

Southlands Care Home

'Enter and view' visit

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General information

Service address	9 Ripon Road, Harrogate, HG1 2JA
Service provider	Bupa
Date	3 February 2025
CQC rating	Good (Sept 2017)
Care home manager	Susan Sowden
Contact number	01423 526203

Healthwatch North Yorkshire Authorised Representatives:

- Pat Southgate (Team Leader)
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The Healthwatch North Yorkshire team would like to thank Susan and her team for their cooperation and support in facilitating the visit.



Background

What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is an independent champion for people using local health and care services. It listens to people's experiences—especially those who feel unheard—to help improve care.

What is 'enter and view'?

An 'enter and view' visit allows Healthwatch to see the quality of a health or social care service in-person. These visits provide an opportunity to hear from residents, their families, and staff while also observing the care environment.

The visit described here was announced and conducted by trained Healthwatch staff and volunteers (authorised representatives) who have the legal right to enter health and social care premises, either announced or unannounced.

During the visit, the team collects feedback and makes observations, which are then compiled into a detailed report. This report highlights areas of good practice and identifies potential improvements. Before publication, the service provider receives a copy and is given the opportunity to respond. The final report is then published at www.healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk.

Healthwatch North Yorkshire may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. The report is then available to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England and other organisations.

The process for selecting which sites to visit includes two main things:

1. To provide representative coverage across North Yorkshire.
2. To avoid visiting providers who have already been deemed to need improvement in some way by the Care Quality Commission.

Notification and location

In preparation for the visit, Healthwatch let Southlands know that they were visiting sometime between Monday, 27th January, and Monday, 17th February 2025. Healthwatch also sent questionnaires in advance for staff and family members to complete, which were distributed by the care home.

Southlands is a Bupa care home offering a range of services, including residential, nursing, respite, day care, post-op recovery, and care for those with Parkinson's. However, it doesn't provide care for dementia, Huntington's disease, or physical or learning disabilities. According to their website, their goal is to provide high-quality care in beautiful surroundings:

“Settled inside a premier refurbished Harrogate hotel, Southlands offers both residential and nursing care including support for those living with Parkinson's in stunning surroundings. We also offer short stays for recovery and respite.”

The home is built within a historic hotel. At the time of the visit there were 65 residents out of a possible occupancy of 70. Healthwatch North Yorkshire heard from:

- **7** people who live there.
- **3** of their friends or family members.
- **15** members of staff.

All people Healthwatch spoke with were aged between 55 and 90+, with four women and three men. Everyone was of white British ethnicity. Healthwatch also observed interactions between residents and staff, as well as the activities being offered.

For a home of this size, **Healthwatch North Yorkshire** typically expect more responses from family and friends—usually around 15. The lower-than-usual response rate limits how effective the feedback is in reflecting the views of all residents and their families.

Key findings

Healthwatch representatives found the home to be cheerful and welcoming, with a strong team spirit among the staff and well-cared-for residents. The staff greeted them with warmth, offering their time and responses openly and helpfully. The management team is clearly committed to continuous improvement, striving to enhance both the living environment and the quality of clinical care for residents.

Positive feedback

- Management identified the importance of **staff training and development** which was echoed by the staff surveyed
- The leadership team also stressed the importance of a **strong governance structure** including regular Bupa inspections
- Residents appeared **content and well looked after**, with food and drink tailored to their individual needs.
- Call bells were **responded to promptly**
- The management and staff team foster a **culture of continuous improvement**
- In the afternoon there was a **social atmosphere** with residents engaging with each other and visitors.

Recommended areas for improvement

Healthwatch did not have any specific recommendations for improvement. Healthwatch were very impressed by the care home and its staff when we visited. This is reflected in the feedback.

Observations

External environment

The care home is housed in a former hotel, the building is in a good state of repair with maintenance staff working in the entrance area when we visited. Southlands is located on a busy street; it has a semi-circular one way drop off point with limited parking to the right and rear of the building. There is some time-limited on street parking not far from the home.

The entrance is easily accessible from the drop-off area, with a set of steps leading to the front door. The steps are equipped with handrails, and a wheelchair-accessible ramp is positioned adjacent to them. The entrance remains locked, with a doorbell for admittance. Upon arrival, staff provided a warm, professional welcome, offering clear introductions and explaining any necessary protocols, such as the sign-in process. The reception area was clean, tidy, and visually appealing.

