healthwatch Cheshire West

Enter and View Report

Belong Chester

13 May 2024

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Report Details

Address	36 City Road Chester CH1 3AD
Service Provider	Belong
Date of Visit	13 May 2024
Type of Visit	Enter and View with prior notice
Representatives	Tricia Cooper Jodie Hamilton Diane Brown (Volunteer)
Date of previous visits by Healthwatch Cheshire West	N/A

This report relates to findings gathered during a visit to the premises on specific dates as set out above. The report is not suggested to be a fully representative portrayal of the experiences of all the residents, friends and family members or staff, but does provide an account of what was observed by Healthwatch Cheshire Authorised Representatives (ARs) at the time of the visits.

What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch Cheshire is the local independent consumer champion for health and care services, forming part of the national network of local Healthwatch across England.

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, local Healthwatch have the power to carry out Enter and View visits as part of their scrutiny function. This legislation places a duty on health and social care providers to allow Authorised Representatives of Healthwatch to carry out an Enter and View visit on premises where health and social care is publicly funded and delivered. This includes:

- Health or care services which are contracted by local authorities or the NHS, such as adult social care homes and day-care centres.
- NHS Trusts
- NHS Foundation Trusts
- Local authorities
- Primary medical services, such as GPs
- Primary dental services, such as dentists
- Primary Ophthalmic services, such as opticians
- Pharmaceutical services, such as community pharmacists.

The list of service providers who have a duty to allow entry is set out in section 225 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and supplemented by Regulation 14 of the 2013 Local Authorities regulations.

At Healthwatch Cheshire, the Enter and View programme is conducted by a small team of staff and volunteers, who are trained as Authorised Representatives to carry out visits to health and care premises.

Following an Enter and View visit, a formal report is published where findings of good practice and recommendations to improve the service are made. These reports are circulated to the service provider, commissioner, the CQC and relevant partner organisations. They are also made publicly available on the Healthwatch Cheshire websites:

- www.healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-viewwww.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-view.

Purpose of the Visit

- To engage with residents, friends and relatives of the named services and understand their experiences
- To capture these experiences and any ideas they may have for change
- To observe residents, friends and relatives interacting with the staff and their surroundings
- To make recommendations based on Healthwatch Authorised Representatives' observations and feedback from residents, friends and relatives

Methodology

This Enter & View visit was carried out with 'Prior Notice'.

A visit with 'Prior Notice' is when the setting is aware that we will be conducting an Enter & View visit. On this occasion an exact time and date were not given.

Prior to the Enter and View visit the service was asked to display both the letter announcing out visit and a Healthwatch Cheshire poster in a public area. The service was also asked to share surveys amongst residents, friends and relatives. Members of the Healthwatch team visited the service prior to the Enter and View visit to deliver paper copies of the surveys.

To enable us to check that there are no health outbreaks at the premises that would prevent the visit taking place for infection control reasons, this Care Home was made aware that we would be coming on the morning of the visit.

Preparation

In preparation for an Enter and View visit the Authorised Representatives who will be carrying out the visit conduct research that involves reviewing:

- The latest CQC report from a routine inspection of the service
- Any previous Healthwatch Cheshire Enter and View reports

- The Care Home's information held on the Carehome.co.uk website
- Entries on social media platforms
- Comments held on Healthwatch Cheshire's feedback centre
- Information received by Healthwatch Cheshire as a result of undertaking surveys.

On the day of the visit the Authorised Representatives hold a briefing to discuss findings from their individual preparation, and decide as a team how they will carry out the visit, and any specific areas of focus based on this prior knowledge.

Belong Chester

Belong Chester opened in July 2022 and is a purpose built, fully intergenerational care village with an on-site children's nursery run by the charity Ready Generations. There are 72 bedrooms in six 'households' for those requiring 24-hour support (48 rooms in four households are occupied currently), and apartments for independent living. The Enter and View was carried out from the perspective of the residents only.

Belong is located by the canal on City Road, which leads down to Chester train station. It has a dementia friendly café, the Bistro, which is open to residents and public seven days a week.

