healthwatch Cheshire West

Enter and View Report

Sandiway Lodge Nursing Home

Dalefords Lane, Sandiway,

Northwich, CW8 2DR

14 July 2025

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Report Details

Address	Sandiway Lodge Nursing Home, Dalefords Lane, Sandiway, Northwich, CW8 2DR
Service Provider	SpringCare
Date of Visit	14th July 2025
Type of Visit	Unannounced
Representatives	Jem Davies Jodie Hamilton
Date of previous visits by Healthwatch Cheshire West	13th November 2018

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-view
- www.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 our 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.

Sandiway Lodge Nursing Home

Sandiway Lodge Nursing Home is a nursing and residential care home located in Sandiway, Northwich. The home is operated by Spring Care Ltd and provides care for up to 36 residents many of whom are living with dementia and have other nursing needs. The home is operated by Spring Care Ltd and aims to offer a safe, person-centred environment that promotes independent, dignity and inclusion. The home is located just off a main road within a residential area with local amenities such as a pub, restaurants, small shops and Blakemere Activity Village a short walk away.

Residents and Relative's feedback

Prior to our visit Sandiway Lodge Nursing Home was provided with surveys for both residents and their relatives. We received a total of 9 resident surveys and 13 from their relatives. The feedback gathered through these surveys has been used to inform this report. At the time of our visit there were 35 residents living at the home.

Findings

Arriving at the care home

Environment

Sandiway Lodge Nursing Home is easy to locate as it is well signposted off Chester Road. The home itself is a large 'manor style' building and within its grounds is a large car park. The area is well maintained.

The home has a secure front entrance with a bell system in place to alert staff to the arrival of visitors, contributing to a safe and controlled environment. The entrance was small but functional, there were several posters and notices displayed providing useful information which included a clearly displayed CQC rating of GOOD, the complaints procedure and a Healthwatch poster and information regarding our visit.

Healthwatch representatives were warmly greeted by the care home's Administrator, who asked us to sign the visitors' book and then introduced us to the care home Manager. The Manager responded to a series of questions about residents' care, treatment, and experiences at the home, the responses to which are referenced throughout this report. Healthwatch was given a tour of the home by the Deputy Manager, providing an opportunity to observe daily life within the care setting.

The reception area at Sandiway Lodge is large, spacious and beautifully decorated.

There is a wide central staircase which leads upstairs where there are four bedrooms. The area is welcoming and all staff greeted us in a friendly way. Various areas around reception displayed useful information for both residents and visitors, including the latest CQC report, Carehome.co.uk

review cards, the weekly food menu, “Employee of the Month” recognition, tips on staying hydrated, and the complaints procedure.

There were also practical amenities such as a hydration station, a coffee station, and a comfortable seating area. A toilet is located within the reception area.

A standout feature was the “Dignity Tree,” which displayed photos of both residents and staff. On the back of each photo, individuals had answered the question, “What does dignity mean to me?” Responses included statements such as “Treat me how you would want to be treated,” “Privacy,” “Respect,” “Using common sense when dealing with people,” and “Respect my needs and wishes.”

The reception area was pleasantly cool, with a fan helping to maintain a comfortable temperature. Additionally, a lift provided easy access to the first floor.

Treatment and care

When Healthwatch asked the Manager what we should be seeing during our visit they told us *“a family feel across the home, lots of caring interactions, teamwork amongst staff, activities taking place and hopefully some visits”.*

Residents were asked in the surveys what they felt was the best thing about life at Sandiway Lodge; all the responses were positive and residents told us that they valued the friendly environment, the sense of safety and the companionship they experienced in the home. One resident stated *“Having staff here 24hrs to help me and make me feel safe.”*

A re-occurring theme was that residents really enjoyed having people around them and feeling safe.

Relatives were also asked what they felt was the best thing about their loved one’s life at Sandiway Lodge. Their responses highlighted an appreciation for the care provided and particularly praising the staff’s kindness, professionalism and approachability.