To the rear of the building, there is a spacious and well-maintained garden, accessible from the main social area. The outdoor space includes seating areas and covered sections. Although no residents were outside during our visit due to the weather, staff noted that the garden is frequently used. An activity planner leaflet indicated that residents could request access to the grounds from 10am.

Internal environment

The home features an inviting entranceway that is wide, open, and well-organised, with a clearly visible reception desk. On either side of the entrance, there are reception rooms. To the left, a small, cozy lounge offers a variety of comfortable seating options, including side tables for drinks. Residents were observed using this space throughout our visit. On the right, a larger room houses a café area where residents were served tea and coffee in the morning. This space also displayed resident artwork, adding to its warm and homely atmosphere. Staff were attentive, and residents we spoke with expressed their enjoyment of the beverages.

A large stairway and well-marked corridors lead to the dining room, ballroom, and some residents' rooms. The overall impression was of a bright, airy, and welcoming environment.

Near the reception area, a large notice board was being updated during our visit to include photos and names of the staff team. Additional information on activities was also displayed, along with the daily menu at the entrance to the dining room.



The central staircase provides access to three residential floors, and there are two lifts, one on each side of the building. During our visit, one lift was undergoing repairs. Signage throughout the home was clear and well-positioned, though all signs were in written format and rooms were predominantly identifiable by a small name plate with little to no personalisation, which may pose challenges for residents with cognitive impairments.

Accommodation



Residential floors had keypad entry as did rooms used by the nursing staff. Corridors were wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and walking frames. Residents each had a lifeline button which was on a lanyard around their necks, it was registered to their rooms and a panel allowed staff to know whether residents were in their rooms or not. Residents were encouraged to press the button if they need help.

All bedrooms had a toilet and a sink, and a few had ensuite baths or showers. Rooms varied in size due to the nature of the building and were predominantly single use. Staff indicated room selection was based on availability and access and mobility requirements.

Residents' rooms looked clean and tidy. Staff were observed clearing rooms and putting away fresh laundry. Rooms are in a good state of repair with some personal touches. All rooms we observed had TVs and one resident was observed knitting. Staff mentioned activities were organised for bed bound residents, but representatives did not witness anything at the time of the visit.

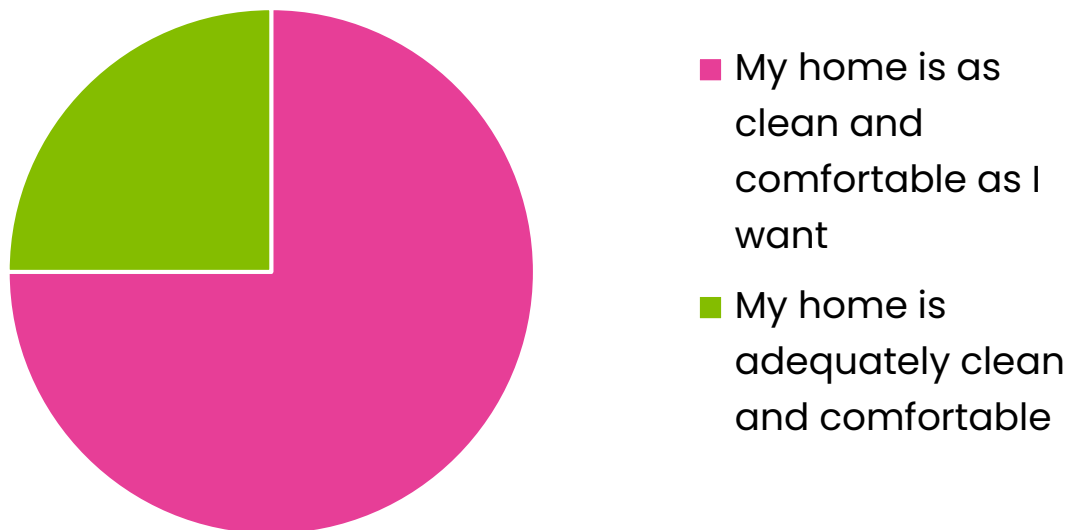
There are communal showers and toilets. The bathing facilities were large wet rooms with a chair below the shower and contrasting grab rails.

Cleanliness and hygiene

All areas of the home looked clean and tidy. There were no unpleasant smells, and all residents were appropriately dressed and looked well cared for. Staff were observed distributing wet wipes after lunch and some residents confirmed to representatives that they received the help they needed to maintain their appearance as desired.

