Enter and View Report
Whitby House

Care Home Contact Details:

Whitby House
99 Pooltown Road
Ellesmere Port
CH65 7AE
Tel: 0151 382 7439

Date of Visit: 17 January 2020
Time of Visit: 10.00 am

Healthwatch Cheshire Authorised Representatives:

Pat Clare, Jackie Griffiths, Andrew Pleass

Staff Present:

Angela Earlam – Manager
Bernie – Administration
Mae, Rosa – Nurses
Shian – Activities Coordinator

What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch Cheshire (HWC) is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across England established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. HWC represents the consumer voice of those using local health and social services and trades as both Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West.

The statutory requirements of all local Healthwatch include an 'Enter and View' responsibility to visit any publicly funded adult health and social care services. Enter and View visits may be conducted if providers invite this, if HWC receive information of concern about a service and/or equally when consistently positive feedback about services is presented. In this way we can learn about and share examples of the limitations and strengths of services visited from the perspective of people who experience the services first hand.

Visits conducted are followed by the publication of formal reports where findings of good practice and recommendations to improve the service are made.

Contact Details: Healthwatch Cheshire, Denton Drive, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 7LU. Tel: 0300 323 0006

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1. Description & Nature of Service
Details of home **From Carehome .co.uk** Whitby House Care Centre is a purpose-built Cheshire facility that offers a number of personalised care packages, from well-trained and qualified carers. The centre performs consistently well with regulatory authorities and has an impressive record in terms of customer satisfaction. Care staff look to appreciate the concerns of loved ones and relatives, as well as those in the care environment, keen to produce worthy results as part of a collaborative effort. • **Group:** Larchwood Care • **Person in charge:** Angela Earlam (Manager) • **Local Authority / Social Services:** Cheshire West and Chester Council (click for ccontact details) • **Type of Service:** Care Home with nursing – Privately Owned , Registered for a maximum o of 40 Service Users • **Registered Care Categories*:** Old Age • Physical Disability

- **Specialist Care Categories:** Cancer Care • Colitis & Crohn's Disease • Epilepsy
- Hearing Visual Impairment• Multiple Sclerosis • Parkinson's Disease • Speech Impairment • SStroke • Elderly Frail
- **Admission Information:** Ages 60+.
- **Single Rooms:** 40
- **Rooms with ensuite WC:** 0
- **Facilities & Services:** Respite Care • Physiotherapy • Own GP if required • Own Furniture I if required • Close to Local shops • Near Public Transport • Lift • Gardens for residents •

Latest CQC Report – the location was subject to CQC inspection in October 2019, report published December 2019. The overall rating was GOOD, although in the category safety REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT. This was largely due to concerns over staffing levels at the time of the inspection and sluice rooms being left unlocked.

Website information: The service has its own page on its parent company website indicating the services and accommodation available. It is clear and easy to use.

2. Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cheshire would like to thank the service provider, care home manager, residents, visitors and staff for their contributions to this Enter and View visit.

3. Disclaimer

This report relates to findings gathered on a specific date of visiting the service as set out above. Consequently, the report is not suggested to be a fully representative portrayal of the experiences of all the residents and/or staff and/or family members/friends but does provide an account of what was observed and presented to Healthwatch Cheshire Representatives at the time of the visit.

4. Purpose of the Visit

- To enable Healthwatch Cheshire Representatives to see for themselves how the service is being provided in terms of quality of life and quality of care principles
- To capture the views and experiences of residents, family members/friends and staff
- To consider the practical experience of family/friends when visiting the service in terms of access, parking and other visitor facilities
- To identify areas of resident satisfaction, good practice within the service and any areas felt to be in need of improvement
- To enable Healthwatch Cheshire Representatives to observe how the service delivers on the statements it advertises on its website.

5. Introduction/Orientation to Service

Whitby House is a care home in a residential area close to Ellesmere Port town centre offering nursing care to elderly patients over 60 years of age. It was originally registered as a residential home offering some nursing but has since switched to providing nursing care for all residents due to the care needs of referred residents. It is not EMI registered. The current population is 31 residents out of a maximum capacity of 36. Four rooms, originally designated as doubles, are now used for single occupancy only. The current age range of residents is from 65 to 99 years, of which a higher proportion is male rather than female. Most residents have restricted mobility.