One relative *said "Wonderful care – the staff from top to bottom care so much and are all approachable"*. Whilst another told us *"The staff are very caring and considerate, they bought my mum a table to facilitate her art work."*

Quality of care

When asked about the quality of healthcare services provided at the home the Manager told us they have a very good relationship with Oakwood Medical Centre, Barnton. The GPs visit every week and will come more frequently if needed. The home also receives support from the Advanced Nurse Practitioner Service for acute needs. All residents are registered with Oakwood, however they are welcome to remain with their own GP, although due to the service that Oakwood Medical Centre provides residents usually opt to transfer.

In respect of hospital care we were told that primarily the home uses Leighton Hospital and there are no issues regarding admissions. There have been a couple of occasions when residents have been discharged from hospital without medication or late in the evening. They added that due to having 24-hour nursing on site that, fortunately, they do not have frequent admissions or discharges. The home does not have any designated discharge beds.

The Manager told us that accessing dental services remains a challenge. *"We struggle like a lot of homes, we do use the community referral route but there is such a long wait. The GPs don't like to get involved in anything dental."*

On a more positive note, we were told that the home has a very good relationship with Eye Care On Call for optician services, who provide residents with their own individual care plans, named glasses and a photo of the resident's glasses. They have also provided a large pictorial menu for display in the home to help residents make their meal choices. The home told us that their linked pharmacy is Boots and that on the whole they have a good service from them.

Other visiting health professionals include speech and language therapist (SALT), dietician, physiotherapist, occupational health and district nurses all of whom contribute to supporting residents' health needs.

Residents we observed during the visit appeared cared for, with good attention given to personal care. Some residents remained in their rooms whilst others were using the various communal areas across the home and being involved in an activity. Several call bells went off during the visit, and staff responded promptly each time.

The home also features a small, basic hair salon, which is visited weekly by a hairdresser. Additionally, a barber attends the home to provide grooming services for male residents.

Privacy, dignity and respect

All residents who responded to the survey reported feeling well cared for, safe and respected and their dignity maintained. All residents felt they had privacy. All residents who completed the survey answered "Yes" to all questions indicating a sense of well-being and positive experiences within the home.

The survey feedback shows that most relatives feel their loved ones are cared for, safe and respected, have their dignity maintained, and have privacy. One relative felt "*some staff would rather be somewhere else".*

The Manager told us privacy, dignity and respect are incredibly important within the home. They have a dedicated member of staff who is a 'Dignity Champion', who cascades training regularly to their colleagues. We were shown the Dignity In Care Policy that the home uses called 'Your Care Plan – Just For You' – a one-page information sheet for residents and relatives about how the home provides personalised care to meet their needs. This was introduced following a discussion in a residents' and relatives' meeting whereby it became clear that residents did not understand what a care plan was.

Healthwatch observed that at lunchtime, staff asked residents where they would like to sit and offered them a choice of drinks with their meals. Staff were seen treating residents with respect throughout the home, providing assistance where necessary while also encouraging independence - for example, walking closely behind residents who require a little mobility support.

During our visit we did not see any personal information on display.

The Manager told us in order to help residents make choices, they use pictorial menus, use large print information, offer 'Yes' 'No' cards. They also use technology such as smart speakers to assist some residents with visual impairment.

We observed a large pictorial menu in Reception which was provided by 'Eye Care On Call'. The Manager told us that if they have items on their menu that they don't have a picture of they will call them and they will provide them.

Understanding residents care plans

The Manager told us that care plans are reviewed monthly as a minimum and more frequently if required. Residents, family, professionals and staff have involvement in the plans, but the Manager told us it is very important that the resident's voice is heard. The home's 'Your Care Plan – Just For You' helps residents and their relatives understand this and provides an easy way to ensure the residents' needs and wishes are respected and catered for as soon as they entered the home.

We were told that the home has a 'resident of the day' where their needs are discussed in the morning. At present this mainly concerns their medical and care needs, although the Manager told us she is hoping to expand this to incorporate all aspects of the home life, e.g. catering and maintenance.

In order to support relatives the home has produced a simple leaflet entitled 'Future Wishes and End of Life Care'. This provides them with information and support to help their loved ones through the process.

Relationships

Interaction with staff

When asked about the relationship between staff and residents, the Manager explained it is *"family-like, warm and friendly, this helps by having a lot of long-standing staff who have built some lovely relationships with residents and their families.".*

All residents who completed the Healthwatch survey said they had a good relationship with staff and really appreciated how caring they were and enjoyed their company.

