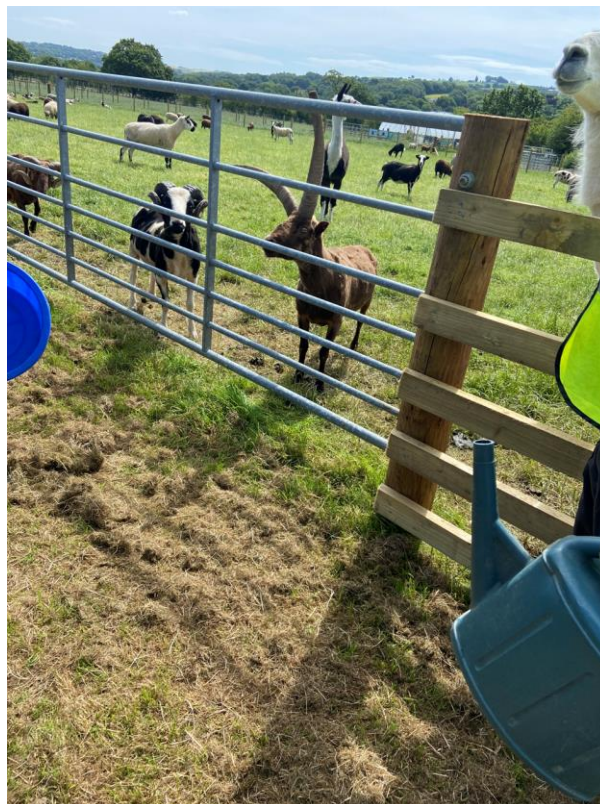


Adam's Activity Ark Blackburn

Adult Day Services Enter and View Report

Tuesday 21st June 2022

9am-12pm



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, people using the services and relatives who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

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Staff met during our visit:

Ellen Pope: Director

Date and time of our visit:

Date: Tuesday 21st June 2022

9am-12pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised

Representatives:

Georgia Hackett - Senior Engagement and
Research Officer

Sue Edwards - Senior Engagement Officer



Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Lancashire is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those that are 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 who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced. The aim is to obtain the views and experiences of people using the services, 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 management, staff, members and relatives for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

General Information

There are twenty-one people using the services overall, eight of these members were present on the day of our visit.

They provide small and large animal care, poultry care, horticulture, woodwork, and arts and crafts. Cooking skills will also be offered once the newly installed kitchen is finalised.

Methodology

We asked the service manager how they refer to people who use the service. For the purpose of this report, people who use the service will be referred to as member.

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on 21st June 2022 and spoke to eight members, three staff members, one external support staff member, one volunteer and one relative. Three further relatives responded to our questions in writing.

Healthwatch Lancashire obtain the views and experiences of people using the services, relatives and staff. Conversations with each are adapted to capture individual experiences to help assess the quality of services. People using the services were asked about their general feelings about the day centre including what choices they have and what they think about the activities and environment. Conversations with staff included their thoughts about the day service, service user choice, staffing levels and support. Relatives were asked to speak about their general experiences including how they feel about the service, if they feel informed and whether their relative has choice in what they do at the day service. Representatives also recorded their own observations on the environment and staff-service user interactions.

To retain confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, names, pronouns and any identifiable details have been removed from quotes; 'they/their [member]' has been used throughout the report to refer to members.

Summary:

Adam's Activity Ark is an activity day service for adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health needs to help improve skills, knowledge and understanding. The service is based on a working farm and members carry out a range of activities including horticulture, animal care, gardening, woodwork, arts and crafts.

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives spoke to eight members, three staff members, one external support staff member, one volunteer and had feedback from four relatives.

The centre is based on a working farm which is open to members of the public during weekends and school holidays (Adam's Activity Ark members feed and care for the animals during the week when the farm is closed to the public). The centre is set in an area of land with large open spaces and is in a countryside farming setting with a range of animals. Staff-member interactions were observed to be friendly and supportive of needs and preferences. Staff ensured that all members were involved and included in tasks and activities.

Feedback from members was highly positive. Members expressed that they enjoy the activities on offer, and they have choice in what they do. Several members had been attending the service for some years.

Relative feedback was also very positive, with only a few issues raised. Staff were highly praised, most relatives felt informed, and all were positive that their relative had choices. Feedback highlighted that the day service has a big impact on the members and their wellbeing.

Staff feedback was also highly positive with no negative feedback given. All staff members would recommend this service to a close relative. Feedback was also gained from an external support staff member who was highly complementary of the service and the positive impact it has on the members *"the service has exceeded my expectations"*.