Whitby House is owned by Larchwood Care, which operates in excess of 50 homes nationwide, but is managed day to day under lease by Healthcare Management Ltd. The registered manager, Angela Earlam, has been in position for 10 years and has worked at Whitby House for 39 years in total.

Fees range from £456 to £934 per week depending on the level of nursing care provided. Eight residents are privately funded. Of the remaining 31, approximately 50% receive Continuing Health Care provision; the remainder have standard local authority funding. Some top-up fees are charged of between £40 and £80 per week.

6. Methodology

Representatives were equipped with various tools to aid the gathering of information. The following techniques were used by the Representatives:

- Direct observation of interactions between staff and residents
- Participant observation within therapeutic/social activities where appropriate
- Assessing the suitability of the environment in which the service operates in supporting the needs of the residents
- Observing the delivery and quality of care provided
- Talking to residents, visitors and staff (where appropriate and available) about their thoughts and feelings regarding the service provided
- Observing the quality and adequacy of access, parking and other facilities for visitors.

7. Summary of Key Findings

- A nursing home catering for elderly residents most of whom have restricted mobility
- An experienced manager running a home with well-motivated and caring staff
- Residents and relatives appear very happy with the care and service provided

- A full range of internal and external activities provided for residents by a personable and enthusiastic activities coordinator
- Strong community links help to enhance the lives of residents and volunteers alike.

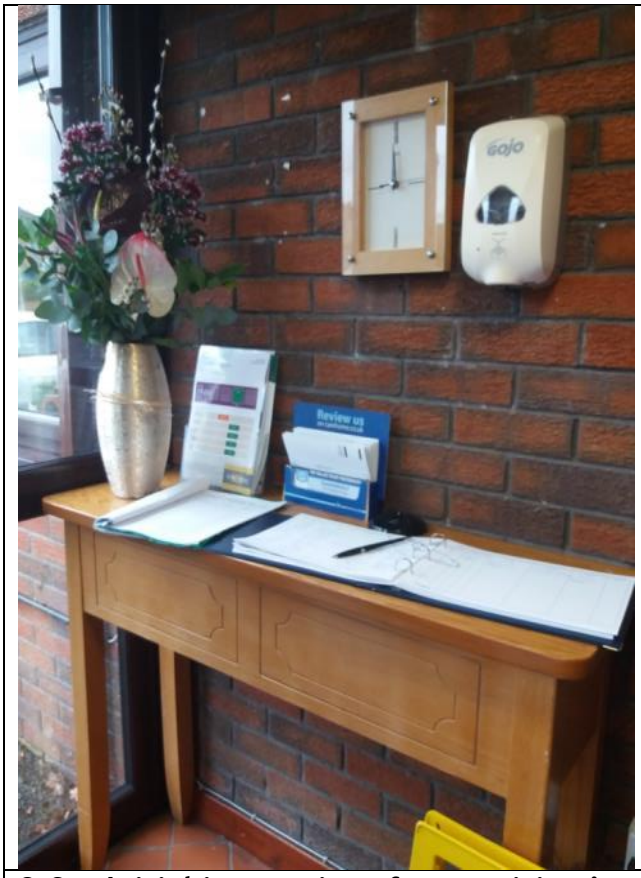
8. Detailed Findings

8.1 Location, external appearance, ease of access, signage, parking

The building externally appears to be a modern, L-shaped, two storey building but in fact is 40 years old. It is approached by a very narrow lane, clearly signed in one direction only from Pooltown Road, which opens into a large car park area in front of reception and ground floor bedrooms. Entry is initially into a covered porch flanked by planters.

Covered main entrance flanked by attractive planters

The attractive porch lobby contains a visitors book, a laminated copy of the December 2019 CQC report for visitors' inspection, CQC registration certificates, complaints procedure and Six Steps end of life programme accreditation certificate. A hand sanitiser on the wall was empty when Healthwatch authorised representatives (ARs) tried to use it.



The entrance lobby is neat and tidy displaying a copy of the latest CQC report and official certifications

8.2 Initial impressions from a visitor's perspective on entering the home

The doorbell was answered by a nurse wearing a tabard bearing the words *Medication Round. Do not disturb*. The reception area is pleasantly decorated in pastel colours and is carpeted. During the course of the visit it became busy with staff, residents and visitors. ARs announced ourselves and were taken by a healthcare assistant to meet the nursing home manager, Angela Earlam, whose office is on the first floor, which she shares with the home administrator Bernie. The manager is familiar with Healthwatch: the visit pre-notification letter and Healthwatch leaflets were displayed on a notice board in the reception hallway, and she recalled a previous visit two years earlier. She was very friendly, welcoming and was happy to answer all AR questions.

