

Enter & View Report

Croftwood Care Home

30.06.26

Visit Details

Care Home	Croftwood Care Home
Address	Whitchurch Way, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 5YP
Provider	Croftwood Care UK Limited
Date of Visit	30 June 2026
Authorised Representatives	Kathy McMullin, Anne Hodgkins and John Fagan
Registered Capacity	47 residents
Residents at Time of Visit	38
Residents Living with Dementia	34
Type of Care Provided	Residential and Dementia Care

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What is Enter & View?

People who use health and social care services, together with their families, carers and members of the public, have the right to share their experiences and influence how local services are developed and improved.

Healthwatch Halton has statutory powers under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to carry out **Enter & View** visits to health and social care settings. These visits enable trained Healthwatch representatives to observe services in operation, speak with people using those services and gather feedback about their experiences.

Enter & View visits are **not inspections** and do not replace the role of the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Instead, they provide an opportunity to celebrate good practice, identify areas where improvements could be made and make constructive recommendations to support continuous improvement.

During each visit, Healthwatch representatives observe the environment, speak with residents, relatives, visitors and staff where appropriate, and meet with the Registered Manager to gain a better understanding of how the service is delivered.

Healthwatch Halton would like to thank everyone who contributed to this report and shared their experiences during our visit.

Why did we carry out this visit?

Healthwatch Halton undertakes Enter & View visits to understand the experiences of people using health and social care services and to observe how care is delivered in a variety of settings across Halton.

The visit to Croftwood Care Home formed part of Healthwatch Halton's planned programme of care home visits. The purpose of the visit was to observe the environment, speak with residents, relatives and staff, and identify areas of good practice as well as opportunities for further improvement.

The visit was not undertaken in response to any specific complaint, safeguarding concern or intelligence regarding the quality of care provided.

Healthwatch Halton's Enter & View visits are not intended to investigate safeguarding matters. However, should any safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are managed in accordance with Healthwatch Halton's safeguarding procedures and referred to the appropriate authority where necessary.

No safeguarding concerns were identified during this visit.

Key Findings

During the visit, Healthwatch Halton observed a welcoming and caring home where residents appeared comfortable, relaxed and well supported by staff. The atmosphere throughout the home was calm and friendly, with positive interactions consistently observed between residents, staff and visitors.

The home was found to be clean, fresh and well maintained, with no unpleasant odours noted during the visit. Residents were observed taking part in a range of activities including painting, reading, games and social interaction, demonstrating the home's commitment to supporting residents' wellbeing and independence.

Residents and relatives who spoke with Healthwatch Halton were complimentary about the quality of care provided. Families described staff as approachable and caring and reported that they were able to visit without unnecessary restrictions.

The Registered Manager demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement, staff development and person-centred care. Staff benefit from a comprehensive training programme and the home continues to invest in refurbishment and improvements to the environment.

Healthwatch Halton also identified some opportunities for further improvement, particularly in relation to enhancing the dementia-friendly environment, reviewing notice boards to ensure information remains up to date and improving directional signage and accessible parking for visitors.

Overall, Croftwood Care Home presented as a caring, welcoming home with a clear commitment to providing high-quality care for its residents.

Arrival and First Impressions

Croftwood Care Home is situated within a residential area of Runcorn. The home is located at the end of a road within a housing estate and, although visitor parking is available, members of the Healthwatch Halton team found the home difficult to locate. Satellite navigation directed visitors towards an inaccessible road and there was limited directional signage to assist first-time visitors. In addition, whilst parking was available, there were no clearly identified accessible parking bays.

Externally, the home presented well. The grounds were clean and tidy with hanging baskets displayed at the entrance, a bench for visitors and residents and several parking spaces shared with a neighbouring building. The outdoor environment created a positive first impression.

The entrance porch contained a signing-in book, hand sanitiser, Healthwatch Halton information, the previous Healthwatch report, visitor information, complaints information, a Croftwood Care Home brochure and information promoting healthy ageing. A notice advising visitors that the home is pet friendly was also displayed. Whilst information was readily available, "Whilst Healthwatch Halton noted that some notice board information required updating at the time of the visit, the Registered Manager has confirmed this has since been reviewed and updated."

Access into the main reception area was through a secure locked door. Reception was clean, tidy and uncluttered, creating a welcoming environment for visitors. Staff greeted the Healthwatch Halton representatives warmly, were courteous and helpful throughout the visit and ensured the team was appropriately signed in before commencing the visit.

