

Thornton House Thornton-Cleveleys

Enter and View Report

Friday 29th April 2022

1pm - 4pm



DISCLAIMER

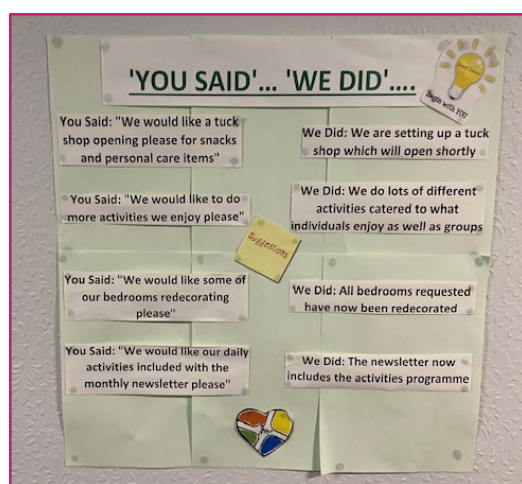
This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff, visitors and residents who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

Contact Details:
Thornton House
Whimbrel Drive
Thornton-Cleveleys
Lancashire
FY5 2LR

Staff met during our visit:
Kimberley Lord (Registered Manager)
Beverley Horton (Senior staff member)

Date and time of our visit:
Friday 29th April 2022
1pm - 4pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised
Representatives:
Maria Lord (Engagement Officer)
Lesley Miller (Engagement Officer)



Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Lancashire is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those that are hard to reach and seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service. This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Lancashire (HWL) who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced. The aim is to obtain the views and experiences of residents, relatives and staff and observe and assess the quality of services.

The team compile a report reflecting observations and feedback. Healthwatch Lancashire is an independent organisation, therefore we do not make judgements or express personal opinions. The report identifies aspects of good practice as well as possible areas of improvement. This is sent to the manager for their opportunity to respond. Where appropriate, Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. The report is then published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk and sent to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank registered manager Kimberley Lord, senior staff member Beverley Horton, and the rest of the staff, residents and relatives for making us feel so welcome and for taking the time to speak to us during the visit.

General Information

Thornton House is a residential home owned by Lancashire County Council. It offers care and rehabilitation for older people, people with a physical disability, those requiring mental health support and those living with dementia. The service can provide care for up to forty-five adults and there were twenty-three residents at the time of our visit.

Methodology

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on Friday 29th April 2022 from 1pm - 4pm. We spoke to four residents and three members of staff; twelve further staff and one relative responded to our questions in writing.

Healthwatch Lancashire obtain the views and experiences of residents, relatives and staff. Conversations with each are adapted to capture individual experiences to help assess the quality of services. Conversations with residents were structured around four themes (Environment, Care, Food and Activities). Conversations with staff included their experiences of staffing levels, support and training. Relatives were asked to speak about their general experiences including how they feel about the service and if they feel involved and informed. The team also recorded their own observations of the environment, facilities and staff-resident interactions.

Summary:

Thornton House is a large care home with accommodation for older people. It spans four separate units: Byron (specialist dementia unit), Wordsworth (residential unit) and Keats (rehabilitation units). The service is for people requiring long term-residential or short-term rehabilitation support. One of the rehabilitation units was closed at the time of our visit.

The interior was observed to be inviting, clean, tidy and uncluttered, with plenty of space in communal areas. These areas were nicely decorated and made to feel homely through the use of ornaments, plants, flowers and pictures, and the presence of two pet cats and some goldfish. Public bathrooms were observed to be modern, clean and fresh, with accessible bathing facilities. The exterior building appeared well-maintained and the surrounding lawns had been recently mowed, so the overall impression was neat and tidy. Some outside seating could be seen in a small, paved courtyard garden in the central quadrangle. Two residents were observed sitting outside and there was also some evidence of recent gardening activities.