This report includes feedback provided by residents and their friends and family who completed Healthwatch surveys prior to and during our visit.

Findings

Arriving at the care home

Environment

Belong Chester is very easy to find on City Road. There is a car park at the rear, on Queen's Avenue, and on the day of our visit all members of the Healthwatch team were able to find a parking space. The rear entrance has a telecom pad but the instructions for entering did not seem to work. However, we gained entry when two visitors were leaving the building. The various apartments, 'households' and facilities are clearly displayed on a large sign as you walk in (lower ground floor).

The reception is located on ground floor and can be reached by the lift or stairs. The main entrance is accessed from City Road. We were required to sign in on arrival, and observed there was information for providing reviews, and Healthwatch surveys and posters were clearly displayed on the reception desk and in the Bistro area (open to the residents and public).

A CQC poster was displayed but the home is yet to be rated.

Various leaflets were on display at reception and a Carehome.co.uk review score of 9.8 was visible.

The General Manager was not in on the day of our visit; however, we had the opportunity to ask questions of the Support Manager (they had been with Belong Chester since June 2023), and we were shown around the building by one of the team leaders, who had been there since it opened in 2022.

The nursery in the care village is based on the lower ground floor and is open five days a week (there are 25 children attending currently). Residents can pre-arrange with the nursery to visit the children, or staff can arrange for residents to visit. We were informed some already have arrangements where they can come and go as they wish. One gentleman will read and sing with the children, and last week he was drawing unicorns with them. The children call the residents their "grandfriends".

The Support Manager told Healthwatch that during our visit we should expect to see people recognising Belong as their home, that they are comfortable and happy, and we should see intergenerational and enabling activities. *"It's a vibrant Community". "We support people in a way that they want to be supported, including relatives and friends - it's their second home."*

Treatment and care

Quality of care

We asked the Support Manager various questions about the quality of care in the care village.

Belong uses Fountains Medical Practice and a GP makes weekly visits; there is currently no set day, it varies week to week. When asked if residents can stay with their own GP, the Support Manager explained *"All residents are registered with Fountains, and if a resident comes here for respite, then they will stay with their own GP."*

If a resident becomes unwell and needs additional care, *"We aim to keep the resident here. If they or others were at risk then we would seek further help and the resident would be assessed. If they were to go into hospital, as soon as they were well enough to come back home, they would be assessed and we would have them back as soon as possible."*

A private chiropodist, who goes by the name of Pete the Feet, visits the care village on an ad hoc basis. Residents can also contact the chiropodist if they wish to make an appointment independently.

When asked about links with a dentist, "We don't have a named dentist but Fountains has links with a community dentist so we would go through the GP for a referral."

Belong Chester uses the services of Vision Care who visits regularly to see the residents and performs eye tests within a familiar environment (this enhances the ability to conduct eye tests for those living with dementia). Residents and their families can also choose to source their own provider if they wish.

One resident said, *"We take mum out for the dentist and opticians. She pays for the onsite hairdresser and chiropodist; the GP practice is excellent. There is a dietitian and podiatry."*

Another commented *"For certain services I have to book and attend, or book visiting services."*

Belong uses Boots Pharmacy in Chester, which they said they have a good relationship with.

Other health services that visit the care village include the physiotherapist, the SALT team, dietician, social workers and occupational therapist. *"Belong has two Admiral nurses that visit the eight Belong villages".*

During our tour of Belong, residents were up and in day clothes and appeared to have good personal hygiene. They looked clean and tidy, and were dressed well. All residents looked well cared for.

We heard call bells whilst in the building and were told they would be answered by staff on the relevant floors.

There are various additional facilities in the care village, including a hairdressing salon (open four days a week to the whole community and public), a therapy room (not yet used as such as currently they do not have a therapist) and a gym which is open Monday to Friday. The latter has state of the art equipment for rehabilitation - a Silverfit Mile screen where the user can choose any route to follow whilst cycling or walking, and a Silverfit 3D screen where residents can improve their mobility through different exercise programmes. The exercise specialist explained how, with support from the team, these programmes have helped people who were immobile to walk unaided again, and have helped a resident reduce their chances of falling at night. Staff were keen to emphasis the benefits of mobility. We were told the exercise specialist makes contact with all residents and families to discuss their requirements within the first three days of moving in, and currently 90% of them use the gym in some way (there are one-to-one and group exercise sessions). They explained that the team will work with

external services such as the physiotherapist and neurologist, however all households have access to this facility.