Enter and View observations

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives arrived at the service before any members arrived so that they had the opportunity to speak to staff. The representatives received a warm and friendly welcome from all staff.

Client interactions

At the start of the day, staff and members casually chatted in one of the activity rooms. Staff were warm and welcoming to the members as they arrived and communicated well with them. They supported members to put their lunches in the fridge and made them a hot drink; staff knew everyone's preferences, and this was part of their morning routine which members appeared comfortable with. There was friendly conversation including staff asking about members' family, an upcoming member's birthday, their pets, and their plans for the weekend. Healthwatch Lancashire representatives felt that there was a very good atmosphere.

At the start of the day the group sat together and decided who was going to do what activity. Members could either help with 'small animals', 'big barn' or gardening. Staff had a register which recorded who had done what activity previously. On this day, the majority of members wanted to help with the big barn. To ensure that staff could supervise all members, the group was asked if someone would undertake a different activity which one member agreed. Staff thanked them for changing activities and reassured them that they would be able to do their chosen activity the next day. Staff explained that if members start an activity and decide they want to do something else they can do.

One of the members was non-verbal and had their own one-to-one support staff, who was external staff from another organisation, and who was able to communicate with them well. This member was included and engaged with throughout the duration of the visit by all staff, and they were given the opportunity to join the group or undertake their own activities dependant on their choice at any given time.

All members had appropriate footwear on for the farm, and some members had a polo top with their name and the service logo on. Staff informed us that it was their choice whether they wore a polo top or their own clothes. It was a hot day on the day of our visit and members were offered sun cream and advised not to dress too warmly before starting activities.

During the activities staff were fully engaged with the members, casually chatting with them about their family and plans for the weekend and they seemed genuinely interested. Staff respectfully offered members guidance on how best to do the jobs on the farm. Healthwatch Lancashire representatives noticed that instead of telling members what to do, staff involved members by asking them

questions. For example, “*shall we take the wheelbarrow with us?*” and “*shall we fetch some water for the pigs?*” which contributed to the friendly atmosphere.

Staff made sure each member was included in the activities and each got a turn at collecting food and water and feeding the animals. Staff often praised members when they did a job well “*That’s it - brilliant!*”. One member chose not to take part in any of the activities and walked round the farm by themselves. Staff explained that this is what this member enjoys doing, and staff were seen to ask this member how they were and chat to them when they saw/walked past them.

Staff showed care and acknowledgement towards the members, often asking if they are okay and asking if they want to do particular jobs if they noticed they hadn’t had a turn in a while. It was a hot day on the day of our visit, and mid-morning staff advised members to sit inside for a short break and have a cold drink, supporting members to wash their hands first.

Due to the hot weather members were informed that in the afternoon there would be arts and crafts activities inside for those that preferred to be out of the sun.

Staff

The director of the service, Ellen Pope, was very welcoming towards Healthwatch Lancashire representatives and eager to show all aspects of the service. Staff knew all members’ names and how best to support them and their individual needs and preferences. Staff were very respectful towards members and appeared professional throughout the visit.

Person-centred support was apparent throughout the visit by all staff.

The Centre

The centre is based on a working farm which is open to members of the public during weekends and school holidays (Adam’s Activity Ark members feed and care for the animals during the week when the farm is closed to the public). Members informed us that it is conveniently based on a bus route, with the bus stop just outside the entrance to the farm. There are several buildings including a recreational/activity room, a smaller recreational room, an office building, a large kitchen space which has just been newly upgraded, a woodwork unit, a polytunnel, and several barns and animal enclosures. The centre is accessed by a path which leads from the working farm and through a children’s activity area. All buildings had disabled access with ramps.

The centre is set in an area of land with large open spaces and is in a countryside farming setting. There were several large outdoor enclosures with sheep, goats, llamas, emus, pigs, a boar, water buffalo, and wallabies. There was also a large poultry enclosure, as well as horses and a donkey that were in stables during the

visit. In the indoor animal enclosures there were rabbits, as well as a hen which was receiving special care.

Members started their day in the recreational/activities room which is set up with two long tables on either side of the room enabling members to sit as a group and be able to interact with each other and staff. There were posters around the walls depicting flora and fauna, and there was a notice board with a range of information including names of the first aiders, contact details for safeguarding concerns, and their complaints and compliments procedure.

There were two bookcases with books around animal care, horticulture, and other such subjects; staff were asked if members utilised the books and they replied that several members enjoy looking at them.

