

Simonsfield Care Home

Enter & View Report

June 2026

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Authorised Representatives: Kathy McMullin and Anne Hodgkins

Date of Visit: 11 June 2026

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1. What is Enter & View?

People who use health and social care services, their carers and members of the public have expectations about the experiences they should receive from those services and want opportunities to express their views about whether those expectations have been met.

Healthwatch Halton has statutory powers to carry out Enter & View visits to health and social care settings. These visits form part of our role as the independent champion for people using health and social care services.

Enter & View visits are carried out by trained staff and volunteers who observe services in operation, speak with people using those services and gather feedback about their experiences.

We do not undertake inspections, and our visits are not intended to identify safeguarding concerns. However, should safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, these would be reported in accordance with Healthwatch Halton safeguarding procedures.

2. Why did we carry out this visit?

The Enter & View visit to Simonsfield Care Home formed part of Healthwatch Halton's ongoing programme of visits to care homes across the borough.

The purpose of the visit was to:

- Observe the quality of care and support provided.
- Gather feedback from residents and staff.
- Identify examples of good practice.
- Review progress made since the previous Enter & View visit in January 2023.
- Identify opportunities for further improvement.

The visit was not undertaken in response to any specific concerns regarding the quality of care provided.

3. Enter & View Visit Report

Care Home: Simonsfield Care Home, Boston Avenue, Runcorn, WA7 5XE

Provider: Hillcare

Date of Visit: 11 June 2026

Simonsfield Care Home provides residential and dementia care for up to 63 residents.

At the time of our visit all bedrooms were occupied, with 28 residents receiving residential care and 35 residents receiving dementia care.

The home is situated within a residential area of Runcorn and benefits from a large car park with accessible parking bays.

The registered manager has been in post since 2015, providing continuity of leadership and a consistent approach to care delivery.

4. Initial Impressions

The exterior of the home was clean, attractive and well maintained. Hanging flower baskets, planters and decorative displays created a welcoming appearance on arrival. The car park was tidy, clearly marked and provided ample parking for visitors.

The entrance area was spacious, bright and welcoming. Information relating to complaints procedures, activities, staff recognition, Health and Safety, CQC registration and resident engagement was clearly displayed.

A resident shop was located near the reception area and stocked with toiletries, sweets, drinks, magazines, cards and everyday essentials. The shop had been developed following fundraising efforts and supports resident independence and choice.

Information regarding the Veteran Friendly Framework was displayed, alongside staff photographs, activity information and examples of resident engagement.

Throughout the visit staff were welcoming, approachable and keen to engage with residents and visitors.

5. Observations

The home was observed to be clean, tidy and well maintained throughout.

Corridors were spacious, uncluttered and fitted with handrails to support mobility and independence. The themed street-style design observed during the previous Enter & View visit remains a strong feature throughout the home and contributes to a homely environment.

Residents' bedroom doors were brightly coloured and personalised with photographs and memory prompts to support orientation.

Numerous dementia-friendly features were observed throughout the home, including:

- Dementia-friendly clocks
- Interactive wall activities
- Sensory and reminiscence features
- Memory prompts
- Bus stop themed areas
- Fidget items and activity stations

Communal lounges were well furnished and provided a variety of seating options. Residents appeared relaxed and comfortable within these areas.

Staff interactions were consistently positive, respectful and person-centred. Staff were observed chatting with residents, encouraging participation in activities and responding promptly to requests for assistance.

One resident was observed wearing socks that appeared to be tight around their lower legs. This observation was shared with staff during the visit.

6. Residential and Dementia Care Environment

The home provides separate residential and dementia care environments whilst maintaining access to shared facilities and activities.

Several improvements have taken place since the previous Enter & View visit in 2023. The resident shop, which was in the planning stages during the previous visit, is now fully operational and provides residents with opportunities to maintain independence and make personal purchases.

The home benefits from a range of communal facilities including:

- Cinema room
- Activity lounge
- Tea rooms
- Conservatory
- Hair salon
- Games area
- Resident shop
- Outdoor garden spaces

The gardens were particularly well maintained, with accessible seating areas, planters and a greenhouse supporting gardening activities.