8.3 Facilities for and involvement with family/friends

Visiting hours are flexible: several relatives of residents arrived during the course of the Healthwatch visit. Monthly resident meetings are held which family members are invited to attend, but few do in practice. The manager operates an open door policy for residents, staff and relatives alike and this was indeed witnessed by ARs. At the time of our visit a first floor lounge/dining room was occupied by a social worker meeting a resident, the privacy of which was strictly observed by the manager and staff.

Relatives interviewed by ARs included: two visiting their father who has dementia and has been a resident for 3 years. They were happy with the care provided;

- a man visiting his father who has been a resident for 2 months who has settled well

- a lady whose mother has been at Whitby House for 3 months. She commented '*The activities are good. The staff are great. She likes the food here*'.

8.4 Internal physical environment

8.4.1 *Décor, Lighting, heating, furnishing & floor coverings*

All rooms, apart from wet rooms, and corridors are carpeted. Decoration is predominantly magnolia-type paintwork with lounges papered in similar neutral shades. Lounges and dining rooms have good natural lighting: artificial lighting in corridors was sufficient. The building was at a pleasant temperature.

Furniture in lounges appears comfortable and in good condition

Dining room furniture was in similarly good condition and appeared stable and supportive.

8.4.2 *Freshness, cleanliness/hygiene & cross infection measures*

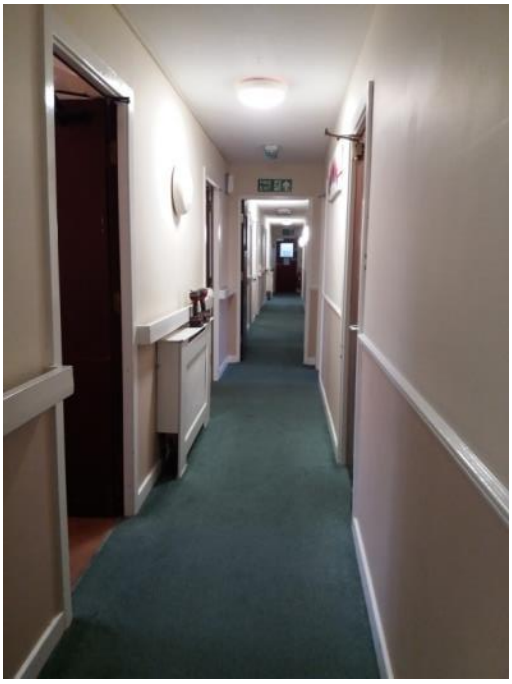
The home appeared clean; there were no unpleasant smells although open bedroom doors gave occasional indication of a slight staleness typical of elderly residents spending time in bed.

A sign on the front door warns of the risk of contamination of residents by visitors entering with flu symptoms

We were informed that there had been no flu or norovirus outbreaks in the facility this winter. All residents and 60% of staff have received a flu jab. All staff are trained in infection control procedures and specialist infection control support is provided by the Countess of Chester hospital.

8.4.3 *Suitability of design to meet needs of residents*

In contrast with its exterior appearance, the internal design shows the true age of the building: corridors are narrow and bedrooms are quite small with no en-suite facilities other than a wash hand basin. Each floor however has shower room and bathroom facilities which were all clean and in good condition.



Corridors are quite narrow. The first floor corridors appeared in better decorative condition than the ground floor ones which showed more damage and scuffs which are likely to have been caused by mobile equipment or walking frames

Bathrooms are clean and well-equipped

Doors to bedrooms are dark wood and have small personal name labels. Communal areas such as dining rooms are not signed. When queried as to whether this might cause any confusion for elderly residents, the manager replied that it doesn't appear to but periodically they have used strategically placed pictures in corridors or in some cases on bedroom doors to aid orientation for certain residents. Most bedroom doors were open; bedrooms contained a single bed, wardrobe and chest of drawers. Many small items personalising rooms were in evidence.