Members have their own drawer with their name on which includes a tub with resources they may need for their activities such as gloves and hand sanitizer. This contributed to the personal, friendly and organised atmosphere.

Management explained to Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that they have been successful in several applications for grants and funding, and this was demonstrated by the quality and quantity of tools and equipment. They have also received funding from a hardware chain to install new ramps/disability access around the buildings.

Due to the nature of the environment, there were some uneven surfaces outdoors, but the members were not observed to be struggling, and all members and staff were wearing appropriate footwear. The members moved around the site at their own pace and staff appeared to know an appropriate speed to move at for the group and the environment.

Members had access to toilet and handwashing facilities. The service currently uses portable toilets which are close to the recreational/activity room. Management explained that these are a temporary fixture as they are currently applying for a grant to be able to construct a permanent toilet block.

Additional information

Management explained that one of the members and their relative(s), and a volunteer are also directors of Adams Activity Ark.

Feedback from members

General feedback

Seven members were able to answer the questions direct and stated that they really enjoy attending services at Adams Activity Ark. The non-verbal member communicated through their one-to-one staff who said that they are really enjoying the service. Several of the members have been attending for some years. One member stated *“I have been coming here for seven years - I love it!”*

Looking after the animals was one of the main reasons given for attending, as well as there being a wide range of activities and the fact that there are choices around these. One member said they like sweeping up, and one said they enjoy the woodwork.

One member said that *“if I’m not in the mood they’ll [staff] give me space and I like this”*.

No negative feedback was given around the services, with only minor comments made like *“I don’t like cleaning out the chickens”* when asked if there is anything they don’t like.

Choice

Seven members shared that they are able to make choices, and some stated this as one of the reasons they enjoy coming to Adam’s Activity Ark. The eighth member is non-verbal, has one-to-one support and communicates through their support staff. Their support staff said they are able to make their choices independent to the group or join in depending on the member’s wishes.

Activities

Seven members said they were happy with the activities, especially working with the animals *“I like feeding the animals, especially bottle feeding the lambs”*. One member shared what keeps them coming back to the day service and said *“everyone is kind and friendly and the animals are very well looked after”*. When asked what he enjoyed doing one member said woodwork. The eighth member is non-verbal, has one-to-one support and communicates through their support staff. Their support staff said they are able to join in activities or opt to do their own activity on the day, and that the centre support them with this.

Building

Seven members said they are happy with the building(s). The eighth member is non-verbal, has one-to-one support and communicates through their support staff. Their support staff said they are able to join other members in the buildings or find their own space if the member so chooses, and that they have access to all the facilities.

Do you know who to speak to if you are not happy with the service or want to complain about something?

Seven members said they would know who to talk to if they are unhappy or would like to complain, several mentioned staff, others mentioned family. The eighth member is non-verbal and would be supported by their support staff to raise issues/complaints.

Relatives and friends' views

General experience

Feedback was gained from four relatives and most relatives gave highly positive feedback, *"I have nothing negative to say about this place"*. Positive comments were made about the staff *"excellent service ran by caring, experienced staff"* and *"work hard and are sensitive to the needs of the people they support"*, as well as the positive impact the service has on well-being *"Adam's Activity Ark is great and has been very beneficial to their [member] overall wellbeing, they are thoroughly enjoying their days that they attend"*.

Choice

All relatives shared that their relative has a choice in what they do whilst they are at the service *"Each day they [member] get to choose what area they want to work in"* and that they enjoy the activities *"[they] enjoy all aspects of activities provided by Adam's Activity Ark, [they] come home telling me all about different activities they have done that day"*.

One relative mentioned a potential future day trip away from the farm *"there is potentially a canal trip coming up which hopefully [they] will enjoy"*.

Do you think you are kept informed about your relative?

Most relatives believe they are kept well informed about their relative and their time at the service through speaking with staff *"I am kept very well informed and I have the opportunity to speak to staff each day"* and support workers *"[they] attend with [their] support worker so I am well informed"*.

One relative stated *"when we ask they will comment but we are not kept informed"*

Any other comments

One relative gave a suggestion of music activities for their relative *"the service is great and will be even better when the new kitchen area is in use. They [member] may enjoy some music but other than that, it's perfect"*.

The following additional comments were made by relatives:

"We feel very lucky that he attends this wonderful, caring day centre"

"Adam's Activity Ark has had a positive effect on her mental health. The staff are very knowledgeable with regards to Autism and the different needs of people"

One relative stated that the services are expensive for people on benefits and if a member is unable to attend for any reason they still have to pay.