Our representatives spoke with residents and observed their interactions with staff. All of the residents we spoke to were happy with the care they received from staff. One resident told us, *"The staff are very good and I can talk to them"* and two more explained *"They look after me."* All of the residents we spoke to were happy with the environment, with one explaining, *"My room is lovely, it's painted how I want it and I have my own things in it."* We received some general feedback about activities. One resident said, *"I really enjoy the activities"* whereas another said they preferred not to join in. One resident explained that books were regularly delivered by the library, but other residents did not mention specific activities. The food at Thornton was described as *"alright"* *"sometimes good"* and *"okay"*. Our representatives considered if residents could give input on future menu choices and the quality of food provided.

The feedback from relatives was limited to just one response, which made it difficult for our representatives to get a full understanding of how the service was viewed. However, the answers given were very positive about the care provided and also voiced appreciation of the staff. Sharing this report with relatives would give opportunities for future feedback on the service which can be made via the Healthwatch Lancashire website.

Our Healthwatch representatives received a range of feedback from staff. There were positive comments regarding the level of training provided and all members of staff told us that they enjoyed their work, with one explaining, *"Yes I love my job and the staff."* Most staff felt supported to carry out person centred care. One member of staff said, *"Yes I feel totally supported"* and another added, *"Yes I have been trained to do this."* Two members explained that person centred care was easier to provide when the workload was shared equally amongst staff and that this was more difficult when working with agency staff. Whilst the majority acknowledged that there were enough staff most of the time, issues affecting staffing levels were also identified. These included: lack of experience or willingness to work on the dementia unit; high levels of paperwork impacting care; and reliance on agency staff for night shifts. Whilst most members of staff felt happy to recommend the service, others didn't feel able to at this time, due to issues with staffing levels. Our representatives felt this could be an opportunity for discussion between management and staff.

Enter and View observations

The external environment

Thornton House is located in the centre of a quiet residential area of Thornton-Cleveleys. It is a large, two-storey, purpose-built facility set in well-maintained grounds of mature trees and lawns. There is a large car park for staff and visitors, with clearly marked bays, including two disabled spaces. The surface is evenly tarmacked, and a dropped curb makes the path to the front entrance of the building easily accessible for wheelchairs and those using mobility aids.

The internal environment/reception - first impressions

The front entrance leads into a large reception area, which was observed to be tidy and well organised, with a visitor book, sanitising station, along with a selection of information leaflets available at the signing in table or adjacent noticeboard. To the right of the entrance, a map of the building layout was displayed, clearly labelled with emergency exits, and to the left, a large noticeboard displayed information regarding safeguarding vulnerable adults. Our representatives were warmly welcomed at the front door by Kimberley Lord, registered manager, and asked to follow the necessary COVID procedures before entering.

The observation of corridors, public toilets and bathrooms

The ground floor corridors allow access to the management office, the specialist dementia unit (Byron), a large lounge area, and rehabilitation unit, although this was not being used at the time of our visit. A staircase or lift could be used to access the upper floor, with corridors leading to the residential care unit (Wordsworth) and a further rehabilitation unit. Public toilets and bathrooms in each location, were observed to be very clean, modern, with accessible bathing or showering facilities, grab rails and non-slip flooring.

All corridors were observed to be clean and fresh, with carpeted flooring and white painted walls with a mixture of information boards, photographs or artwork. All corridors were observed to be free from clutter and very tidy, with handrails positioned to assist with residents' independent movement between rooms. Equipment such as hoists and wheelchairs were stored neatly against the wall of one of the corridors, although this did prevent access to the handrail. Homely additions such as an armchair next to a small telephone table, an old-fashioned telephone, and a replica Royal Mail post-box prompted residents to reminisce about communication methods familiar to them.

The lounges, dining and other public areas

Each unit has a large communal area which encompasses a lounge, dining room and modern kitchen area. All lounges were observed to be carpeted, pleasantly decorated to a high standard with comfortable, supportive armchairs and a large television. A homely environment was created through positioning of table lamps, flowers, plants, pictures and ornaments. The lounge on Byron unit also had a large fish tank, where the goldfish could be observed by residents. Dining tables were arranged to seat small groups of between two and four people and were also used when residents were taking part in activities, such as the bingo activity our representatives observed.