Healthwatch North Yorkshire asked residents about the cleanliness of the home.

How clean and comfortable is your home?



All 7 residents our representatives spoke to felt the home was clean or adequately clean.

“I’m happy with my room and like to have family photos around me.”

All 3 friends and family felt the home was clean and comfortable.

“The room is clean and comfortable.”

“I’ve noticed a lot of improvements in the past few years.”

Quality of life

General happiness

Residents were asked whether they were happy living in the care home and how much choice they had over their daily life. (By choice, this meant could they get up/go to bed when they want, can they go where they like in the home, do they choose what to wear each day etc).

The home had a nice atmosphere with residents appearing well looked after and generally content.

Most residents who responded expressed satisfaction with living at the home. Those who felt less content attributed it to a preference for being in their own home rather than any dissatisfaction with Southlands itself.

All residents said they had as much choice or adequate choice over their daily life as they wanted. Example feedback included;

“I’m happy staying in my room, I watch tv, I like to do that.”

“I have lots of choice, it would be nice to have someone come and say goodnight.

All friends and family felt their loved one was happy at Southlands.

“Hasn’t been in the home long but has settled well. She’s content.”

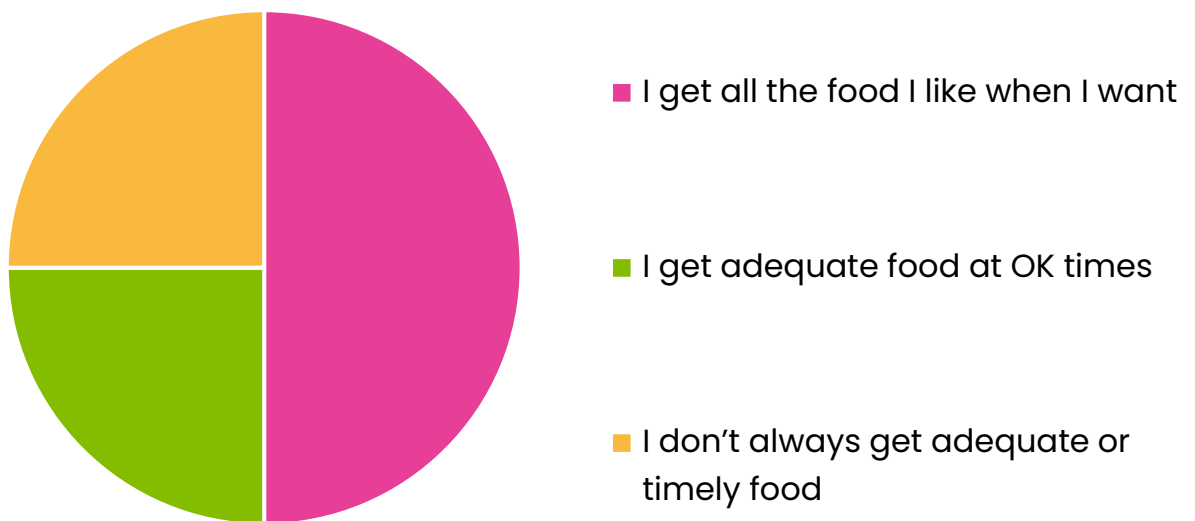
Food and drink

Residents and friends and family were asked to share their views on the food and drink. Our representatives observed a mealtime in the home.

Most residents were in attendance for lunch in the dining room. Some representatives joined residents for lunch. The layout allowed for residents to socialise in small groups, although observers noted varying levels of social interaction. Residents ate well and fed back that they generally enjoyed the food. A variety of drinks were offered including water, fruit juice, lemonade and a milkshake.

Residents are offered a choice of 2 main courses selected in the morning for the main lunch meal. Dietary requirements are accommodated.

Do you get the food you like when you want it?



Among the residents who felt the food was adequate, some shared the following responses:

“There are plenty of vegetables, and the food is plentiful.”

“Happy with the options and quality of the food.”

One resident responded that the food isn't always adequate or timely, noting:

“I'm not at all happy with the food, I am only given two options and very often the food isn't warm.”

Residents were happy that drinks were readily available and said that they were able to reach drinks when they wanted. Healthwatch representatives witnessed this on the day.

All friends and family felt their loved ones got adequate food they liked when they wanted it.