The overall atmosphere within the home was calm, friendly and relaxed. Throughout the visit, residents, relatives and staff were approachable, welcoming and supportive of the Enter & View process, helping to create a positive and open environment in which to observe the service.

The Environment

The home was observed to be clean, fresh and well maintained throughout the visit. All communal areas, corridors, bathrooms and resident bedrooms viewed by the Enter & View team were clean and free from unpleasant odours. Good standards of housekeeping were evident, with clear walkways and very little clutter observed.

The communal lounge and dining areas provided comfortable seating for residents and were bright, welcoming spaces. Music was playing in the dining room, creating a pleasant atmosphere, and the room had been decorated with bunting and flags which added colour to the environment. A daily menu was clearly displayed, enabling residents to see the meal choices available.

Healthwatch Halton observed a range of books, magazines, games and activities available for residents to enjoy. Residents' artwork was displayed throughout parts of the home, helping to personalise communal areas and showcase residents' creativity.

The home benefits from a large, accessible garden with level pathways, raised planters, bird boxes, seating areas and a spacious patio, allowing residents to enjoy the outdoor environment safely. A ramp provided good access into the garden and the outdoor space appeared well maintained and inviting.

Throughout the home, handrails were provided along corridors to support residents with mobility needs. Falls prevention equipment, including falls mats and pressure cushions, was observed where appropriate, demonstrating consideration for residents assessed as being at increased risk of falls.

Healthwatch Halton noted that the medication room and sluice room were securely locked, with appropriate access controls in place. Personal protective equipment, including gloves, aprons and face masks, was readily available for staff throughout the home.

Several bathrooms and toilets were viewed during the visit. These were clean, tidy and well equipped, with toilet surrounds and safety equipment available where required to support residents' independence and safety. Windows throughout the home were open where appropriate for ventilation whilst remaining suitably secured.

The home continues to invest in improvements to its environment. During the visit, the maintenance person was observed carrying out decoration work to residents' bedroom doors, and the Registered Manager advised that refurbishment of the home remains an ongoing programme.

Whilst the home provides a pleasant environment overall, Healthwatch Halton identified some opportunities to further enhance the surroundings for residents living with dementia. In particular, the Pine Corridor appeared less welcoming than other areas of the home. Bedroom doors were similar in appearance, with limited personalisation to assist residents in identifying their own rooms. Although residents' names were displayed, the use of photographs, memory boxes, contrasting colours or personalised door features could further support orientation and independence for people living with dementia. In addition, some vacant bedrooms and furnishings showed signs of wear, and Healthwatch Halton encourages the home to continue its ongoing refurbishment programme to further enhance the environment. The Registered Manager has advised that replacement of bedrooms, furnishings and bedding forms part of the home's ongoing refurbishment programme.

Staff Support, Skills and Interaction

Throughout the visit, Healthwatch Halton observed staff interacting with residents in a warm, respectful and compassionate manner. Staff took time to engage residents in conversation, responded promptly to requests for assistance and demonstrated patience and kindness during all interactions observed. Residents

appeared relaxed and comfortable in the presence of staff, suggesting positive and trusting relationships had been established.

Staff were visible throughout the home and were readily available to provide support where required. During organised activities, staff encouraged residents to participate whilst respecting individual choice and preferences. Residents who preferred quieter activities such as reading or watching television were equally well supported, demonstrating a person-centred approach to care.

The Registered Manager described Croftwood as having a diverse and inclusive workforce with many long-serving members of staff. At the time of the visit the home employed 53 staff across care, catering, domestic, maintenance, administration and activities roles. Wherever possible, the home aims to maintain continuity of care by using its own staff to cover absences before using agency staff, with agency staff generally only utilised to provide one-to-one support where required.

Healthwatch Halton heard about the home's strong commitment to staff development. Staff undertake a comprehensive programme of mandatory and specialist training including the Care Certificate, dementia care, falls prevention, palliative care, the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism, together with additional training delivered in partnership with Halton Haven Hospice, Cronton College and Northwest Ambulance Service. The home continues to invest in staff knowledge and skills to ensure residents receive high-quality, person-centred care.

The Registered Manager also explained that staff wellbeing is actively promoted through regular supervision, team meetings, return-to-work interviews, wellbeing information, signposting to support services and an open-door management approach. Healthwatch Halton considered this to demonstrate a positive commitment to supporting and retaining staff.