One resident shared *"Exercise and gym sessions are good."*

Privacy, dignity and respect

When asked how Belong ensures privacy, dignity and respect are promoted, *"We are lucky enough to have plenty of space so people can have privacy. We hold private meetings, information is secure, all documents are electronically based, all bedrooms have an ensuite, and we treat people how they would like to be treated. Residents are called by their chosen name and this is respected by the staff".*

Of the two relatives who responded to our survey, both said their loved ones had a good relationship with staff and felt they were safe, respected and had their dignity and privacy maintained.

One resident commented in our survey, *"I would prefer a male carer to help with showering and dressing in the morning."*

A relative said of their loved one*, they "can socialise or go to their own room and be private."*

Regarding support for alternative systems, accessible information, hearing loops and large print information, we were told *"During a resident's initial assessment, we would assess their needs and a care plan would be created. We would then support them depending on their needs, whether it be pictorial or audiology."*

At first it was hard to establish who were care staff and who were residents or visitors, but it was soon noted that staff had a call bell fob card attached to their clothing. Staff were present on each household in the open plan communal areas, and Healthwatch witnessed staff making residents drinks, assisting residents with food, and participating in an aeroplane making activity and talking to residents. All the residents that we encountered seemed happy and comfortable.

Healthwatch observed that staff were very friendly and approachable.

We did not see any personal information on display in the communal areas.

Understanding residents care plans

The Support Manager shared with Healthwatch that residents at Belong have electronic care plans, and there are a minimum of 18 domains (different areas of care) within each plan. They said having separate domains works well for recording information and that this information is more accessible. The care plans are updated every 28 days and reviewed by senior staff and leads. Where able, residents are involved in their plans, and relatives can be involved where appropriate also.

Relationships

Interaction with staff

Healthwatch asked about the relationship between staff and residents, and the Support Manager explained they were like a family. They have key workers called "companions" and residents bond well with their companions. *"You will find quite often on days where staff are off, they will pop in and say hello to residents, and come and have lunch with them. It really is just like one big family."*

A relative shared, *"We have complete trust in the staff."*

We were told Belong's staff have a good relationship with friends and family, who are made to feel welcome. *"This is their village too."*

When asked about name badges, it was explained they were worn by managers but not by other staff. "*We wouldn't wear name badges in our own homes. We don't wear uniforms either for this reason*." However, the Support Manager said that after feedback from residents being confused with who were staff and who were visitors, Belong is in the process of ordering all staff name badges.

During our visit, we observed staff being very friendly, warm and professional. They were helpful and accommodating, and seemed happy

to talk and answer our questions. They talked about what they were trying to achieve, particularly how different Belong is compared to a normal care home, and how the intergenerational approach works. There was a clear presence of calmness which created a warm welcoming environment.

"Mum does have her favourite staff especially those that are physically warm towards her."

Residents and family told Healthwatch the staff are friendly and approachable, and that they listened to any issues that were brought up. *"A garden of Eden"* one resident said. *"It's an atmosphere of caring, giving and sharing."*

A relative in Bluestone household shared with Healthwatch *"I wouldn't want my husband anywhere else; the care here is outstanding. The staff always make me feel welcome and always bring me a cup of tea. When my great grandchildren come, they can play and be children, they are not expected to sit and be quiet, the staff are fantastic with them".*

Staff were enthusiastic about children and residents mixing, and the benefits of this. Stay Play, singing through play and the Doh Disco with children and adults encouraged flexibility and fun. *"Dexterity, hand eye coordination etc improve. It gives the residents a purpose and some become intergenerational champions. These champions will advocate the benefits of residents' and tenants' interaction."*

Other comments received from residents and friends of residents:

"The staff cannot do enough on Handbridge household".