Observations of resident and staff interactions

The interaction between staff and residents was observed as being both caring and professional. Carers assisted residents at mealtimes and showed respect and patience when offering alternative choices to a resident who did not feel like eating the meal provided. When a resident asked for water, one of the carers asked if they would prefer a cup with a spout. Another carer took a resident out into the garden as they had always loved gardening. They took care to make sure that the resident was warm enough and picked some flowers for the resident to put in her room. During an activity session, there was a high ratio of staff to residents, and carers could be seen actively encouraging residents to participate, but also being respectful of those who did not want to.

Additional information

The registered manager was passionate when talking about the dedication shown by the staff at Thornton House during the pandemic. She explained that staff had stayed on site to help provide consistent care and prevent the spread of infection. It was also noted that the management felt very well supported in very difficult circumstances by Wendy Cooper, one of the senior leaders for Older People's Care Services at Lancashire County Council.

Feedback from residents

Environment

All of the residents we spoke to were pleased with their surroundings at Thornton House. The size of the bedrooms was really appreciated by three of the residents, along with personalisation and décor. One resident said, *“My room is lovely, it’s painted how I want it and I have my own things in it”* and another told us, *“My room is big, I’ve got it painted blue.”* Two residents were happy with how light and spacious their rooms were, with one describing their room as *“large and bright”* and another explaining that they could sit by the window and *“watch the squirrels outside.”*

Activities

Some of the residents we spoke to said they liked participating in activities. One said, *“I really enjoy the activities”* and two more shared that they enjoyed watching films or reading books. Another resident told us, *“There are plenty of books, and the library bring books every month, but I do miss being able to go out by myself.”* During the visit, our representatives observed a group ‘Bingo’ activity taking place where staff encouraged and supported residents to join in and respected the wishes of those who preferred not to. This was reiterated by a resident who explained, *“I don’t do activities, but it’s my choice not to.”*

The registered manager explained that all staff have access to training from ‘Oomph Wellness’ on how to provide activities to promote physical, mental and emotional wellbeing in older adults. They explained that photographs of activities were shared on the Thornton House Facebook page as a way to keep relatives informed during lockdown. The page was viewed by one of our representatives and residents could be seen participating in a range of activities such as dominoes, baking, knitting, gardening, flower arranging and a variety of themed days. Our representative considered if it would be possible to keep the page regularly updated like it had been previously.

Care

All residents we spoke to were happy with the care they received from the staff at Thornton House. Two residents explained *“They look after me”*, one described the care they received as *“good”* and another told us, *“The staff are very good and I can talk to them.”*

Food

When asked about the quality and variety of food available, feedback from residents was varied. One resident said they liked the food, and two residents told us that *“sometimes the food is good”* or *“it’s alright.”* Another resident gave a mixed response and described the food as *“okay but sometimes not that great.”* A member of staff explained that a menu spanning three weeks was set up after consultation with residents. In addition to this, residents are able to choose what they would like to eat on a daily basis. The registered manager added that even though the catering staff were still managed by Lancashire County Council, they worked closely with Thornton House. Our representatives considered that this could be an opportunity to address standards of food provided and encourage the residents to share their views.

Relatives and friends' views

How do you feel generally about the service?

The relative we spoke to described the service as “*excellent*”, particularly referencing the “*hard work and care*” from the staff during the pandemic.

Do you think that you are kept informed about your relative e.g. Health and future care plans?

Overall, the relative we spoke to was happy with the level of information sharing at Thornton House. They did, however, mention that it would have helped to know sooner about changes to visiting after lock downs were lifted, although they recognised there may have been reasons why this would not be possible.

Do you know how to make a complaint if you need to?

The relative we spoke to said they were aware of the complaint procedure.