Healthwatch ARs were shown a typical bedroom which has recently been vacated and will be redecorated and refurbished before the next occupant moves in

A contractor was seen fitting new door handles and vanity units are being installed around washbasins, 12 bedrooms at a time. Upgrades of furniture, carpets and decoration are planned over the course of the coming year.

8.5 Staff support skills & interaction

8.5.1 *Staff appearance/presentation*

Nursing staff, carers and housekeeping staff all wear uniforms bearing the Larchwood logo and name tags. Many of the staff have worked at Whitby House for a long time. The manager has been in post for 10 years and her administration assistant, Bernie, for 14 years. Staff retention is not considered to be a problem and all levels of staff work well together as a team. This appears to stem from the manager's lead: *'I love it here. We support one another well.'*

The manager stated that she ensures Whitby House is staffed according to the number and dependency level of residents. Daytime staff patterns consist of two registered nurses (1 per floor) with 6 care assistants working morning shifts and 5 afternoon shifts. Night cover is provided by 1 nurse and 3 carers. A position is currently advertised for a Registered General Nurse for the night shift to a cover a period of maternity leave.

Housekeeping, kitchen staff, a handyman, the activities coordinator and other maintenance men were all met by Healthwatch ARs. A position will shortly be advertised for a part time kitchen assistant to cover a vacancy arising at the end of January 2020.

8.5.2 *Affording dignity and respect/Approach to care giving*

Whitby House aim to provide a caring environment for their residents. This ethos was very noticeable when ARs were shown round. Everyone was welcoming, friendly and smiling. When asked what she enjoys most about her role the manager replied: *'Keeping everybody happy.' She also stated 'You have to want to be a carer.'*

A display in the downstairs lounge encapsulates the care ethos at Whitby House

The activities coordinator and handyman arrived back during our visit having attended the funeral of a former resident that morning. The handyman was noticed giving a 'thumbs-up' signal to one gentleman resident walking with the aid of a frame along a corridor and calling '*Hi Sid*' to another.

8.5.3 ***Effective communications – alternative systems and accessible Information***

Healthwatch ARs felt that signage within the home could be improved by use of pictorial indications for dining rooms, bathrooms, toilets etc. or even colour coordination of certain rooms eg wet rooms. Other information is displayed nevertheless, such as menu choices, a photobook 'Enhancing our lives' showing many examples of activities undertaken by residents, and at time of our visit – a display on the Chinese New Year.

Chinese New Year information display

8.6 - Physical Welfare

8.6.1 ***Appearance, dress & hygiene***

Most residents were still in bed or in their bedrooms at the time of our visit. This was explained by the manager as: '*It tends to be a sleepy house in the mornings It's a very relaxed home'*. Residents get up when they feel ready to. They are not forced to be up by a certain time in the morning. Breakfast is brought to their room if they want it. The manager said that residents will often stay in bed until they hear the activities coordinator arriving and will only then get up.

8.6.2 ***Nutrition/ mealtimes and hydration***

We saw the small kitchen where the two members of staff were hard at work. There is a morning drinks trolley at which residents make their breakfast and lunch choices and another in the afternoon when they chose their evening meal. Lunch is the main meal of the day with a lighter meal or snack in the evening. Alcoholic drinks are available if desired.

A 4-weekly menu cycle is published.

All food is prepared freshly on site. Any allergies are discussed and highlighted before resident admission and food consistency/texture requirements are identified and prepared individually.

The dining room was pleasant with tables laid for lunch: table cloth, napkins, condiments, today's menu choice

Adapted cutlery is available for residents who have difficulty holding conventional designs. A gentleman in the lounge was observed using a specially designed cup to aid grip and prevent spills.

8.6.3 ***Support with general & specialist health needs/Maximising mobility & sensory capacities***

General medical support is provided by Whitby GP practice: a doctor or Advanced Nurse Practitioner visits weekly on Thursdays. Regular physiotherapy support is also provided. The Countess of Chester hospital provides support in areas such as speech and language therapy, continence, tissue viability and Whitby House also makes use of end of life support provided by Macmillan nurses and the Hospice of the Good Shepherd.

8.7 Social, emotional and cultural welfare
8.7.1 *Personalisation & personal possessions*
Although bedrooms are small, most were seen to be well-stocked with personal possessions which residents are encouraged to do. In fact rooms appeared to ARs to contain many more personal items than seen in most other care homes previously visited. To quote the manager again: '*Their rooms are their memory boxes*'.
Personalised walking-frame bags have been made for some residents by volunteers during activity sessions
8.7.2 (*Choice, control & identity*)
Residents meetings are held monthly at which they make suggestions for activities they would like to undertake, make menu suggestions or raise any concerns. These meetings are minuted and regular feedback is given. Although family members are invited to these meetings, few attend in practice.