"The staff are amazing. The level of care and attention is excellent. It is always beautifully clean and tidy."

"Very pleasant staff and very helpful."

When asked what they thought was the best thing about life at the care home, replies included:

"Home from home, family unit set up, no uniforms, facilities for social opportunities."

"Location, design of my apartment. The facilities which are offered in the Belong building."

"I feel safe. The food. The friendly caring people."

"Safety in older age."

Is there anything you would change? *"They need more staff!"*

Feedback from one relative, *"There were a few niggles early on with the lack of consistency of the same staff, staff came and went and there were agency staff, but they have been resolved since we spoke up. There was an incident when they were painting her nails and she drank the nail varnish remover. She was Ok and they phoned us immediately after asking for medical advice. We felt a real duty of candour, honesty and trust. They explained the changes they had made and what they had learnt."*

There is an onsite training hub in Belong Chester where inhouse training is provided to all staff (domestic, maintenance and care staff receive the same training). They have a four-day induction which includes basic first aid and training in safeguarding, dysphagia, and manual handling. Dementia training is also provided inhouse (Belong follows the Gold Standard Framework). Everyone has Namaste* training.

*Namaste is specifically tailored to people living with advanced dementia. Namaste sessions are run by trained carers and involve individual caring touch, such as a hand or foot massages, music therapy, themed sensory and gentle movement sessions, or simply reminiscing.

Connection with friends and family

The Support Manager told Healthwatch that residents and staff keep in touch with friends and family via the telephone, Teams meetings and relatives' meetings. Visitors are welcome at any time at Belong. *"If someone wanted to come and visit their mum every night at 9pm to say goodnight, that is very much welcomed".*

A resident shared *"My wife lives in an apartment in the same building and she will help with any phone calls."*

When asked how infection outbreaks impact visiting, it was explained it can still take place whilst following their guidelines. Relatives would be informed of the situation and if they still wished to visit their loved ones, Belong would provide them with the correct PPE.

Friends and relatives can raise complaints, concerns or give feedback in the relatives' meetings which are held bi-monthly in each household. The Support Manager said *"I make sure I attend every other meeting at least. Relatives can also speak to myself or another member of staff in person, over the telephone or by email."*

We also spoke to family members of another resident who praised the home. *"We are all seen as a team, an effective team. There is trust and transparency here, they listen to us and respond. On one occasion there was an incident with our mum but they contacted us immediately, they shared with us what they had learnt and what they had changed. The ethos is as a small household and everyone mixes if they want to. They are encouraged to participate in almost everything from cooking to activities like reading to the children, staff value our input."* They told us they were particularly impressed with the PCS (personal care system) where all activities and care were tracked daily. They could access this at anytime on a mobile phone or tablet.

Wider Local Community

Belong's involvement within the wider community has involved hosting a Silver Pride Event celebration with the LGBTQ community and was open to the local community of Chester. There is a weekly dementia group run by the Admiral nurses called B's. This is also open to the public who can come to seek free advice from the nurses and socialise with other attendees. Belong has taken part in the annual Chester duck race, and has visited the local Cathedral.

Everyday Life at the Care Home

Activities

There are four members of staff in Belong's Experience Team, covering weekdays, some evenings and weekends. They offer a variety of activities, for example: group crosswords, movie nights, quizzes, monthly poetry club, pub nights, pool tournaments and bingo. Sometimes they will visit the local pub. Belong has a seasonal gardening club which uses the garden room on the lower ground floor, and members of households can drop into the "repair shop" there. There is also an intergenerational choir, and often the children from the nursery will join residents for intergenerational activities.

"Mum loves the interaction with the children as she was a primary school teacher. The intergenerational activities are wonderful and she joins in the choir and the prambles (pram rambles)."

Belong has recently had a visit from an orchestra and young lambs have been brought in. The nursery has been hatching chicken eggs with the children, and residents helped with the care off the eggs, especially on weekends when the nursery was closed.

