-nourished and accepted interaction with our team. There seemed to be enough staff on the day we visited, and they were attentive and empathetic to individuals.



*Safety gate in the hallway
before fire exit*



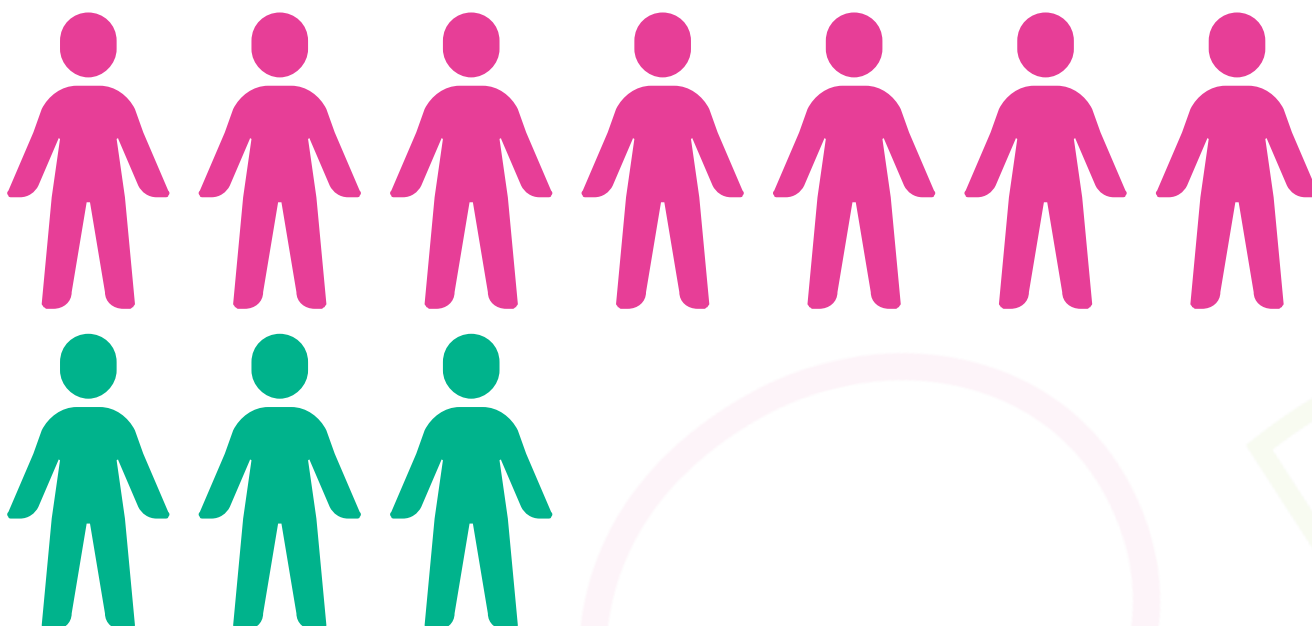
Residents' feedback

This section of the report contains residents' feedback around the following themes: overall experience of the home, activities on offer, feeling listened to and treated with respect, and food.

Residents' overall experience

"Overall, how do you rate your experience living here?"

The experience was rated as positive, with seven residents choosing "Very good" and three "Good".



Residents also had the opportunity to provide more details on what they thought about their experience at Stobars Hall.

What emerged is that they appreciate the company, the quality of the care received (“the staff are very kind”) and the lack of responsibilities (“not having to do any housework”), and the views (“so uplifting to get up and see all the beauty around you”; “seeing the squirrels and the church steeple”).

When asked whether something could be improved, one resident answered:

“The food! They serve Wiltshire Farm [Foods] ready meals all the time, they used to have a chef but not anymore. I miss that.”

They also said the evening meal is at 5pm and it is a long time until the morning however, when prompted further, they stated that residents can have drinks and snacks whenever they want.

Manager's response

The manager informed us that the food is prepared by Apetito, an outside agency, but is absolutely not microwaved. Residents and staff have had food tasting sessions and they have received positive reviews from this.

Activities

All residents stated that they were aware of the different activities on offer. Some favourites were:

- Music and art
- Baking
- Reading,
- Reminiscing
- The vicar's service
- Exercises, walking, joint activities

“Armchair exercises with Helen which always generate a good laugh and jokes”

In general residents are motivated to participate in all the activities, except for one participant who told us “I don't partake” and who would like disco dancing to be offered.



Feeling heard and respected

All residents said they were feeling listened to and treated with respect (“The staff are very good”). However, further comments included:

“Listened to but not always acted upon.”

“They are so good with us mostly. (...) the odd one doesn’t listen sometimes, doesn’t listen fully.

Pre-empting me before I say it.”

[Before the resident has the chance to finish talking.]

Food

Most residents stated that they like the food provided. However, one resident indicated ‘food quality’ as an area that could be improved, another resident identified “Having the food freshly cooked” as something needing improvement.

One resident answered “no” (as an improvement they would like a chef) and two residents did not give a decisive answer (“Like the curate’s egg” [good and bad].)

