Healthwatch Cheshire West Enter and View Report	
Enter and View Visit to	**Meadowbank Lodge Grange Lane Winsford**
Date and Time	**8th February 2018 arriving at 10.00 a.m.**
Authorised Representatives	**Chris Banfi, Janet Lomas, Georgia Hulme**
Staff Present	**Tony Cove - Manager**

Background

Healthwatch Cheshire CIC is the consumer champion for health and social care services. It works as an umbrella organisation for both Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West. We gather the views of local people and look at information about how well local services are performing. We then use that information to assist residents and communities to be listened to by the organisations that provide, fund and monitor services.

What is Enter & View?
Enter and View is part of the local Healthwatch Cheshire CIC programme. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) grants local Healthwatch representatives powers of entry, allowing them to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, care homes, dental surgeries and GP practices.

Purpose of the visit

As part of its work plan this year Healthwatch Cheshire CIC continues to work in observing care provision across the area.
This work has the full support of health and Local Authority commissioners.

With this in mind, throughout the year, we visit a number of establishments with the intention of observing settings from a family perspective and gathering feedback from

service users, relatives and staff. This report is based on these observations and conversations.

Highlights from the Visit

- Friendly welcoming staff
- Evidence of activity and appropriate stimulation

Overall, we witnessed a well utilised, busy day centre where clients and staff interacted well and showed great regard for each other. Clients were treated with dignity and respect and the atmosphere was upbeat and friendly.

General Information

Meadowbank Lodge is a non-residential day centre, close to Winsford town centre, providing care and activities for a range of adults who have learning difficulties. The services aim (as advertised on the CWaC Local Offer Website) to provide, ***"Bespoke activities with outcomes focused on health and wellbeing sports and leisure and independent training packages."***

Environment

This was an unannounced visit. We arrived at 10 a.m. when clients were mainly in the large lounge. The area was busy and noisy as clients and carers were organising themselves for the morning's activities. Some were going out to their volunteer roles while others were off to sporting activities. Although there was a lot of noise, this was not unpleasant, and we saw lots of interaction of staff and service users. We were told that there were quieter areas where some service users preferred to spend their time.

We were greeted warmly and the staff were friendly and helpful. Tony Cove, the manager, seemed pleased to see us and offered either to take us around or allow us to wander round and ask questions when we needed to. In fact we had an enjoyable tour from a service user who proved very helpful and informative. He was obviously proud of being part of the centre and was enthusiastic about what they provided. He enjoyed football, and we learned that he played regularly and had been involved in tournaments.

The entrance to the centre has recently been fitted with new automatic doors, which Tony said had made life much easier. However they had not yet had time to replace posters etc. in the foyer and main entrance.
After the automatic door entrance into the centre is through a key-coded door. A visitors book was available for signing in.

The main hall area seemed rather bare but this was because of the recent work on the doors.

Everywhere looked clean and in good order. Tony said that they had some problems having no proper storage for equipment. It means that equipment had to take up space in the communal areas.
There is an enclosed, covered area, which currently has a roof leak. Equipment cannot be left there and has to be put elsewhere. This adds to the storage problem. Tony did say that the new doors had been expensive so they might have to wait some time for more improvements to the building.

There was plenty of comfortable seating in the main lounge and the dining area looked clean and functional, as did the kitchen which was large and of good design. We saw several smaller rooms that service users could use, and three sensory rooms which Tony told us were used most days. The rooms were cold but Tony said that someone had switched off the radiators, possibly a service user and that they would warm up quickly once he had switched them back on.
As it was still early there was plenty of time for this.

Outside there is a grassed area where in summer there is garden furniture and an awning. It looks well maintained and inviting. We were told they were hoping to put in a sensory garden this year.

Health and Wellbeing

Specialist room areas - We saw the interactive (virtual reality) floor in one of the rooms where residents were able to experiment safely with different projected environments such as crossing a virtual road or jumping into puddles. In another 'sensory' room service users were enjoying the projected lighting effects and patterns in a soft floor area with cushions.