The Experience Team will let residents know what is going on each day, and printed "What's On" activities schedules were available in different font sizes at the reception desk and around the care village. May's showed activities for each day of the week, often one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Residents can interact either in a large group or a more intimate group, or on a one-to-one basis. The staff try to engage all the residents if possible. We were told that some activities with the children are spontaneous. For example, they may come up to the Bistro with board games to play with the residents or visitors. The children (with staff) will use all communal areas, and residents can be as involved as much as they want to be. Many will read to the children.

We were told residents can discuss what activities they would like to take place with the Experience Team and in residents' meetings.

For those who do not leave their rooms, the Experience Team will often visit residents for one-to-one activities. Known as "Activities on Tour", residents can participate in whichever activity they wish, even if it is just a conversation.

The Support Manager shared with Healthwatch that a member of staff learnt how to play Rummikub so they were able to play with the resident who they were a companion to. Belong has a small group of staff/companions who play with the residents.

The care village celebrates special events and just recently it held a Ladies' Day for Aintree Races.

Both residents and family who talked to Healthwatch commented that birthdays were celebrated as were other events such as Eurovision, Chester Races and Halloween.

The Support Manager shared with Healthwatch that Belong likes to take residents out locally, and they have received some tickets for Chester Zoo and will be visiting there soon. Belong does not have its own transport, but has contracts with local taxi firms.

Feedback from a relative, *"We would however like to request a mini bus for outings. There are taxis sometimes but it would be good for residents to go out together. It could be shared across the NW villages."*

During our walk around the home, we observed a couple of residents making paper aeroplanes with two activities staff in their creative room. The staff were interacting with the residents and listening to what they wanted to do. *"It's all about giving people choices when it comes to activities. Households can drop in whenever they like and can also book certain activities. Today we are making paper aeroplanes and then this afternoon we are doing exercise."* The Monet project (a month of celebrating Monet) was a suggestion from a resident and we were told all ages embraced the project in different ways.

Healthwatch observed some of the nursery children going into the creative room with staff, saying hello to the residents and playing with the aeroplanes. The nursery can also book this room if they wish to use it.

When asked if the person they are visiting is kept up to date with what activities are happening each week, responses included:

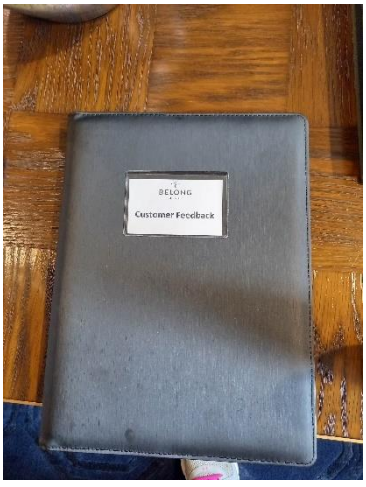
"Planners are given to him every month."

"As his wife I would like his carers to try to encourage him to mix more."

Person Centred Experience

We asked the Support Manager how they ensured residents' experiences were person centred. They told us when a resident has their initial assessment, their likes, dislikes and what they wish to be involved in is recorded in a live document called "My life". This is adapted as and when required. "My life" includes information about their family tree, what their occupation was, where they enjoy travelling and so on. Residents often take part in Armchair Travel. One lady loved Jamaica and staff created Armchair Travel to Jamaica, which included sensory items, the fragrance of pineapples and the sea, and the touch of sand.

Belong uses Person Centred Software (PSC) which includes the full care plans for each resident, and can be used as a communication tool also. It can be accessed by staff and relatives on mobile phones and tablets. It was explained that staff are encouraged to make entries hourly, and relatives can make requests or ask questions through the software.



Regarding how to feedback or make a complaint, we were told a resident could speak to a member of staff, the manager or raise it in a residents' meeting which every household holds bi-monthly. There is a formal complaints procedure which families were aware of. Relatives who completed a survey, or who we spoke with, said concerns were listened to and dealt with. However more serious issues could be raised confidentially.

One resident shared they would *"Discuss with staff at reception"* any concerns or complaints.

Healthwatch asked if there is provision for religious or spiritual needs, and the Support Manager explained they have a monthly church service.

Pets are not able to live at the care village but they are allowed supervised visits.