You Said… We Did display giving feedback on resident suggestions.

A tropical fish tank has been installed in the downstairs lounge at the request of residents and is in the process of being stocked

Most residents lack sufficient mobility to leave the home by themselves. As Healthwatch ARs arrived, however, a resident was seen leaving the home in a wheelchair-adapted taxi, accompanied by a care assistant. No Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) have currently been authorised for Whitby House residents.

8.7.3 *Feeling safe and able to raise concerns/complaints*

The complaints procedure is on display in the entrance lobby, as are carehome.co.uk feedback forms. The current carehome.co.uk review score displayed for Whitby House on the Larchwood Care website is 9.6 from 41 reviews. All visitors met by Healthwatch ARs expressed satisfaction with the care provided.

8.7.4 (*Structured and unstructured activities/stimulation*)

The activities coordinator, Shian, works five days per week and has been in post for 6 years: her enthusiasm is infectious. '*Everything we do is for anyone to be able to participate in. Everything is inclusive or we adapt it. If they are bed-bound I read to them.*'

A minibus, shared with other local care homes is used for outings. These have included trips to markets, Parkgate, boat trips on the River Dee, Ellesmere Port Boat Museum and theatre trips. To celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day a trip is planned to Ellesmere Port Civic Hall to watch performances by the D-Day Darlings and Bombshell Belles. Internal activities are described as '*any excuse for a party. Anything involving children, animals, music – they love it. Balloon whacking, bingo. They are so competitive.*'

Shian also finds any opportunity she can to develop and involve community links at Whitby House: Age UK, High school work experience, College students on health care courses, the Princes Trust, the local fire brigade, nurseries, toddler groups to name just a few.

8.7.5 *Cultural, religious/spiritual needs*

A regular lady visitor from a local church attended during the Healthwatch visit. At Christmas a Tree Of Lights celebration was held supported by a local church and the Sunshine Singers. This was extremely popular and successful.

8.7.6 *Gardens – maintenance & design/suitability for use/enjoyment*

Gardens at the rear of the property which are accessible from the lounge are said to be the centre of activity in the summer. Work was undertaken in 2019 by 14 Princes Trust volunteers to install raised flowerbeds and paint furniture. The garden also contains bird feeders and a family of garden gnomes which arrived with one of the residents.

9. Observations

9.1 Elements of observed/reported good practice

- Staff working together to provide a caring service, led from the top (the manager). It is visible how much staff enjoy their work
- A clear example of how one enthusiastic activities co-ordinator can encourage staff and residents to enjoy their day
- The activities co-ordinator and the handyman had attended the funeral of a resident
- *You Said … We Did* display
- Visible sign on main entrance door warning of the danger of flu contamination
- Nurse dispensing medicine wearing *Do Not Disturb* tabard
- Staff retention rates.

9.2 Other observations / findings of note applicable

WiFi is available throughout the home. An IPad is available which the activities coordinator and volunteer groups use to project films and play music.

10. Comparisons
10.1 - Comparisons of observations against providers website
Whitby House has a dedicated page on the Larchwood care website. It gives an overview of services, has a letter from the manager, gives full contact details, reviews from relatives of residents and details current staff vacancies.
10.2 - Comparisons with previous Healthwatch visit(s) where applicable
The overall positive experience of care provision gained on the previous Healthwatch visit in December 2017 was also experienced by ARs this time.
11. Recommendations
• Try to improve the general appearance and decoration of the corridors, particularly the doors. Consider adopting different colour schemes eg for wet rooms to aid orientation for residents • Consider use of pictorial signs on common usage room doors or in corridors e.g. dining rooms, lounges, WCs to aid orientation • Consider how to improve external signage from Pooltown Rd to improve visibility from both directions.

Feedback from Provider of Service
Were you happy with the arrangements/requests prior to the visit? Please feel free to comment as appropriate. *Yes, happy with the arrangements.* *Thank you for your Feedback.* *We are having all the doors painted shortly which will brighten up the corridors.* *We will also put some signage on the doors to assist our residents identify different rooms.*