

**Healthwatch Cheshire West Enter and View Report**

<b>Enter and View Visit to</b>	Hooton Chase Care Home 1 Hooton Road, Ellesmere Port, CH66 1QU
<b>Date</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>Authorised Representatives</b>	Andrew Firman, Jackie Lewis
<b>Staff Present</b>	Acting Manager Karrise Smith & her staff
<b>Background</b>	Hooton Chase provides a care home service without nursing for up to 12 people with learning disabilities. It operates as a limited company by the non-resident owner in association with two other care homes on the Wirral. On the day of the visit there were two female and six male residents ranging in age from 30 to 64 with disabilities arising from Autism, Parkinson's disease and Down's Syndrome. The Acting Manager has been standing in since the substantive post holder left in April 2015.
<b>Overall Impression</b>	There is a homely and caring atmosphere in this older home where residents are encouraged to get involved in the tasks of day to day living. The small number of residents have a wide age range and a wide range of need. All the staff carry out a range of roles, and adapts to what is needed on the day. The acting manager appears to be doing a good job though under pressure with many tasks to juggle; perhaps needs experience of wider management functions and knowledge of some relevant local organisations - that the home could work with, to expand the resident's social life.
<b>Any ideas or suggestions for improving service?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall management should be strengthened to help to ensure that policies and procedures are better understood, including the regular review of care plans and to enable the residents to get more from life.</li> <li>• Catering arrangements could be organised perhaps a weekly menu choice with the residents; to perhaps become more cost effective. A more systematic and more proactive approach to promoting healthy eating.</li> <li>• Greater capacity could be brought to arranging activities by enhancing links to other homes, local agencies and the wider community.</li> <li>• Some investment in the garden area could help to enhance residents' use and enjoyment of this facility.</li> </ul>

## Environment

The home is housed in a substantial Victorian building on two floors. All areas appeared to be clean and well-maintained albeit with somewhat faded decor and furniture. There were bedrooms on both floors, all with en suite facilities. Residents with less mobility were housed in one of the four rooms on the ground floor as the property has no lift. There is a lounge on the first floor which was not being used at the time of the visit and two lounge/dining rooms on the ground floor. There is a pleasant large garden area at the rear of the property, largely laid to lawn. The property has a secure access door and policies, including a comments/suggestions book, are readily accessible. At the time of the visit the general atmosphere was homely and calm with residents involved in various individual activities.

## Health and Wellbeing

### Staffing

The senior carer who is acting manager over this period was welcoming and gave generously of her time but Authorised Representatives could see that she was hard pressed to deal with all the issues at hand. She knew the residents well and ensured that routine care arrangements were in place. However, she lacked experience of other tasks including the writing and review of care plans and procedures for recruiting and appointing staff. We were told that care plans were in place and had been updated recently by the then manager. The acting manager refers for support and advice to the other managers in the linked homes. It was felt that she was not adequately being supported and was expected to do her job as well as the acting manager and was genuinely doing her very best in a difficult situation.

Daytime staffing levels were with one senior carer and two support workers whereas at night one senior and one support worker would be on duty. Representatives felt that some of the residents needed a more in the way of to one support.

Staff training is encouraged, some being in-house, some based at the local Civic Hall. We spoke to one senior carer who had come in on his day off to continue his study for an NVQ level 3 qualifications and work with his assessor from REMIT who was visiting that day. He had to repeat his study as his completed portfolio had been lost by the organisation he had previously been linked with and which had apparently ceased trading. He was very committed to his role, and spoke very compassionately about the residents.

There is a range of healthcare professionals visiting the home including district nurses, occupational therapists and a community physiotherapist who helps one resident recovering from hip replacement. Although there were no relatives in the home during the visit we were told by the staff about regular contact with families. One resident has a relative visiting every two days, another goes out with family and a third has sleepovers with their family.

### Care

There is a culture of staff carrying out a number of roles which they understand is necessary in such a small setting. One staff member travels an hour each way to work. We saw this staff member deal effectively and sensitively with the behaviour of one resident who was upset and known to be prone to lashing out.

We felt confident about the level of care being provided in this home. This was exemplified by one staff member who said "I look after the residents as if they were my own family".

We found that staff to be skilled in the often difficult task of communicating with some of the residents. This included the use of picture cues to help establish preferences.

A staff member felt that it was difficult to meet the needs of one of the residents without one-to-one support which was not currently available. The process of reviewing care plans and seeking additional support where needed did not seem to be well understood.

We were told that the home found that it was much more difficult to get social care staff involved if needed, if a resident's previous address was in Cheshire West & Chester (CW&C) than if it had been in Wirral.

### Food and menus

Staff and residents both help with catering arrangements which seemed from what we were told to be somewhat ad hoc! The home is not large enough to employ a specific catering member of staff. Residents are offered a daily choice of menu - dependent of what was in the fridge or freezer. The home is bringing in a healthy eating approach as summer comes. We were told that residents' preferences were listened to and these were met on the day where possible. On fortnightly basis residents enjoy a takeaway meal including sometimes fish & chips. The home currently holds a food hygiene rating of three (inspected January 2015).

### Activities and Community Links

Meetings are held for residents with staff to discuss arrangements and to collect suggestions. One of the residents engaged us in conversation for some time whilst doing a jigsaw. He seemed very content with the care he was receiving and clearly enjoyed the weekly visit by bus and train to a disco in Liverpool.

Although we were told by staff that there was a lack of local provision for activities for residents, the home has organised a range of provision including a visiting group running a well-supported weekly 'Happy Times' session involving gentle exercise and relaxation and other external visits including to Chester Zoo, to Blackpool and to a pantomime over the Christmas period. A range of games and activities were available for residents to use. Although some residents benefited from access to the garden, more could be made of this facility with some investment.

The home seemed not to know about the organisation with contracted responsibility for care provision in CW&C which might be a source of additional support for the provision of activities. There was also little or no knowledge of the existence of Healthwatch or of its signposting role.

Representatives feel more could be made with contacts in the community and encourage the residents to take part in more activities outside the building or invite the wider community to events at the home.

### Feedback

Representatives spoke to and NVQ assessor who regularly visits and she said, *"It is always a pleasure to come to Hooton Chase and the staff are very dedicated."*

### Additional Comments

None

### Feedback from Provider of Service

*We did not know about the visit as it had been arranged with the old manager. We had a lot of things going on that day so staff were a bit under pressure when the visit happened.*

*Representatives were pleasant and polite they answered any questions put to them.*

*Service users have a great range of food offered to them as our fridge and freezers are always full. Service users can use the gardens at time and have an assortment of games with which to use when outside, it just happened to be a dull day when the visit happened, not sure if the representatives were shown the green houses or outside gardening area that we have which the services users take great pride in.*