Communal Areas

Each household at Belong has an open plan communal lounge, dining area and kitchen, and does not have the usual care home feel. Households also have a good-sized balcony overlooking the canal so residents can people watch.

While being shown around one occupied household, we saw numerous staff, and one helping a resident eat their lunch.

We found décor was bright, inviting and of a high standard with a good contrast of colour. The lighting and heating were extremely comfortable. The corridors are very wide on all floors and very accessible for those with mobility aids. We were told that the public liked to visit the Bistro because it is wheelchair friendly. There were contemporary and traditional art works that represented Chester and many positive quotes on the walls throughout the care village.

One resident shared *"Downstairs and corridor areas are very clean and tidy."*

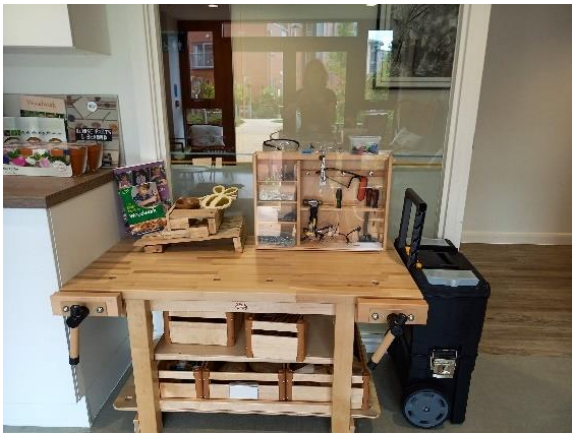
There is a communal large room, called the Venue, which is open every day and can be used for birthday celebrations and pub quizzes. It has a small pool table, duke box and a bar (open a couple of evenings a week).

The furniture is in excellent condition, much of it new and modern, as would be expected in a new care home.

The air was very fresh and the only noise we heard was chatter in the Bistro and when residents were socialising together.

Communal bathrooms are situated on each floor, and these are well equipped and have mood lighting. There are also large separate toilets along the corridors and in communal areas.

There are quiet sitting areas, a library and the garden room where, we were told, residents could help with any repairs to furniture or soft toys brought in, with the supervision of the maintenance staff. Creative items, such as pottery made by residents and the nursery children, were on display throughout the care village.



Near the reception on the ground floor and the nursery entrance (lower ground) there were post boxes, so residents, children and visitors can send notes, Christmas cards and birthday cards to each other.

A resident shared that they think the best thing about life at the care village is *"Mixing with other people."*

Another said the best thing was *"Stimulation – making friends, choice."*

Residents' bedrooms

All 72 single rooms at Belong have ensuite bathrooms. There are also three guest rooms which can be used for respite stay or if family visiting a resident require a room (for a charge). If the guest suite is for use by family when a resident is at end of life, there is no charge.

We were told residents are welcome to make their rooms feel like their own, and can take in as many personal possessions as they wish and would fit safely. While Healthwatch was on a tour around the care village, it was noted that residents' rooms (where doors were open) had personal items and rooms looked very homely.

A relative shared, *"They do let us shower mum."*

Each bedroom door had a photograph of the resident occupying it. The rooms vary in size and many had balconies. We were informed each bed has a sensor under the mattress, which monitors the circulatory rate of the body. If residents get out of bed at night, an alarm will sound if they do not return within a specific time (this can be set to different times depending on the resident's needs).

The Support Manager explained that couples can live in the care village together and they will accommodate this as much as possible. Fees are charged per person, so Belong suggests to couples wishing to share that they use one room as a bedroom and the second room as a lounge.

It was explained that the care village does not use medication trolleys, but there are locked medication cabinets in the residents' wardrobes.

Each bedroom has a telephone port and Wi-Fi.

There was plenty of natural light, and all rooms appeared to have windows and some have views of the canal or road.

Feedback we received from residents and family include:

"Very pleasant room overlooking a busy street leading to the railway station."

"For some staff to appreciate that the room is the resident's home and walking in without a knock or, by your leave, is suggesting this is not so and can be quite intrusive. It only takes a moment to knock but gives the resident some ownership of their room."