“Food can be variable, but they always get a choice of food, and someone comes every day to ask what they prefer.”

All friends and family confirmed that drinks were readily available and accessible.



Activities

Residents were asked if they spend their time doing things they value and enjoy. Friends and family and staff were asked if residents have regular access to activities in the home.

The home had daily activities in the morning and afternoon. On the day of the visit the morning activities included puzzles and colouring, a small proportion of residents were involved in these activities with the remainder watching television. After lunch there was a lull with many residents in their rooms and some napping in the ballroom, later the ballroom was much livelier with breakout groups of residents took part in activities and friends and family visits.



Do you spend your time doing things you value and enjoy?



- I'm able to spend my time as I want, doing things I value or enjoy
- I'm able to do enough of the things I value or enjoy with my time
- I do some of the things I value or enjoy with my time, but not enough
- I don't do anything I value or enjoy with my time

Of the people who felt they did as much or enough of what they enjoyed Healthwatch noted the following feedback:

"I enjoy the crossword but not word searches."

Residents who felt they did not take part in activities they enjoyed did not provide specific reasons beyond physical limitations and a desire to return to their own home:

"Poor hearing prevents me from joining in activities."

"When I was young, I liked to dance, of course I can't do that now, but I watch television, I like that."

All three friends and family of residents that responded felt they had regular access to activities in the home. Although one said that taking part with the activities was not great:

“Plenty going on and activities advertised on the walls and leaflets posted through doors once a week.”

“Mobility is an issue and there are no upper floor-based activities or social space.”

All friends and family who responded said that they received invites to participate in activities.

Staff noted that residents are offered a choice of activities, regardless of whether they can move around the home or remain in their rooms. Activities mentioned by staff included baking, singing, dancing, and puzzles. Special events, such as a Valentine’s dinner and Robert Burns night, were also highlighted:

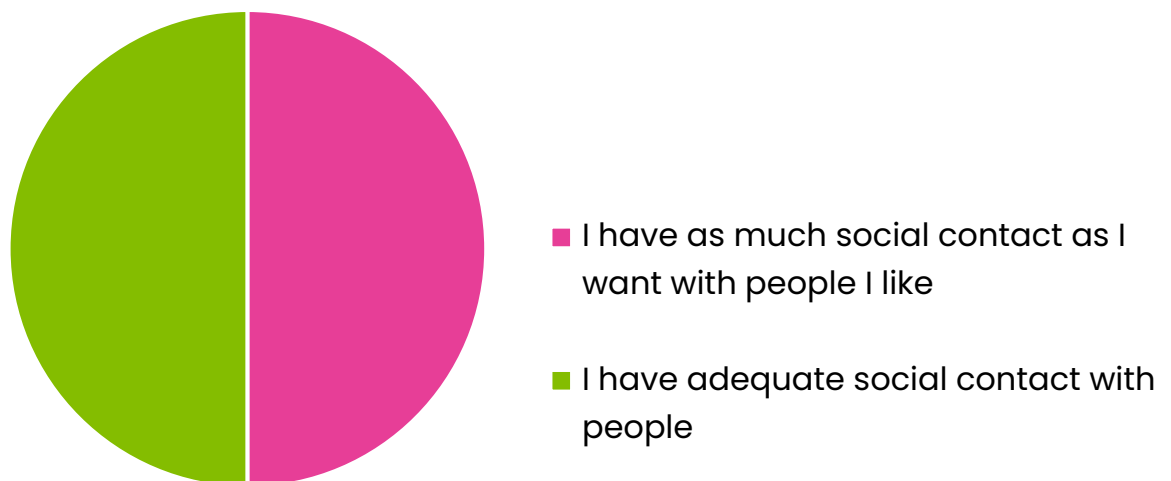
“There are activities organised on a daily basis by the activity coordinator.”

Social contact

Residents and their friends and family were asked about their social contact and our representatives observed interactions between residents, friends and family, and staff.

All residents felt they had at least a sufficient level of social contact. Some had formed established social groups, while others preferred solitude. One resident mentioned sharing a common interest with another resident and expressed a desire for more interaction but had not had the opportunity to reconnect. This may present an opportunity for the home to assist in facilitating social connections.

How much social contact do you have with people you like?



“I have some friends here and my family visits regularly.”

Friends and family all expressed that the care home facilitated contact with their loved one as much as they wanted.

