

# The Hamlets



**Enter and View Report, August 2022**

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# Introduction

## What is an Enter and View visit?

Healthwatch Liverpool has powers to carry out what we describe as 'Enter and View' visits. These are visits to health and social care settings which help us in our role as the independent local champion for health and social care. Enter and View visits are carried out by small teams of trained members of our staff and volunteers to observe a health and social care service at work, for example at a GP practice, a care home, or a hospital. We only visit services that are publicly funded, e.g. through the NHS or via local authorities.

## What happens during an Enter and View visit?

During an Enter and View visit we talk to people using the service, whether patients or residents, and to friends and relatives where appropriate. We also speak to staff to find out where they think the service is working well, and where it could be improved. We also observe the service. We write up our observations and the feedback we receive and publish it as a report. Our report is sent to the provider of the service, as well as to regulators such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the local authority, and NHS commissioners when appropriate.

If there are recommendations in the report, the service provider is asked for a response, which we later publish online alongside the Enter and View report.

## Details of the Enter and View Visit:

Name of the service visited: The Hamlets

Address: Mersey Parks, 99 Mill Street, L8 5XW.

Website: <https://www.ageconcernliverpoolandsefton.org.uk/services/specialist-residential-care/>

The Date of the Enter and View Visit: Thursday 11 August 2022

The Time of the Enter and View Visit: 1pm – 3pm

The names of the members of the Healthwatch Enter and View Team that undertook the visit were:

Natalie James, Engagement and Project Officer

Mohammed Taher, Engagement and Project Officer

This was announced visit.

We would like to thank staff from The Hamlets and Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton, particularly Jacinta Ashdown (Director of Operations at Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton) and Jackie Achilles (manager at The Hamlets), for facilitating the visit and for taking the time to talk to us.

## **Why did we carry out this visit?**

Enter and View visits can take place for a variety of reasons, for example to find out more about a particular service, or in response to public feedback.

The Enter and View visit to The Hamlets was to learn more about the service, and to find out from observations and speaking with people where the service appeared to be doing especially well, in addition to finding out if any improvements could be made. The visit was not in response to any prior feedback or concerns identified relating to the quality of this service.

## **Safeguarding**

Healthwatch Liverpool Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies, and the Local Authority will be notified on the same day as the Enter and View visit.

There were no safeguarding concerns identified during this Enter and View visit.

# About the Service

## Background

The Hamlets is a nursing home run by Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton. The home provides specialist care to people over 50 with a functional mental health diagnosis, such as paranoia, schizophrenia, Korsakov's Syndrome, severe depression, or other forms of dementia.

The Hamlets is a single story building. There are two corridors with bedrooms for residents, attached in the middle by a communal lounge and dining area. The home also has a self-contained garden, which is accessible via the communal lounge and some of the bedrooms.

The Hamlets based on the same site as Mersey Parks, another care home. Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton rent the building from HC-One, the company which runs Mersey Parks.

The Hamlets currently has 29 residents, which is full capacity. There is a 30<sup>th</sup> bedroom on-site, which is used as a Covid testing area.

The home does not charge any top-up fees.

## Discussion with the manager

When we arrived at The Hamlets, we sat down with Jackie Achilles, the manager, and Jacinta Ashdown, the Director of Operations at Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton. They told us about the home.

Both Jacinta and Jackie were fairly new to The Hamlets. Jackie started as the home's deputy manager in November 2021, and became the manager in February 2022. Jacinta and Jackie explained that there had been problems with the previous management of the home, which they were both working to resolve.

Under the previous management, a number of permanent staff had left the home. This meant there were a lot of agency staff working at The Hamlets. Agency staff working at the home were block-booked, so the same agency staff worked regular shifts. Jackie and Jacinta have been focused on recruiting more permanent staff for the home. A number of agency staff who had been working at the home long-term were being bought on as permanent members of staff. There home now has 5 permanent nurses, and 11 permanent care workers.

Jackie told us that professionals who work with the home, including GPs, district nurses and community matrons have fed back the environment in the home is better and more pleasant now than it was under the previous management.

The home had also recruited a new full time nurse, and a kitchen assistant. The home is also looking to hire a new deputy manager. Jacinta and Jackie told us they were keen to hire people who were a good fit for the home.