The upstairs dementia care area contained a range of reminiscence and sensory features designed to support orientation, engagement and wellbeing. Interactive wall displays, themed areas and memory prompts contributed positively to the environment.

One resident who found the main dining room environment too noisy had been supported through the creation of a quieter dining space within an upstairs tea room. This demonstrated a responsive and person-centred approach to meeting individual needs and preferences.

Signage was available throughout the home, although some signs appeared less prominent than others and could potentially be enhanced further to support residents living with dementia.

7. Activities and Community Engagement

Residents had access to a varied programme of activities reflecting individual interests and preferences.

Activities observed or discussed during the visit included:

- Communion services
- Church visits
- Entertainers and singers
- Ukulele group visits
- Dog therapy sessions
- Hairdressing services
- Nail care sessions
- Gardening activities
- Movie afternoons
- Arts and crafts
- Community events and summer fairs

Residents are actively encouraged to contribute ideas for activities and are consulted regularly regarding activity planning.

The home maintains strong links with the local community through churches, community groups, volunteers, newsletters and social media.

The home has also achieved recognition through the Veteran Friendly Framework and supports former members of the Armed Forces living within the home.

8. Staffing and Leadership

The home benefits from experienced leadership, with the manager having worked at Simonsfield since 2015.

The manager described the home's culture as being person-centred, caring, open and transparent, with a strong focus on dignity, equality, diversity and meeting residents' individual needs.

Staffing levels appeared appropriate to meet residents' needs and included care staff, senior carers, activity coordinators, domestic staff, catering staff, maintenance staff and administration support.

Staff receive a combination of online and face-to-face training, including:

- Care Certificate training
- Oliver McGowan Training
- Safeguarding
- Medication administration
- Health and Safety
- Specialist care training

The home demonstrated a commitment to staff wellbeing through social events, wellbeing initiatives, health checks and opportunities for career progression. Staff are encouraged to develop within the organisation and internal promotion opportunities are actively supported.

During the visit staff appeared knowledgeable, caring and committed to providing high-quality care.

9. Dining Experience

Dining arrangements appeared flexible and person-centred.

Residents were offered menu choices at mealtimes, with alternatives available where required. Protected mealtimes were in operation, and menus were displayed throughout dining areas.

Residents had access to hydration stations, drinks trolleys and snacks throughout the day.

Breakfast choices included cereals, porridge, toast and cooked breakfast options. Lunch and evening meals offered a choice of menu options, with special dietary requirements catered for appropriately.

Residents spoken to during the visit were complimentary about the quality of food provided.

Tables were attractively presented and dining areas appeared welcoming and well maintained.

10. Safety and Quality Assurance

A range of systems were in place to support resident safety and wellbeing, including:

- Individual risk assessments
- Window restrictors
- Nurse call systems
- Sensor mats
- Alarmed exits
- Safeguarding procedures
- Medication competency assessments
- Falls prevention measures

Regular audits, governance meetings, observations, handovers and supervision sessions were used to support quality assurance and continuous improvement.

The manager operates an open-door policy and residents and relatives are encouraged to provide feedback through surveys, meetings and informal discussions.

The home demonstrated a willingness to adapt services in response to resident feedback and changing needs.

11. Progress Since the 2023 Enter & View Visit

Healthwatch Halton reviewed the recommendations made following the January 2023 Enter & View visit and found evidence that these had been addressed.

Advocacy information had been updated and advocacy support remained available to residents.

Religious and spiritual support has expanded, with regular faith-based visits and services now available within the home.

Resident and family feedback continues to be actively sought through surveys, meetings and open communication with management.

The home has continued to invest in environmental improvements, including refurbishment work and the development of the resident shop, which was identified as a future project during the previous visit.

Overall, the home demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement and responding positively to feedback.

12. Summary

Feedback received from residents, together with observations made during the visit, reflected a welcoming, caring and person-centred environment throughout the home.