Relatives shared similar sentiments, with one commenting, *"Wonderful care, the staff team from the top to the bottom care so much and are all so approachable".*

Another noted *"All staff are kind and supportive, my relative feels safe."*

The Manager told us that the home holds relatives' and residents' meetings together every three months; we were shown the minutes of the most recent two meetings. They explained it has proved to be a good way of ensuring the residents' opinions are listened to and how the home can meet their needs and wishes. A very good example of this was residents voiced that they missed making their own bread. It was decided that the home would purchase a bread maker and the home's Activity Coordinator would help residents make their own bread and all could enjoy it afterwards.

During our visit staff were observed engaging with residents and having friendly conversations around the tables at lunchtime before meals were served. They were also attentive when residents were moving around the home, checking in to ensure they were okay and offering support as needed. Staff were warm and welcoming to Healthwatch representatives.

All staff wear name badges and a uniform appropriate to their role.

In terms of agency staff, we were told the home uses them occasionally, primarily through their preferred providers. The Manager explained they try to use the same staff and they are always 'buddied up' with a permanent

member of staff. Training for agency staff is managed via profiles maintained by the agency, ensuring staff are up to date with the required competencies.

Connection with friends and family

In the surveys completed by residents at Sandiway Lodge, residents told us that they keep in touch with friends and relatives by having visitors. Whilst relatives told us that they visit their loved one or staff help them use their telephone or Ipad to make contact. The response to our survey suggests that residents are well supported in maintaining contact with their family and friends.

There are no set visiting times at Sandiway Lodge, although most visitors tend to come during the daytime. Visitors are asked to sign in and out when they arrive and leave. While there are no formal restrictions around meal times, families generally avoid visiting during these periods unless their presence helps to encourage the resident.

In the event of an infection outbreak, the home contacts infection control for advice and follows the guidance provided. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is made available for visitors. The Manager shared that most visitors would choose to postpone or rearrange their visit under these circumstances.

The management shared that residents, friends and relatives can raise concerns or provide feedback by speaking directly to staff and are encouraged to do so at the earliest opportunity. There is a copy of the complaints policy in each resident's room and prominently displayed throughout the home. Quarterly meetings are held with residents and relatives to provide them with another opportunity to voice their opinions.

The Manager also told us that she had recently implemented a 'Suggestions Box' which has been well received by all. As a result they have recently purchased some additional garden furniture for residents to enjoy.

When we asked relatives whether they knew how to provide feedback, raise concerns, or make a complaint, all relatives who responded to the survey answered yes. Most felt confident in how to do so, and several shared their views on the process. Relatives told us *"I would speak with the nurse", "use*

the suggestions box", "speak with the Manager", "all staff are approachable to I could speak to anyone".

These responses suggest that relatives who completed the survey feel well-informed and comfortable giving feedback when needed, and that there is a strong culture of openness and responsiveness at the home.

Whilst Healthwatch was at Sandiway Lodge we saw residents receiving visits from family and friends.

Wider Local Community

The Manager shared with us that Sandiway Lodge has established some good connections with the wider community. These include Pettypool College who will visit during the year, a church choir visits monthly and the home receives two church visits a month.

Sandiway Lodge has recently been approached by Crowfest, who would like to include the Home in their annual local festival. They are aiming to establish a link with a local primary school going forward. The home is fortunate to have access to transport so residents can visit local attractions such as Blakemere Village and local shops.

Everyday Life at the Care Home

Activities

Sandiway Lodge employs two Activiity Coordinators who between them provide activities seven days a week. During our visit, an activity session was taking place, led by an external facilitator with the home's Activity Coordinator also participating. The session was a chair-based dance exercise, and several residents in the lounge had joined in and appeared to be enjoying themselves.

The home offers a wide variety of activities, including rock painting, spa yoga, horse racing, live music, football viewings, and baking sessions. Activity planners were displayed throughout the home, and each resident also has a personal copy of the planner in their bedroom.

There was evidence of celebrations taking place in the hallway near the dining room, there were several photographs of residents enjoying live music and activities.

Residents are taken out on day trips to places such as the garden centre and Blakemere craft centre. They have also been shopping in Broughton. The home shares a minibus within the care home providers chain Spring Care which they have access to at least once a month.