Outdoor areas

There is a lovely outside shared space (off the garden room) with tables, chairs and benches, where residents are able to see the nursery garden and watch the children play with the sound of laughter.

The team leader told us residents grew potatoes in the accessible planters last year. The area is maintained to a high standard with many lovely flowers, shrubs and trees.

The garden is accessible via lifts and stairs, and some residents would be supervised, especially those with special needs and dementia, in this outside area. It was explained that the residents do not have access to the nursery and the

nursery does not have access to the care home from the garden. The door leading onto the patio is alarmed in the evening.

Food and drink

The Support Manager shared the ethos of Belong, that "*cooking smells encourage people to eat*". The care village has its own catering staff and menus for the week are displayed pictorially in a folder for residents. Choices change daily and there are two options for each meal time. Food is usually pre-prepared the day before but if residents do not want what is on offer, there are alternative options. On the day, meals are prepared in the Bistro and then sent up to the households. Staff will then finish off the dish, for example adding cheese to the top of a cottage pie, and warm the food up. This way the aroma of food cooking is present in the households.

There is flexibility at Belong with when meals are eaten (there are no set times). Main meals can be at either lunch or tea time; staff work around the residents.

It was noted that residents were able to have a choice of food if visiting a different household, as one household was having a meal from the set menu and another was having jacket potatoes and salad because they did not want the options offered for lunch.

Each household's open plan kitchen and dining area are attractive, bright and welcoming. The kitchens are well equipped and have a store of tinned and dried items in the kitchen cupboards, and fresh/chilled food in the fridges, which residents can help themselves to. There are homemade ready meals in the freezer to accommodate residents who want something different to the offered meal option.

"It is my mother, she has been here since August 2022. My sister and I live in Chester so we moved her from Warrington. She is 84 and has mild dementia. The home has an ethos as a small household, my mum can get to know the other residents. The food is cooked freshly in the kitchens that are open plan into the dining room and our mum can help if she wishes. She likes to tidy up and clean skirting boards, they let her get on with that.

We feel a part of one team with great accessibility, there is always someone to talk to. The staff listen and value our input as relatives."

Residents can choose where they would like to eat, and this is usually in the Bistro during opening times or the household dining areas. If they wish to eat in the Bistro, the cost of the meal is included in their fees (independent living tenants would have to purchase food from the Bistro). If residents wish to have branded items, such as crisps and chocolate, there is a small charge, and residents and tenants alike can use their prepaid Belong card. We were informed dementia residents are encouraged to help with kitchen duties and cooking in the households, and their nutrition is monitored daily.

Comments from relatives included, *"A newly recruited Chef in the Bistro is very good."*

"Daily menu and alternatives if he doesn't want them."

"It would be lovely if the Bistro could stay open until 4 o'clock. Family who can only visit pm lose out on the opportunity to share a coffee out the home environment – just drinks and cakes!"

The Support Manager shared with Healthwatch that Belong cater for different dietary requirements including fortified diets. They also cater for those requiring soft, pureed and liquid diets (soft diets are all moulded to look more appealing).

"Relatives and friends can join residents at any time for a meal, there is no need to book as there is always plenty of food available, and there is the Bistro too."

Residents are invited to eat with some of the children in the Bistro and will support them with eating (nursery staff take different groups up each day).

During our visit, Healthwatch staff were offered a drink, and enjoyed coffee and a biscuit.

Some responses received in our surveys include:

"He can eat where he wishes.", "He enjoys the Bistro as well."

"The catering staff really should consult with households and be aware that many residents require "wet" food support. Sauces/gravies to be available."

"Food can be a bit spicy or greasy at times. Would be nice to have more fruit available."