An activities co-ordinator had also been recruited. Unfortunately, the activities co-ordinator had unexpectedly passed away shortly before our visit. Jacinta told us she would like to give staff and residents the chance to grieve and process this loss before recruiting a new activities co-ordinator.

Jacinta explained the arrangement The Hamlets has with HC-One, the organisation Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton leases the building from. The building is leased on a 5 year contract, and at the time of our visit this contract was being renewed. Under the agreement, Mersey Parks supply food from their kitchens to The Hamlets. The Hamlets does not have its own full kitchen, but does have a satellite kitchen where toast, cold food, and drinks can be prepared. Jackie told us that one residents' family brings food in for them – this resident is Chinese, and their family bring Chinese food in for that resident which the main kitchen cannot provide. Mersey Parks also do all the laundry for residents at The Hamlets.

Once the new rental contract for The Hamlets has been agreed with HC-One, Jackie told us that she is planning to do decorating and renovations across the home, including in the communal lounge.

The Hamlets works with Sefton Park Medical Centre. Dr Lipton from the practice visits the home every Wednesday to do a GP 'ward round'. When he is unavailable, a nurse practitioner will visit instead. The home also works with Sefton Park Pharmacy.

All residents are vaccinated against Covid-19. All staff, except for one person, are also vaccinated against Covid-19. Jackie told us that the home had experienced a Covid-19 outbreak before she started working there, and that some residents had sadly passed away during this outbreak. However, since she had started, there had been no Covid-19 outbreaks, and only some isolated Covid-19 cases in the home.

Visitors are able to drop in, although the home does have protected mealtimes. The protected meal times are displayed in the reception area. Visitors are asked to avoid visiting during these times, so that residents have dedicated time to eat. The home has a WhatsApp account they use to communicate with family members, and an iPad they use for virtual visiting and video-calls with residents' family. Jackie told us having the iPad had been really helpful for one resident whose family live abroad, as it means this person can more easily speak to family when they are upset and need some family support.

Jackie told us that she will speak to all new residents before they move in, to learn more about them and make sure the home can meet their needs.



# Observations

## Observations on arrival

- When we arrived at The Hamlets, we were met by one of the home's care workers. She made sure our staff members were wearing face masks, and took us inside to meet Jackie and Jacinta.
- We arrived at the end of the home's lunch hour. Residents were eating together in the communal dining area, with staff supporting residents who needed assistance with their food.
- We also saw a visitor waiting outside the home for the protected mealtime to end.

## Observations of the building and facilities

We were shown around the home by Jackie Achilles, the manager.

- The home was clean and tidy throughout, and there were no unpleasant smells.
- The communal areas and most of the corridors were decorated in neutral colours. Some of the décor was worn in places. We saw scuff-marks on some of the floors in both the communal areas and in bedrooms, and scuff-marks and damage to paint on some bedroom doors.
- One corridor leading to residents' bedrooms was decorated in brick wallpaper, to resemble a street. Jackie told us she was keen to change this, to make the corridor look less dark and more welcoming.
- There were some posters, photographs, and decorative signs hung up in communal spaces and corridors. One corridor had a photo frame hung up with photos of previous residents. There were some walls in some corridors which did not have any decoration hung up.
- Residents' bedroom doors were numbered, and also had residents' names on. Jackie told us that she would like to redecorate the doors to make them appear more like front doors, with door knockers and decorative panelling.
- The home provides furniture for all rooms, but residents are also able to bring their own furniture when they move in if they choose, along with their own bedding and decorative items for their rooms.
- Residents can also decorate their rooms before they move in. We saw one bedroom which had been painted purple at the request of a resident, as it was her favourite colour.
- All bedrooms have a profiling bed and nurse call system.