We were told about a resident who prefers to do craft activities on their own and that the home had purchased a table for them for this purpose. Their work is then displayed across the home.

For those residents who are unable to leave their rooms the Activity Coordinators will provide 1-2-1 sessions to provide company and stimulation.

We were told that although there is a programme of events it is very much led by the residents as to the activity.

Person Centred Experience

The Manager told us that in order to provide a person-centred experience for residents it is vital that their voice is at the centre of all they do. They carry out a thorough needs assessment and take time to speak with the resident and relatives about their likes and dislikes. We were told that once these have been established, the Home fits their care around this, such as knowing the resident's routine – when they like to get up, go to bed.

As previously mentioned, examples of a craft table and bread maker are some of the ways the home has ensured it meets the needs of its residents.

One relative who completed our survey told *us "All staff from all the departments are very friendly, welcoming and go above and beyond in everything they do for my relative and myself."* Healthwatch surveys for both residents and relatives showed that the complaints procedure is well known and people have confidence in raising concerns.

Communal Areas

The home was free from unpleasant odours and benefited from ample natural light. It is a large building, with communal areas that have been recently updated and decorated to a high standard. The main lounge is spacious and beautifully decorated, with furniture that complements the overall décor. The dining room features stunning high ceilings and includes a separate seating area, adding to its welcoming atmosphere. Additionally, there is a conservatory with two seating areas available for residents; this space can also be used privately by residents and their relatives for special occasions or celebrations.

All communal areas have been modernised and maintained to a high standard. The hallways leading to the bedrooms are wide and equipped with handrails, although some areas appeared slightly worn and would benefit from refurbishment. A lift provides access to the upper floor, ensuring accessibility throughout the home.

Throughout the building, the walls are displayed with local artwork and photographs of popular spots in Northwich. This thoughtful décor serves as meaningful memorabilia for residents, offering a comforting sense of familiarity and connection to the local area.

The home featured communal toilets, bathrooms, and shower rooms on both floors. These facilities were clean and spacious, although some areas, such as the communal bathrooms, appeared a bit outdated, in keeping with the overall décor.

Residents' bedrooms

During our visit to the care home we observed that the bedrooms varied in size. All the bedrooms benefitted from natural lighting and views of the surrounding grounds of the home. Residents' bedrooms also varied in layout, with some consisting of just a bedroom, while others included a sink, a sink and basin, or a full en-suite. All rooms observed during the visit appeared to have been personalised by residents with their own belongings and decorations, giving each space a homely and individual feel.

Outdoor areas

The home features a very spacious garden, accessed via steps leading from the patio doors in the dining area. A beautiful original garden feature is present, which the home plans to enhance further with floral decorations. Whilst there are some raised planters we were told that the home is seeking to increase the number of them.

There are several seating areas throughout the garden, some offering more shade than others to suit residents' preferences. We were told residents use this area daily and the home also holds BBQs and family events in this space. Additionally, the home provides a designated smoking area for those who require it.

Food and drink

The dining room at the care home is a stunning space, featuring high ceilings and tasteful décor. It was very clean and tidy, with furniture that complemented the overall design. The room felt warm, welcoming, and spacious, and benefited from an abundance of natural light, creating a pleasant and comfortable environment for residents to enjoy their meals.

Sandiway Lodge has its own kitchen and prepares and cooks all food on the premises. To support residents to make choices the home uses pictorial menus, which are displayed throughout the building. In the dining room, each table had a daily menu featuring clear images of the meal options to support residents in making informed choices. Staff were observed assisting residents to the dining area and helping those who required additional support to prepare for their meal.

Cold drinks were offered before meals, and residents were also given the option of having soup as a starter. Staff wore appropriate PPE while serving food, and all residents appeared comfortable and content during the mealtime.

The Manager, residents and their relatives all told us that a member of the catering team would visit the resident each morning to ascertain what they would like to eat that day. There are usually two choices on offer, however, should a resident wish for something else, this is accommodated. There are snacks available to residents throughout the day which include fruit, cake, biscuits, cheese and biscuits and crumpets. Hot and cold drinks are continually available.

We were told that that the home caters for the dietary needs of all its residents; at present these include those on soft diets, fortified meals, vegetarian and gluten free menus.