The home demonstrates a strong commitment to dementia-friendly care, resident independence and meaningful engagement. Residents appeared happy, comfortable and well cared for throughout the visit.

Staff interactions were consistently positive and respectful, and leadership within the home was visible and proactive.

Significant progress has been made since the previous Enter & View visit in 2023, including environmental improvements, expansion of activities, development of the resident shop and continued investment in staff training and wellbeing.

The culture of the home was described as being "like one big family", an observation that was reflected throughout the visit through the interactions between residents, staff and management.

13. Resident and staff Feedback

Residents spoken to during the visit provided positive feedback about the home.

Comments included:

"The food is very nice."

"Sunday roasts are good."

"The staff are very caring."

"I feel safe here."

Residents also spoke positively about activities, companionship and the support they receive from staff.

Staff Survey Feedback

Healthwatch Halton invited staff to complete a confidential feedback survey as part of this Enter & View visit. No completed staff questionnaires were received; therefore, we were unable to include staff survey findings within this report.

Healthwatch Halton values staff feedback as an important part of the Enter & View process and would encourage participation in future visits.

14. Recommendation

Review signage throughout communal areas to ensure lounges, dining rooms and activity spaces are consistently and clearly signposted to further support residents living with dementia.

15. Provider Response

We welcome this recommendation and appreciate the positive feedback provided during the Enter & View visit.

The home recognises the importance of clear and consistent signage in supporting residents, particularly those living with dementia, to navigate the environment confidently and maintain their independence. We will undertake a review of all communal area signage to identify any areas where improvements can be made.

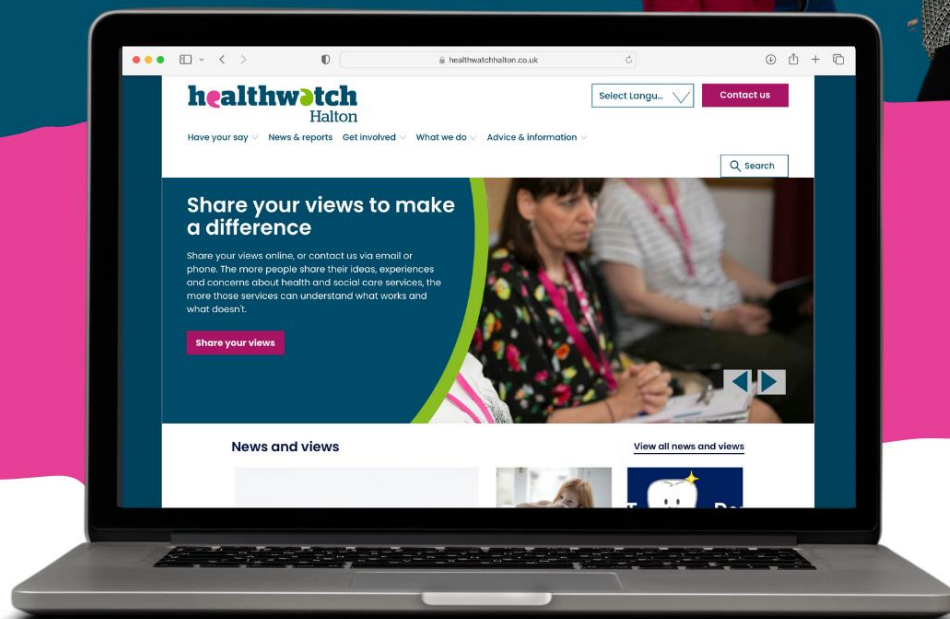
Where required, we will introduce additional dementia-friendly signage, incorporating clear wording, appropriate colours, symbols and visual cues to further enhance orientation and wayfinding throughout the home. This work will form part of our ongoing environmental improvement programme and will be monitored through our regular quality assurance audits.

We remain committed to continuously improving the living environment to ensure it meets the changing needs of our residents and supports their safety, wellbeing and independence.

Have Your Say

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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.



A.R.T. Centre
Tan House Lane
Widnes
WA8 0RR
Tel: 0300 777 6543
E: feedback@healthwatchhalton.co.uk