"Do you like the food provided?"



10%
No



20%
N/A



70%
Yes

The final, open, question about whether they wanted to add anything showed that, generally, residents feel looked after and treated well:

"I like all of the staff, they all treat me well."

"You cannot find fault with the staff."

"Very nice staff."



Relatives' feedback

This section provides feedback on the following key areas:

- Overall experience with the home
- Updates from the home about their loved ones
- Awareness of complaints procedure and of the social activities provided
- Likelihood of recommending the service to others

Overall experience

Three out of four relatives who completed our questionnaire rated the home as "Very good". On the other hand, one relative rated the home as "Adequate", and had some dissatisfaction:

"Most staff are really good and do a wonderful job although recently I have had a bad interaction with [one] when I expressed my concerns about my mother's health. The food is microwaved, not fresh; we continue to have an unusable lift after many years."
(See recommendations.)

Manager's response

Some residents with full capacity have expressed a preference for them to not share certain things with their family. This information has been shared with relatives. The lift has been out of action for eight weeks over a 12-month period.

“Overall, how do you rate your relative’s care?”



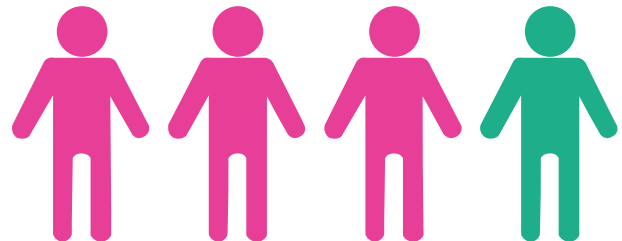
25%
Adequate



70%
Yes

Information about loved ones

Three out of four relatives felt that they are kept informed about their loved one’s health and well-being, although one person said:



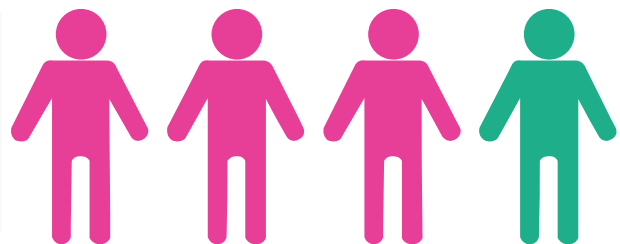
“They don’t [keep them informed], I visit regularly so I find out about any changes then.”

We were told by the manager that residents’ relatives are kept up-to-date on their health and care, unless the resident has asked for this not to happen. If this is the case, this is also documented in the consent to care forms.

Awareness of complaints procedure

Three out of the four relatives stated that they are aware of the home's complaints procedure. However, one person said that although they would feel confident in making a complaint, they:

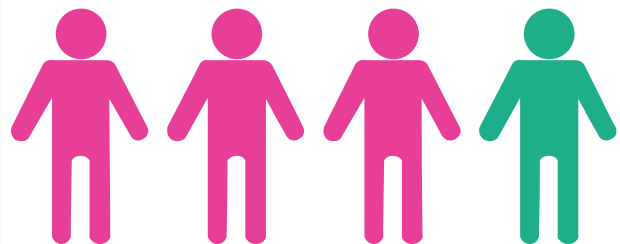
"Would not like to make it uncomfortable when I visit"



Recommending the service to others

Three out of four relatives would recommend the service to others. In contrast, one person commented:

"I would worry if my mother's health declined she wouldn't get adequate care due to staff shortage."



Awareness of activities

All four relatives answered that they were aware of the activities offered at Stobars Hall.



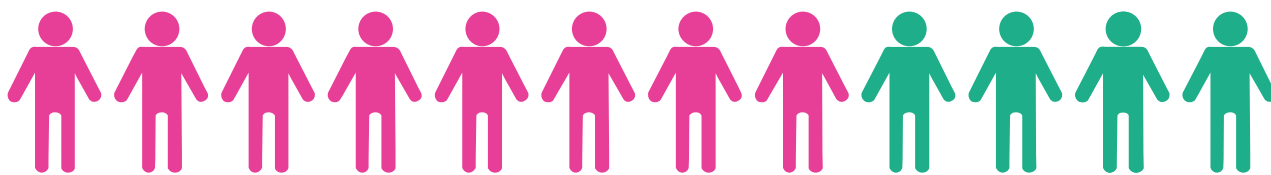


Staff feedback

Feedback from staff revolved around having adequate numbers to meet residents' needs, feeling supported to deliver person-centred care, their overall experience as staff, likeliness of recommending the service to a close relative, changes they would like to see to improve residents' experience, and training.

Staffing

Eight out of 12 members of staff felt there are enough staff when on duty.



Two answered "no"

"I believe there is enough staff, could do with more support workers."

and two chose the "sometimes" option.

"Sometimes things happen where we cannot do daily tasks and if there were more staff then things wouldn't have to be missed."

Support

All members of staff who answered our questionnaire stated that they feel supported to deliver person-centred care.