Are you aware of the social activities at the service and do you feel welcomed to join in?

The response explained that involvement in activities had been affected by Covid, but the activities were described as “*really good*” and that they were enjoyed by their family member.

Would you recommend this service to others?

The response to this question was incredibly positive. The relative explained “*Yes I would recommend this service and I do. I am always telling people how good the staff are and how very caring and thoughtful they are.*” They went on to say, “*My mum seems happy and content and I couldn't wish for anything else.*”

Staff views

Do you have enough staff when on duty?

When asked this question, the responses from staff were varied, but still positive overall. Five members of staff were confident in the staffing levels, with one saying, *“Yes there are plenty of staff when I’m on duty”* and another explaining that agency staff were used as a *“top up”* if necessary. Five members of staff thought that shifts had enough staff most of the time, with one explaining, *“mostly they provide enough staff for working”* and another adding *“Yes, the majority of the time, there are plenty of staff on the dementia unit.”* One member of staff recognised that there had been an improvement in staff numbers and explained it was *“now better than it was”* but that additional staff would be needed when the unit is full to capacity *“especially when you have clients that need two carers.”* Another thought that agency staff were relied upon a lot for night shifts. Three members of staff did not think there were always enough staff, with one explaining that the high levels of paperwork prevented staff from focussing on care. Another explained that even when there are enough staff, some are unwilling to work with, or have no experience working with dementia.

The registered manager explained that they have a procedure if a member of staff is absent. Firstly, employed staff are asked to cover, followed by casual staff from Lancashire County Council. If neither of these options are available, agency staff will be used, but they try wherever possible to use staff who are familiar with Thornton House. The manager explained that they were currently recruiting for additional staff and interviews were taking place later that day. It was also explained that staffing levels can be changeable depending on the support needs of the residents, but that this was regularly monitored.

Do you feel supported to carry out person centred care?

Thirteen members of staff told us that they felt supported to provide person-centred care, and we received comments such as, *“Yes I feel totally supported”*, *“Yes always”* and, *“Yes I have been trained to do this.”* Two members of staff explained that they felt supported to carry out person centred care some of the time. One said they felt supported *“when the team work together equally.”* Another member of staff explained that, *“You work better when it’s your work partner because you can understand the jobs.”* They continued to share that it can be more difficult to provide person-centred care when agency staff are working at Thornton House for the first time as everything needs explaining and it *“takes twice as much time.”*

Do you feel you have enough training to carry out your duties well?

All of the staff who shared their views felt that they had received enough training to carry out their role. Three members of staff described having “*plenty*” of training, one told us, “*Yes, training is up to date*” and another explained that the training is “*online and e-learning.*” The registered manager explained that all training is logged on the training matrix and updated annually. Domestic and catering staff now receive the same mandatory training as the rest of the team, including safeguarding and working with challenging behaviour. Care staff are trained to work with people living with dementia.

Are you happy working here?

All of the staff who shared their views said they were happy, or very happy working at Thornton House either all of the time or most of the time. We received comments such as, “*Yes I love my job and the staff*” and “*Yes, I’ve been here a long time and it’s nice with your work team*”. One explained they were happy with the pleasant working environment including the other staff. Three members of staff explained that they enjoyed their job, but also identified some things they weren’t happy about. One told us, “*The only time I’m not happy is when I’m working with staff who won’t or don’t do their fair share of the workload.*” Another explained that they didn’t agree with some things but didn’t elaborate further. One member of staff was concerned that hospital assessment forms did not accurately reflect the needs of the residents they were transferring to Thornton House, and this made planning for care more difficult.

Would you be happy to recommend this care home to a close relative?