We asked about input from physiotherapists and occupational therapists and were told that while they responded to particular requests and referrals, they are, ***"Not getting as much input as we were."*** He said staff, ***"Always seem to be chasing referrals to the CWP team,"*** and recognising the restricted number of therapists, ***"O.Ts are quite rare!"*** Tony regretted that they couldn't give the care staff more training in the use of the sensory rooms towards a, ***"Better outcome for clients."***

Although Tony has had to cope with a reduction in some staff numbers: ***"They took my clerical away, then my supervisor."*** He is pleased that four grade five posts have recently been created. We met a member of staff who started three weeks ago and is overseeing activities and community interaction. She told us that she is involved with developing the activities that are already in place such as the link with Hebdon Green, a local school, and their involvement with Mersey Forests. In March the staffing should be up to 1:1 for the most dependent clients, although we were told that if extra needs arose they could always go back to panel to request more staff.

A music therapist comes in on a Tuesday, and one of the staff has volunteered to teach 'Bollywood' sessions which the service users seem to really enjoy. We saw photographs of these sessions and the service users nearby reacted positively to them.

A staff member told us that they did not have any volunteers from the community but they did get college students and trainee nurses who came to Meadowbank for experience. She told us that the activity choices are constantly evolving: their links to Mersey Forest developed and they have obtained funding to maintain this. Those clients involved did a presentation to the Forestry Commission to help extend access to the forest. At Christmas they made decorations made from greenery collected in the forest. We were able to see photos of these activities in the rolling photo presentation on the computer. Each client has a personal timetable of their chosen activities. This can be changed, however, if anything does not work out.
We were told that carers can gauge success by client behaviour as well as using questionnaires to fully understand their needs.

Meadowbank has its own minibus and service users can also use their own transport to access the community. Some also use CWaC transport which service users pay for. We

observed one client leaving to go for a hydrotherapy session in his own car with two members of staff.
The more able clients also go bowling, take the train to Liverpool and visit a local pub where they pay for their own meals and drinks thus increasing their experiences of being independent. Meadowbank also has links to the Storyhouse Theatre in Chester and with Norton Priory. There is a quarterly coffee morning session at the centre when local community members visit, as well as family members, to buy cakes that clients have made.

A weekly healthy eating group plans a meal, shops for the ingredients and then prepare the food which they can then eat. Sometimes they can use the vegetables that have been grown by Meadowbank service users on their allotment. This allotment has been transformed from a wilderness into a series of raised beds where a variety of fruit and vegetables have been successfully grown. In photographs on display at the centre you can see other allotment holders helping to clear the ground for Meadowbank clients and we were told that this has helped develop their social skills.

A member of staff explained about the safeguarding sessions that they have had. As well as posters and other literature, she is hoping that they will have more training to help service users recognise and understand what abuse is like. She emphasised that this training has to be meaningful to the service users and she is committed to continuing with this.

Feedback

We spoke to a number of service users who commented that they enjoyed coming to the centre – communication with clients was difficult in some instances but comments included:

- ***"Very happy here!"***
- ***"We are very proud."***
- ***"This is a good place."***
- ***"We enjoy it here."***

Suggestions for improvement

- The safeguarding training should continue to help service users recognise abuse and learn the best way to report it.
- Request regular sessions with Occupational Therapists and physiotherapists who can train carers to make the most of the sensory equipment at Meadowbank.
- Ask for help from Vivo to solve the problems created by a lack of storage space. Perhaps there is a way they can utilise the central covered area when the roof has been repaired.
- Improve the look of the entrance area with artwork/photographs. Perhaps utilise the lovely photographs we saw on the computer.
- Investigate the possibility of a local football team giving Meadowbank sponsorship or other type of help to maintain the clients' interest in sport.

Feedback from Provider of Service
At time of publication – no feedback received.