During conversations with residents and relatives, several people spoke positively about the staff. One resident described the carers as "good", whilst relatives consistently praised staff for their caring approach and the quality of support provided. Healthwatch Halton found these comments to be consistent with the interactions observed throughout the visit.

Residents' Social, Emotional and Cultural Wellbeing

Healthwatch Halton observed a positive and friendly atmosphere throughout the home. Residents appeared settled, comfortable and relaxed, with many engaging

confidently with the Enter & View representatives and happily sharing their experiences of living at Croftwood Care Home.

A varied programme of activities was taking place during the visit. A group of residents were enjoying painting at easels, while others chose to read, complete games, watch television or spend time socialising with one another. Residents appeared encouraged to take part in activities according to their individual interests and abilities rather than following a one-size-fits-all approach.

The Registered Manager explained that the home provides a varied monthly programme of activities including entertainers, singers, pet therapy, holistic therapies, painting sessions, school choirs, themed events, chair-based activities and fund-raising events. Residents are regularly asked for their views on activities through meetings and discussions, helping to ensure the programme reflects their interests and preferences.

Healthwatch Halton also heard how some residents receive one-to-one support to access the local community independently where appropriate, while others are supported to attend appointments, family events and community activities. Although transport can sometimes present challenges, the home continues to explore opportunities to enable residents to remain connected with their local community.

Residents spoke positively about life at the home. One resident commented that although they did not particularly enjoy the food, they thought the carers were very good. Another resident explained how much they enjoyed helping to care for the home's cat, highlighting the sense of purpose and companionship this provided. Residents also spoke positively about the range of activities available and appreciated having the choice of how they spent their day.

The home maintains strong links with healthcare professionals, schools, entertainers and local community organisations. Visiting services include hairdressing, podiatry, district nursing, speech and language therapy, opticians and faith representatives where available. These partnerships help to promote residents' wellbeing and maintain important community connections.

Residents' Physical Wellbeing

Healthwatch Halton observed residents to be well presented, appropriately dressed and wearing suitable footwear. Residents appeared comfortable and

well cared for, with staff providing support discreetly and respectfully where required.

The home promotes residents' independence wherever possible, with care tailored to individual needs and abilities. The Registered Manager explained that care is centred around personalised care plans and risk assessments, with residents encouraged to remain as independent as possible whilst receiving the support they require.

A range of equipment was observed throughout the home to support residents' safety and mobility. This included falls mats, pressure cushions, handrails along corridors and toilet safety surrounds within several bathrooms. An electronic monitoring system was also in place to alert staff when residents required assistance, enabling prompt responses when call bells were activated.

Residents had access to spacious, clean bathrooms equipped with appropriate bathing and showering facilities. Bathrooms observed during the visit were clean, well maintained and provided sufficient space for staff to support residents safely where required.

The Registered Manager explained that residents' safety is supported through a combination of individual risk assessments, floor and chair sensors, choking protocols, secure access systems and regular reviews of residents' needs. The home also uses person-centred care planning to balance residents' independence with appropriate levels of support.

Healthwatch Halton observed infection prevention and control measures to be well maintained throughout the home. Hand sanitiser and personal protective equipment were readily available for staff, while clinical areas including the medication room and sluice room remained secure throughout the visit.

Residents are supported to maintain good nutrition and hydration. Meal choices were clearly displayed, and the Registered Manager explained that residents are offered snacks and drinks throughout the day in addition to breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper. Drinks trolleys regularly circulate the home, and residents are able to request refreshments whenever they wish.

During the visit, Healthwatch Halton observed a member of staff offering residents a selection of ice lollies from a refreshments trolley, which was well received. The team also heard that residents are able to request alternatives if they do not wish to eat the meals on the daily menu. One relative advised that their family member was happy with both the meals and the choice available, while another resident commented that although they personally preferred home cooking, they felt well cared for by staff.

Overall, Healthwatch Halton found that residents' physical health, comfort and safety were well supported through appropriate equipment, person-centred care planning and attentive staff.

Facilities for Family and Friends

Healthwatch Halton observed relatives visiting throughout the home during the Enter & View visit. Visitors were welcomed by staff and appeared relaxed and comfortable within the environment. Family members spoken to during the visit were complimentary about the care provided and reported that they experienced no unnecessary restrictions on visiting.

Relatives described staff as approachable, caring and supportive and expressed confidence in the care their loved ones received. One family member told Healthwatch Halton they were very happy with the care provided and appreciated being able to visit freely. Another relative commented positively on both the quality of care and the meals available within the home.