Care Home Best Practice Initiatives

During Enter and View visits, Healthwatch observe which NHS care initiatives have been adopted at the care home. The three we focus on are:

MUST (Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool)	A tool used to identify adults who are malnourished, at risk of malnutrition(undernutrition), or obesity. It also includes management guidelines which can be used to develop a care plan.
Restore2 (Recognise Early Soft-signs, Take Observations, Respond, Escalate)	A tool designed to help staff recognise when a resident may be deteriorating or at risk of physical deterioration and act appropriately according to their care plan to protect and manage the resident.
RITA (Reminiscence /Rehabilitation & Interactive Therapy Activities)	A digital reminiscence therapy with user-friendly interactive screens and tablets to blend entertainment with therapy. It assists patients (particularly with memory impairments) in recalling and sharing events from their past through listening to music, watching news reports of significant historical events, listening to war-time speeches, playing games and karaoke and watching films.

Belong care village uses both MUST and Restore. RITA is not used but they have interactive tablets which are similar.

We asked the Support Manager what their biggest challenge had been, and they shared that it had been being involved in a new care village. They explained *"carrying out 10 interviews a day, having safe staffing levels, recruiting staff ready for new households to open, the nursery, numerous tours and enquires. It's been very busy but fantastic. Being an intergenerational care village has brought lots of attention. We've been on Granada Reports, on TV in Germany and even in America on the Drew Barrymore Show."*

They also shared with us that the Sankofa Choir has been one of the biggest achievements for Belong. *"Hearing the joy it brings, it's not just about the nursery, it's the joy the music brings to everyone."*

The Sankofa Choir is an intergenerational choir created at Belong by the charity Ready Generations, involving both residents and children from the nursey.

Additional information provided to Healthwatch

Experience Days

Belong Village offers day care (10am - 4pm) and anyone attending these "experience days" will be treated the same as a resident. They are able to enjoy all activities, lunch, visit the Bistro and much more. There can be up to six people booked on these at one time, and we were told there were three people attending experience days one day a week at the time. There was one gentleman in the creative room on an experience day during our visit.

Belong at Home

Belong at Home is a domiciliary service offered to support the community and individuals in the apartments at Belong. The service helps people by maintaining their interest and being part of the community. Belong at Home offers help around the house, Belong friends (enjoying a chat and cup of tea), supporting hobbies and activities at home, help attending

appointments, personal assistance, providing wellbeing coaches and dementia expertise.

Recommendations

- Consider involving residents in choosing which activities takes place.
- Keep the Bistro open later so family and friends can enjoy the food and space with the residents into the early evening.
- Encourage catering staff to consult with households regarding dietary requirements such as needing wet food.
- Consider having the use of a minibus to take residents further afield occasionally.

What's working well?

- The intergenerational approach particularly regarding activities. The children learning whilst being with the residents, and both the children and residents inspiring and motivating each other.
- This could be replicated and shared with other care home owners as a really inspirational approach to caring, where children learn from the older generation.
- The wide variety of activities provided by the activities team.
- Communication - staff seem to listen and respond to residents.
- Staff praised one another - great team work.
- The provision of a rehabilitation gym to help mobilise the residents.
- The variety of food options and flexibility with meal times.
- Residents are given 'choice' in many aspects of their care.
- Well maintained building and garden - good maintenance team.

- Belong appeared well run by management.
- The onsite training facility which enables continuous training, potentially creating a high standard of care.

Service Provider Response

Re involvement of residents planning activities

Our Experience Day Coordinator meets with each new resident on moving in to discuss their preferences regarding activities. We hold regular resident and relatives' meetings (approximately bimonthly). We will ensure that the Experience Day Coordinator attends these meetings at least quarterly to give a greater emphasis on activity provision and inclusion in activity planning.

Re Bistro opening hours and planning of food for households

Additional Bistro hours have been recruited since the inspection to give greater flexibility in opening hours of the Bistro.

We have recruited a full time Household Catering Lead who will liaise and coordinate the communication and provision of food from the Bistro to the households.

Re minibus

We are exploring various options, including how to source our own minibus. We are also in discussions with a national company who specifically arrange and provide transport for trips/days out.

In regards to feedback from the visit and your inspectors, I wasn't at work the day you visited, but all the feedback has been positive, the visit was well received and feedback regarding the people conducting the inspection was that they were friendly, considerate and interested in how Customers felt about the service they receive.

I have been involved with the Healthwatch Enter and View at my previous Belong Village in Macclesfield and can reiterate that it has always been a positive experience.

General Manager