Staff views

Pre-visit questionnaire

A pre-visit questionnaire was carried out by telephone on Wednesday 8th June 2022 between Healthwatch Lancashire representative Sue Edwards and Adams Activity Ark Director Ellen Pope. Ellen was very engaging and spoke about the services they offer, their facilities, activities, and any communication needs we may need to be aware of. Ellen was very welcoming of the proposed visit and saw it as an opportunity to identify any area(s) needing improvement. Ellen stated that they carry out regular feedback surveys from members and relatives, and that relatives are very supportive.

General feedback

Ellen and two further members of staff were present on the day of the visit and gave feedback, along with one volunteer who completed a paper copy of the survey. All staff gave positive feedback with no negative comments made. Staff stated that they enjoy the activities and the services Adams Activity Ark provides *“they cater for individual needs and capabilities”*.

Staffing levels and support

All staff felt that they have enough staff when on duty and felt well supported. Staff felt they had enough knowledge and interest to carry out their duties *“I am always willing to learn”*.

Members' choices

Staff expressed that there is a good range of activities on offer for members and that members are able to make choices around their day and what they would like to do. It was explained to Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that members get to choose what they want to do on a daily basis, but if there any day activities away from the main farm they are consulted *“approximately two months before”*.

Environment

All staff were happy with their working environment and felt it was suitable for its members *“it is ideal for walkers and wheelchair users”*.

Would you recommend this day service to a close relative?

All staff stated that they would recommend the services to a close relative *“Yes - happy, relaxed, calm atmosphere”*.

Feedback from external support staff:

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives had an in-depth discussion with the external support staff member who was carrying out one-to-one support. This individual was highly complementary of the service and the positive impact it has on the members. It was explained to representatives, that this staff member previously supported another member of the service and was so pleased with the service, that they recommended it to their new client who now attends the service *“the service has exceeded my expectations”*.

They discussed that the farm environment and the animals can be very *“therapeutic”* for the members *“we call it our magical moments when we have a special moment with an animal”*. This individual also spoke about the staff and how well they work with the members, *“They [staff member] picked up that feather earlier because they know that member does this, that will have made an awful lot to them”*.

Regarding communication, Healthwatch Lancashire representatives were informed that the service consults with members, support staff and family about day trips that they arrange. Previous events that the service have provided included a boat trip and a flower show.

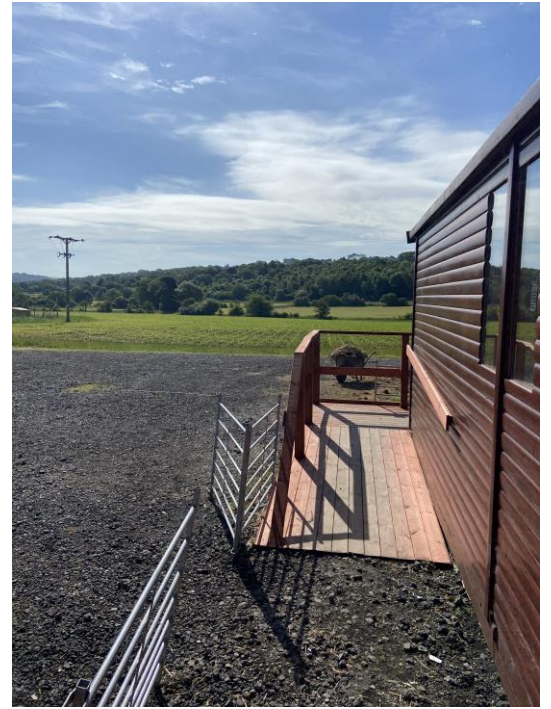
Areas for improvement

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

- Improve current communications methods for relatives to ensure that all relatives feel fully informed around the services and their family members experiences, progress and development- consider a relative newsletter/social media communication- how would relatives want to be informed.

Pictures taken during the visit





Response from provider

Areas identified for improvement	Action from provider	When by	Comments
Communications methods for relatives	I have sent out a letter home with everyone today incorporating a questionnaire with the following questions. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would you like a regular report about what your family member has been doing eg. Monthly, Bi-monthly, Six-monthly, Annually or Don't require one. 2. Does the Newsletter give you enough information about the work we have been doing and upcoming events. Yes / No 3. Regarding keeping you informed what would your preference be Newsletter -Letter-e-mail telephone or social media 4. Are you signed up to our Face Book group Yes / No 5. If we set up a family member steering group meeting periodically throughout the year would you be interested in taking part? Yes / No 	End August 2022	I will collate responses and then address the areas identified by families.
Completed by	(Name)Ellen Pope	Date	16/08/2022

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