Residents' feedback on food and drink was positive. The majority of residents stated they were happy with the quality, taste and choice of food as well as the availability of snacks and drinks. A small number of residents stated that they would like the food to be warmer.

On the day of the visit, two lunch options were available: hunter's chicken or fish cakes, both served with potatoes and vegetables. Dessert options included homemade carrot cake or fresh fruit. We observed residents having lunch

in the dining room; they were supported by a number of staff to make choices and with eating and drinking if required. All the interactions we observed were friendly, warm and caring. Staff provided assistance where required and the atmosphere was sociable.

Biggest challenges... The Manager told us that Pathway 3 Brokerage System regarding the three-monthly reviews is a challenge. The home is often chosen for what they can provide for the resident to meet their needs, however upon review their costings are challenged and the resident may have to move homes.

Biggest success to date... The Manager told *us "I feel we continually strive to create the best for each resident. We have good staff retention which provides stability for residents.".*

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.

The Manager shared that the home uses MUST initiatives. The home also uses an activity table and games projector to support residents.

Sandiway Lodge has previously engaged with the End of Life Partnership, however funding has been removed by the local authority in Cheshire West and Chester. The home has used the knowledge they have gained to produce the Future Wishes and End of Life Care leaflet.

Recommendations

- Clear and dementia-friendly signage throughout the building could further support resident independence and ease of navigation.
- There are steps leading from the dining area to the garden. Consideration could be given to adding a ramp or alternative accessible routes for residents who use wheelchairs or have limited mobility, to ensure everyone can enjoy the outdoor space independently.
- Share the leaflet regarding Future Wishes and End of Life of Care with Spring Care for other homes to benefit.
- Consider adopting a wider approach to 'Resident of the Day' to include all departments within the home.
- Consideration to updating some areas of the home to provide a consistence standard across the whole building.

What's working well?

- Clean, spacious, and well-decorated environment across the building creating a homely feel.
- Engaged and caring staff - Staff we observed in respectful, warm and supportive interactions, particularly during mealtimes. Staff were observed responding quickly to the call bell system.
- Good variety of activities and events taking place across the home and the wider community.
- Personalised bedrooms – Rooms were decorated with residents' own photos, ornaments and furniture, helping to create a homely and familiar environment.
- Resident dignity and independence promoted.
- Strong family engagement and visitor feedback.
- Well maintained and accessible garden – The garden benefits from a large, covered patio area ensuring residents can use it all year round.

Service Provider Response

Recommendation Clear and dementia-friendly signage throughout the building could further support resident independence and ease of navigation.
Service provider's response Recommendation will further support resident's independence and ease of navigation around the home
Action **Dementia-friendly signage has been implemented to communal areas and bathroom facilities.**
Recommendation 2 There are steps leading from the dining area to the garden. Consideration could be given to adding a ramp or alternative accessible routes for residents who use wheelchairs or have limited mobility, to ensure everyone can enjoy the outdoor space independently.
Service provider's response The access to the garden is via the main entrance with a laid pathway and additional access via a ramp is from the conservatory area. All residents who have limited mobility or require a wheelchair are able to safely access the garden via these routes.
Action Recommendation will be discussed with operations team for consideration.
Recommendation 3 Share the leaflet regarding Future Wishes and End of Life of Care with Spring Care for other homes to benefit

Service provider's response The Future Wishes and End of Life Care leaflet aids supporting resident's and loved ones to make informed choices around their care at this time.
Action The leaflet will be distributed for all care homes to utilise when supporting resident's and their loved one to make choices around Future wishes and End of life care.
Recommendation 4 Consider adopting a wider approach to 'Resident of the Day' to include all departments within the home.
Service provider's response A wider approach to 'Resident of the Day' had been discussed prior to Healthwatch's visit.
Action Resident of the day to include all departments to visit the resident to ensure that a more robust person-centred approach to care and care planning is undertaken.
Recommendation 5 Consideration to updating some areas of the home to provide a consistence standard across the whole building.
Service provider's response Updating of the home to ensure a consistent standard has already been approved by the operations team. This requires detailed planning due to the logistics and to ensure comfort and safety of the residents is maintained whilst works are being carried out.
Action **For the proposed updating of the home to be completed within a reasonable time frame.**