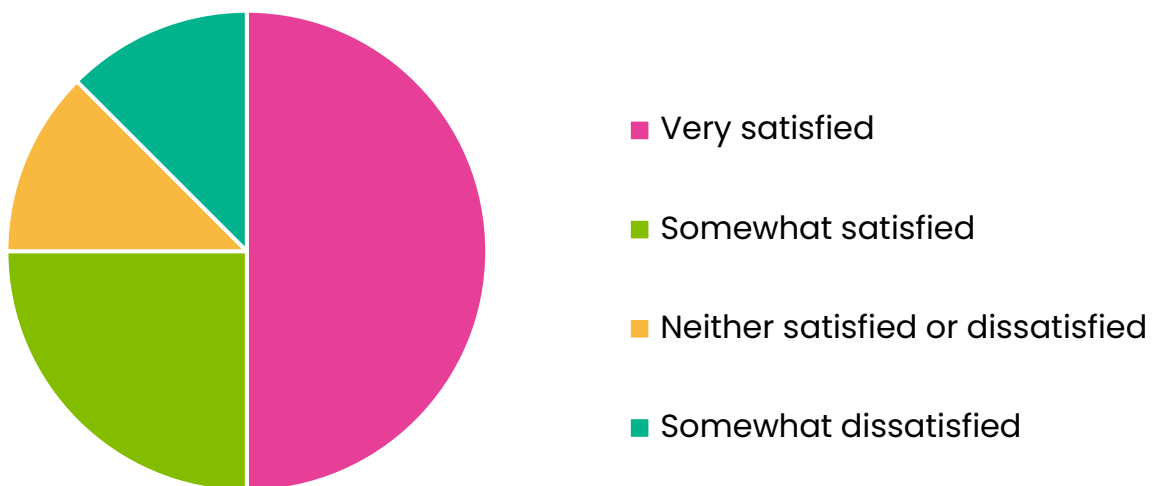
Quality of care

Residents and friends and family

They were asked whether they felt they/their relative was well cared for. Healthwatch also observed whether residents looked well cared for during our visit.

All residents looked well dressed and well groomed. One of our representatives witnessed laundered clothing being returned to residents' rooms and all looked in good condition although a resident noted that occasionally the wrong clothing is returned to them.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the care that you receive?



Of those that were very satisfied (4 of 7), Healthwatch collected the following feedback:

“I can’t fault the care or the food.”

“My room is very nice and some of the staff are lovely.”

Where residents were more ambivalent about Southlands, they all expressed a preference for being in their own homes rather than any specific concerns.

All people Healthwatch spoke with reported feeling at least adequately presentable with 6 out of 7 reporting feeling clean and able to present themselves as they would like. Our representatives noted that all residents were properly dressed and well groomed.

Healthwatch also wanted to know whether residents feel like they need additional help with anything, such as help to eat or drink, and if they receive enough help.

3 residents out of the 7 who responded indicated that they required additional help and that they felt they were given enough help.

Friends and family were asked how satisfied they are with the care their loved ones receive.

2 out of 3 said they were very satisfied with the care their loved ones received. The other person said:

“I feel there needs to be more one-to-one time with staff and personalised activities for those who are not able to access the social spaces.”

Relatives and friends were asked if they contribute to individual care plans.

All relatives and friends reported that they contributed to their friend/relatives' individual care plans:

“I have regular dialogue with the care home staff.”

Safety and staff levels

Residents, friends and family, and staff were asked whether they feel there are enough staff, and Healthwatch asked the residents if they felt safe in the home.

Staff were observed interacting cheerfully and respectfully with residents and demonstrating knowledge of preferences.

5 out of 7 residents who responded felt there was enough staff to care for them. Of the other two, one person stated that they did not talk with many staff and the other felt call bells could have been answered more promptly. When asked specifically about whether call bells are answered in a timely manner Healthwatch got the following feedback.

“Sometimes it feels like a long wait.”

A Healthwatch representative stepped on a floor pressure pad, and a staff member responded immediately. Management said they track call bell response times and address any delays with residents.

All residents who answered said they feel safe.

All 12 staff members agreed there are enough staff to keep things running smoothly. Some said relying less on agency staff has improved care, with local staff covering shifts and transport arranged for workers from Leeds.

Most friends and family (2 out of 3) feel staffing is sufficient. The one negative response is explained below.

“More time is needed for one-to-one interaction. Good that there are no agency staff (there were previously). Think they need additional staff or volunteers to do one-to-one activities.”