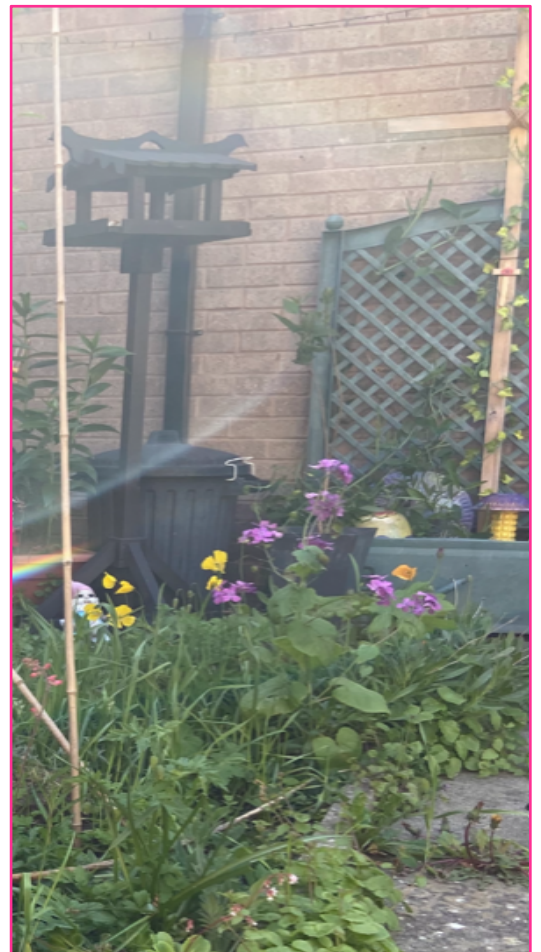
Most of the staff we spoke to told us that they would be happy to recommend Thornton House to a close relative. Three said they “*often do*” or “*already have done*” and five said they would recommend if a relative needed residential or rehabilitation care. One member of staff said they probably would and another was unsure, but this was due to it being their place of work rather than any issues regarding the level of care. Contrastingly, five members of staff didn’t feel comfortable recommending Thornton House at the present time, with one explaining that their decision was due to staffing levels and another feeling that even though they would like to recommend, they felt it was “*let down*” by some staff.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas for improvement have been highlighted from residents, relatives, and staff feedback. These are not Healthwatch Lancashire recommendations but rather, areas for improvement suggested by residents, relatives and staff.

- Evaluate the quality of food and food choices provided and request regular feedback from residents regarding this.
- Provide opportunities for staff to share their views on how to improve the service, addressing the concerns which have been raised in this report.
- Once published, share the Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View report with relatives and direct them to the Healthwatch Lancashire website where they can submit feedback at any time.

Pictures taken during the visit







Response from provider

Areas identified for improvement	Action from provider	When by	Comments
<p>Evaluate the quality of food and food choices provided and request regular feedback from residents regarding this.</p>	<p>Pictures of all food menus taken and being used for residents to choose what they would like. Feedback on food is gathered it residents meeting and consultation and questionnaire.</p> <p>Mealtime's observations are being completed on each area weekly.</p> <p>Staff will be informed to report to the duty</p>	<p>September 2022</p>	
<p>Provide opportunities for staff to share their views on how to improve the service, addressing the concerns which have been raised in this report.</p>	<p>Recruitment is on going but it is very difficult to recruit in this area, Staff have a survey sent out annually, we have staff meetings every 3 months where staff can raise their concerns, and these are addressed at the time.</p> <p>Staffing levels meet the Barthel,</p> <p>New electronic care plan system will be introduced to Thornton house, we are just awaiting a date for this to commence, so this will reduce the amount of paperwork staff have to complete. Staff receive 1-1 four times a year and regular observed supervisions where they can raise concerns.</p>		

<p>Once published, share the Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View report with relatives and direct them to the Healthwatch Lancashire website where they can submit feedback at any time.</p>	<p>As soon as this report is finalised and published this report will be shared with relatives and visitors where we can see feedback</p>		
<p>Completed by</p>	<p>Kimberley Lord</p>	<p>Date</p>	<p>12/08/2022</p>



www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk
info@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk
 Twitter: @HW_Lancashire
 Facebook: facebook.com/lancshealthwatch