The Registered Manager explained that the home operates an open-door approach, encouraging relatives to raise questions, provide feedback and remain involved in their loved one's care. Regular care reviews, family meetings and informal discussions take place, enabling relatives to contribute to care planning and decision-making where appropriate.

The home gathers feedback from residents, relatives, professionals and visitors through a variety of methods including feedback forms, reviews, meetings, email communication, social media and online review platforms. This demonstrates a commitment to listening to feedback and using it to support ongoing service improvement.

Healthwatch Halton also noted that visitor information, Healthwatch information, complaints procedures and other useful resources were displayed within the entrance area, making information readily accessible for relatives and visitors.

"The home is proudly pet friendly... During our visit, several residents spoke positively about a friendly cat that regularly visits the home. The home has since clarified that the cat is not owned by Croftwood Care Home but is a frequent visitor."

Additional Observations

The Registered Manager shared several challenges currently affecting care homes more widely. One of the most significant concerns related to delays in so-

cial work involvement for residents who were medically fit to return to independent living. The Registered Manager described examples where residents had waited many months for appropriate assessments and support packages before being able to return home, despite no longer requiring residential care.

Healthwatch Halton also heard concerns regarding access to specialist mental health support. Whilst positive relationships exist with local GP practices and district nursing teams, the Registered Manager highlighted difficulties accessing timely assessments from specialist services, explaining that there were occasions where medication recommendations had been made without residents first receiving a face-to-face specialist assessment.

Despite these challenges, the Registered Manager spoke positively about the support received from local healthcare professionals including district nurses, speech and language therapists, podiatry services, opticians and GP services. The home continues to work collaboratively with partner organisations to ensure residents receive appropriate care and support.

Healthwatch Halton was pleased to hear that five residents had successfully been supported to return to independent living with appropriate support arrangements in place. This demonstrates the home's commitment to promoting independence and achieving positive outcomes for residents wherever possible.

Residents' Comments

Healthwatch Halton spoke with several residents during the visit to gain an understanding of their experiences of living at Croftwood Care Home. Residents who were able to engage in conversation spoke positively about the care and support they received and appeared relaxed and comfortable within the home.

Several residents described staff as caring, kind and helpful. One resident commented that although they were not particularly keen on the food, they felt the carers were very good and looked after them well. Another resident explained that they enjoyed spending time with a friendly cat that regularly visits the home, something they clearly took pride in and which contributed positively to their daily routine.

Residents were observed participating in a variety of activities including painting, reading, watching television and socialising with one another. Those spoken to explained that they were able to choose how they spent their day and were encouraged to take part in activities if they wished.

Healthwatch Halton also observed residents enjoying the communal lounges and dining areas, where there was a calm and relaxed atmosphere. Throughout the visit, residents appeared comfortable approaching staff when they required support, and staff responded promptly and respectfully to requests for assistance.

Overall, residents who spoke with Healthwatch Halton expressed satisfaction with the care they received and appeared happy living at Croftwood Care Home.

Friends and Family Feedback

During the Enter & View visit, Healthwatch Halton spoke with several relatives who were visiting loved ones at the home. The feedback received was consistently positive.

Relatives described staff as caring, approachable and supportive, commenting positively on the quality of care provided. Family members advised they experienced no unnecessary restrictions on visiting and felt welcomed whenever they came to the home.

One relative explained they were very happy with the care their family member received and had no concerns regarding the service. Another relative commented positively on both the meals provided and the caring attitude of staff.

In addition to the feedback received during our visit, Croftwood Care Home has received 53 independent reviews on Carehome.co.uk with an overall review score of 9.8 out of 10. Reviews consistently praise the caring and compassionate staff, welcoming atmosphere, cleanliness, communication, activities and the quality of care provided. This positive independent feedback reflects the comments received by Healthwatch Halton during the Enter & View visit and through the Friends and Family questionnaires.

Friends and Family Questionnaire

During the Enter & View visit, Healthwatch Halton received feedback from relatives through completed Friends and Family questionnaires. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with relatives describing Croftwood Care Home as caring, welcoming and well-managed.

- *100% of respondents said staff treated residents with kindness and respect.*
- *100% said they would recommend the home to others.*
- *Relatives praised the caring nature of the staff, the good communication and the welcoming atmosphere.*

- *Visitors commented that staff knew residents well and always made them feel welcome.*

Staff Feedback

Two members of staff completed questionnaires during the Enter & View visit. Both respondents spoke positively about working at Croftwood Care Home and described a supportive, caring working environment.