Health checks

Healthwatch asked residents and friends/ family if they had been able to access relevant health checks.

3 out of 7 residents indicated they can access health checks including GP visits, eyesight checks, dentist appointments and hearing checks as required. The remaining people Healthwatch heard from indicated that they had not required any health checks so far. One resident was awaiting new hearing aids.

Friends and family noted that their loved one had hearing checks at the hospital and has had eye tests in the home.

GP visits

3 residents indicated that they could access GP visits, when necessary, the other responses were not applicable, suggesting they had no requirement to access a GP. All residents in the home come under the care of a nominated local GP.

All friends and family who responded to this question confirmed their loved one had access to a GP.

Eyesight checks

Staff informed us that needs are recorded on care plans and opticians visit monthly and staff determine who needs to be seen.

Dentist appointments

All new residents are registered with a dentist if they don't have one already, this is covered by a local dental practise.

Hearing checks

Onsite nurses take care of needs and have the option to refer to audiology as required.

Raising concerns and issues

Residents, family, and friends

Healthwatch wanted to know if they had any concerns about the service, would they know what to do.

All residents Healthwatch spoke with said they would know what to do if they had concerns:

“I would communicate through my son.”

“I would raise to management or my family.”

All friends and family confirmed that they would know what to do if they had any concerns:

“I would raise any issues with the manager.”

Healthwatch also asked if they had been happy with how the concern had been dealt with in the past.

Most people said this had not been needed. One person said that a request had been made for a room with a garden view and more storage, but this had not been actioned, the resident believed this to be due to availability or cost.

One family member had indicated that issues had been raised to management in the past and they had been dealt with.

How do staff feel?

Healthwatch asked staff about working in the care home.

The staff group had mostly been there for some time with the tenure ranging from 2 weeks to over 12 years based on 12 responses to our survey.

All 12 staff who responded said that they enjoyed working at Southlands:

“Good environment to work in, management responsive to feedback and focused on improvements and training.”

“Very supportive staff team.

“I really enjoy all the roles.”

Healthwatch wanted to know if staff felt there was anything the home could put in place to improve their working environment

Most comments indicated that staff felt supported and able to contribute to improvements in the service. A culture of continuous improvement was evident in staff responses. While all staff members Healthwatch spoke with confirmed that Southlands was adequately staffed, one person suggested that additional time with residents would be beneficial. All staff noted that they received the necessary training to effectively perform their roles.

Healthwatch wanted to know whether the staff feel well informed about changes to services in the home.

11 out of 12 staff members Healthwatch spoke to agreed they were kept well informed about changes to services, 1 staff member informed us that sometimes they did not know about changes but did not provide any further details.

In response to whether staff input had been acted upon, feedback indicated that contributions were actively encouraged. Several staff members provided examples where their contribution had led to positive improvements:

“Management listens to and act on feedback or explain why they are not able to.”

Healthwatch also wanted to know how well informed the staff are about the residents they look after in terms of their individual likes and dislikes, food/drink requirements, hobbies/interests.

All staff reported being somewhat or very well-informed about the residents they care for, including their likes and dislikes. This is facilitated by detailed care plans that are accessible electronically. Additionally, a thorough review is conducted for each resident on a rotational basis to assess any changes in their needs or preferences. Staff also noted that time is spent getting to know new residents when they first arrive. Management confirmed that they are actively working on this area, focusing on both personal preferences and clinical requirements.

All staff responded that they would recommend Southlands to friends and family, with one person mentioning that several staff members have had loved ones as residents in the home. 1 member of staff rated the home 4 stars out of 5 as they felt striving for improvement was always necessary to create the best environment for residents.

“It’s an exceptional home offering fantastic care and support to residents and staff.”

Overall rating

Healthwatch asked family and friends of residents and care home staff how they would rate the home out of 5 (with 5 being the best).

Friends and family: (4.3/5)



Care home staff: (4.6/5)



Acknowledgements

Healthwatch North Yorkshire would like to thank the manager, staff, friends and families of residents, and residents for letting us access the care home, and for sharing their views with us. Thanks also to our dedicated volunteers who helped support this visit.

Disclaimer

This report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients, friends and family, and care home staff, but an account of what was observed on the day of the visit and shared with us by those who completed our survey. Note: Some of the residents Healthwatch spoke with have cognitive impairment which can impact their ability to answer the questions.



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