“Everyone’s really good and supportive”

However two respondents highlighted that, sometimes, they do not feel they have enough time to provide appropriate support.

“It depends on the day: today is quiet, for example.”

Training

All members of staff who answered our questionnaire felt that they have enough training to carry out their duties well.

Particularly, one member of staff told us that

“Training is a big thing”

and staff are regularly advised on training they need to receive:

“We’re regularly told what courses we need to take to ensure skills remain up to date.”

Overall experience

All staff described their experience of working at Stobars Hall as positive. Some comments were:

"It's a very good experience. I enjoy coming in."

"I love working here! Residents are amazing, staff is good."

"Lovely setting and great place to work [and] a great team."

"I have had a very good experience with my co-workers. People are supportive and help whenever required."

"It's a happy place to work."

"I really enjoy talking to the residents and helping out where I can."

"I thoroughly enjoy my job, I enjoy interacting with the residents and giving them a clean environment."

However, one respondent reported difficulties recruiting locally-based staff, a fact brought to our attention by others during our visit.

One member of staff felt that

“Upper management don’t value their staff”

and one respondent felt that, despite being a “great place to work”,

“Staff need more organisation and enthusiasm”.

Recommending service to a relative

All participants but one would recommend the service to a close relative. The only participant who said “no” expanded by saying

“I would prefer them to stay at home.”

which does not suggest a specific criticism toward Stobars Hall, but rather a wish that their loved one(s) can remain in their own home.

Changes to resident experience

Slightly more than half of the staff did not identify any changes to be made.

“It’s getting there. George [the manager] is trying his hardest.”

On the other hand, five members of staff felt that improvements can be made by increasing the staffing:

“More support workers”

“More support [with] feeding”

“Need more staff in shifts”

“More staff so that they can have more time to give”

“More staff [and] more appreciation from higher management”.

To conclude the interviews with staff we also asked whether they had anything else they would like to share, and one member of staff raised the pay issue:

“The work is flexible, which is good, but we are paid very little”



Conclusion

On 15th January 2025 our authorised representatives carried out a visit to Stobars Hall, a residential care home run by the Franklyn Group and located in Kirkby Stephen. We had sent a questionnaire for staff, residents and relatives prior to our visit, which was filled out by eight residents, four relatives and 10 members of staff. During the time of our visit we were able to also talk with eight residents and six members of staff (plus the manager).

This report highlighted what is working well and identified areas for improvement. We felt that the environment was homely and very welcoming. The Registered Manager and the other staff members seemed attentive and caring towards residents, who looked happy, cared for and relaxed.

Most commented on the beautiful views around the home and enjoy spending time outside which, as corroborated by several studies, has a positive impact on their moods and health, particularly for people living with dementia.

Various interventions have been developed to improve the care of residents, for instance a laminate floor was laid in the room of a patient with dementia.

We found Stobars Hall to be a welcoming place, where residents are supported and cared for by skilled and compassionate staff.

What is working well

Stobars Hall is homely and welcoming.

Residents looked happy, cared for and relaxed.

Registered Manager and staff are attentive and caring towards residents.

Beautiful views around the home and residents enjoy spending time outside. Lots of wildlife to see.

Residents' bedrooms were personalised with items important to them.

Good variety of activities on offer within the home.

Picture mats for those who have different communication needs.

On-site hairdresser supports residents to take pride in their appearance.

Recommendations

Number	Recommendations	Response	Timescale
1.	Bring in badges for staff that clearly show their name and job title.	We do have the badges for the company and roles, but name badges will be passed up for review.	
2.	Improved signage to Stobars Hall at the entrance from the road, and throughout Kirkby Stephen, which would support easier visiting.	The sign was taken down due to having the old logo. A new stone sign has been commissioned and this will be installed shortly.	Done (February 2025)
3.	The car park does not have designated parking spaces for blue badge holders or a drop off/pick up area. Explore if the car park can be made bigger to accommodate these.	Parking is rarely an issue. The car park cannot be made bigger due to having to landscape which we won't do on a Grade 2 listed property. We can however look at having an "eco matting" area for staff to park further down the driveway which would in turn make the top area directly outside less full.	

Number	Recommendations	Response	Timescale
4.	Install dementia-friendly clocks in shared areas to promote resident orientation and independence.	A 10 inch dementia clock is arriving on 19th February, 2025 for the main lounge.	Done (February 2025)
5.	Install dementia-friendly toilet seats and grab-bars in contrasting colours in toilets in communal areas to promote resident independence.	A lot of our residents with dementia do already toilet independently and have no issues. If this becomes an issue in the future then I will revisit this point.	
6.	Consider improving signage near uneven surfaces to increase safety for residents and visitors.	Have already placed signs on the top corridor which you mentioned specifically.	Done (February 2025)
7.	Provide a timescale for repairs to the lift.	New sensors have been ordered by the engineers. We usually receive parts in 14 working days. Parts are fitted on day of arrival.	



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