Staff explained that they treat residents like family, helping them to feel safe, valued and at home. Staff also commented positively on the kindness shown by colleagues and the support they receive from one another.

When asked what the home does well, comments included:

- *"Work well as a team, treating residents like family, making them feel at home and supporting families as well."*
- *"Cares for the residents, looks after them well and staff are friendly and kind."*

When asked about areas for improvement, staff suggested:

- Providing a greater range of meal choices for residents requiring special diets.
- Offering more activities for residents.
- Continuing to make improvements to the environment through ongoing updates and refurbishment.

Both members of staff stated that they **feel supported and valued** in their role. One respondent commented that staff "support each other," while another described the team as working well together and providing support whenever it is needed.

Both respondents had worked at the home for **more than three years**, with one member of staff explaining that they had worked at Croftwood for **nine years** and "love the home and residents."

When asked whether they would be happy for a family member to move into Croftwood Care Home, both responses were positive, with one member of staff stating they would be **"Very happy"** and the other responding **"Very."**

Throughout the visit staff were approachable, welcoming and happy to discuss their roles and responsibilities. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of residents' individual needs and worked together effectively to provide person-centred care.

Summary

Healthwatch Halton would like to sincerely thank the Registered Manager, staff, residents, relatives and visitors at Croftwood Care Home for the warm welcome extended to the Enter & View team. Everyone we met throughout the visit was friendly, approachable and supportive, creating an open and positive atmosphere that enabled us to gain a good understanding of life within the home.

During the visit we observed a caring, well-managed service where residents appeared happy, comfortable and treated with dignity and respect. Staff interactions were consistently warm, patient and compassionate, and it was evident that positive relationships had been developed between residents, relatives and staff.

The home was found to be clean, well maintained and provided a pleasant environment for residents. A varied programme of activities was taking place during the visit, residents were encouraged to maintain their independence wherever possible, and relatives spoke positively about the quality of care and the welcoming approach adopted by staff.

The Registered Manager demonstrated a clear commitment to continuous improvement, staff development and person-centred care. The home continues to invest in refurbishment, staff training and improving the resident experience whilst maintaining strong links with healthcare professionals and the wider community.

Healthwatch Halton identified several opportunities to further enhance the environment, particularly in relation to dementia-friendly design, visitor wayfinding and ensuring information displayed within the home remains current. These recommendations are intended to support the home's ongoing commitment to providing the highest possible standard of care.

Overall, Healthwatch Halton found Croftwood Care Home to be a welcoming, caring and professionally managed home where residents appeared well supported and respected. The positive comments received from residents, relatives and staff, together with the observations made during the visit, reflected a service committed to providing compassionate, person-centred care.

The positive feedback received from residents, relatives, visitors and staff through conversations and completed questionnaires reinforced the observations made by the Enter & View team during the visit.

Recommendations

Healthwatch Halton recognises the positive work taking place at Croftwood Care Home and makes the following recommendations to support the home's ongoing programme of continuous improvement.

Recommendation 1 – Improve wayfinding and visitor access

Consider continuing to explore opportunities to improve directional signage to the home and clearly marked accessible parking bays to assist first-time visitors and improve accessibility. The provider advised they have previously approached the local council regarding signage and will continue to explore available options."

Recommendation 2 – Continue developing a dementia-friendly environment

Continue enhancing the environment for residents living with dementia by considering greater use of personalised bedroom doors, photographs, memory boxes, colour contrast and themed corridors, particularly within the Pine Corridor, to support orientation and independence.

Recommendation 3 – Review displayed information

Implement regular reviews of notice boards and displayed information to ensure notices remain current, relevant and accessible for residents, relatives and visitors.

Recommendation 4 – Continue the refurbishment programme

Continue the planned programme of refurbishment to address areas where décor, furnishings and bedding show signs of wear, further enhancing the overall environment for residents.

Service Provider Response

The Registered Manager thanked the Healthwatch Halton representatives for their visit and the positive feedback contained within the report. The provider clarified that the cat observed during the visit is not owned by the home but is a regular visitor. They also advised that the notice board has since been updated, replacement of bedroom furniture and bedding forms part of an ongoing refurbishment programme, and that enquiries have previously been made regarding additional external signage. The provider welcomed the report and

confirmed it would be shared with the staff team.



We are committed to the quality of our information.
Every three years we perform an in-depth audit
so that we can be certain of this.



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