- All the bedrooms we saw were clean and bright, with large windows. Some bedrooms also had access to the communal garden via patio doors.
- None of the bedrooms are en-suite. Some rooms have commodes if this is needed. Both of the corridors leading to residents' bedrooms have sluice rooms to safely dispose of waste from commodes.
- Residents share communal toilets and communal bathrooms. There is a toilet and bathroom accessible from each of the corridors leading to residents' bedrooms. These rooms were identifiable through written signs on the door. The bathrooms and toilets were clean and spacious.
- In one of the bathrooms, we saw a folded-up manual wheelchair being stored. Equipment such as wheelchairs should be stored elsewhere, as storing items in a communal bathroom can be unhygienic.
- We saw some seating areas in the corridors. Jackie explained that this was so staff could sit on the corridors, near to the residents bedrooms, during the night.
- The communal area for residents is separated by a half-wall. Part of the communal area is a dining area, with tables and chairs for residents to eat in. The other half is a lounge, with armchairs and sofas where residents can sit and watch TV.



- There is also a nurses' station in the communal area. This has glass walls, so residents and staff can easily see each other.



- The communal garden is accessible from the lounge and some bedrooms. The garden was nicely maintained, with a variety of plants including grass, bushes, shrubs, flowers, and potted plants. There were benches to sit on and a smoking area for residents.



- We also saw PPE stations, with aprons, gloves, and hand sanitiser, throughout the home. These were tidy and appeared well-stocked.

## **Observations of the kitchen and catering area**

- The Hamlets does not have its own full kitchen. Hot food for breakfast, lunch, and tea is cooked in the main kitchen at Mersey Parks and bought over to The Hamlets on a trolley. The Mersey Parks kitchen has a 4-week menu.
- Residents have a choice of two options for each meal, and choose what they want to eat at meal times.
- There is a small satellite kitchen accessible from the dining area. Simple food for residents can be prepared in this kitchen, such as cereal, toast, and hot and cold drinks.
- The satellite kitchen also has its own microwave.
- During the lunch hour, staff who were helping out with lunch were all wearing blue aprons.

## Observation of activities

- Before Jackie and Jacinta started working at The Hamlets, the home did not have an activities co-ordinator. An activities co-ordinator had been hired, but had unfortunately passed away unexpectedly after only a couple of months in the role.
- During the time she had worked there, the activities co-ordinator had organised some group activities, including booking actors to come into the home to perform a play for residents. She had also looked into pet-therapy and bringing therapy animals into the home.
- The activities co-ordinator had also organised one-to-one activities for residents to take part in, such as knitting, quizzes, and arts and crafts. Jackie told us that most residents preferred one-to-one activities, as some of them find group activities, such as bingo, to be overwhelming and prefer not to take part in them.
- Jacinta told us she will be recruiting a new activities co-ordinator, but that she wanted to give the residents and other staff time to process this sad loss before starting the recruitment process.
- Chinese Wellbeing, a local charity which supports the health and wellbeing of older people in the local Chinese community, visit twice a week to spend time with a Chinese resident.
- During our visit, some residents were spending time in their rooms. We saw other residents watching TV together in the communal lounge.

# Feedback from residents, relatives, and staff.

On this visit, we did not speak to any residents.

We did speak to one member of staff, a care worker. She had recently started working at The Hamlets, and told us she thought it was a good place to work. She told us she got on well with the residents and other staff, and enjoyed working with residents in a 'hands-on' way.

# Summary and recommendations

## Summary

The Hamlets was clean and tidy, and the atmosphere in the home was pleasant. We did not notice any fire or health and safety hazards on the day. Although the décor in some areas would benefit from a refresh, the management of the home was aware of this and told us they had plans to redecorate.

When we were in the home, we saw caring interactions between staff and residents. Although we didn't speak to residents on this occasion, people we saw in the communal areas seemed to be calm and relaxed.

As she was showing us around, Jackie knew lots of the residents by name, and was able to tell us things about them. She also told us anecdotes about time she had bought residents items for their rooms. Even though she had not worked at The Hamlets long, it was clear she had taken time to get to know the residents, and seemed to have a genuine care and warmth towards them.

Jackie and Jacinta were both upfront about the challenges the home had faced with the previous management and further steps they needed to take to make improvements. We were impressed by their honesty, openness and willingness to discuss these issues with us. We felt that it was positive Jackie and Jacinta had made progress on recruiting more permanent staff, and also had plans to ensure the residents had a good quality of life at the home by recruiting an activities co-ordinator, and making plans to redecorate.

## Recommendations

We make the following recommendations for The Hamlets:

- Jackie told us she planned to redecorate areas of the lounge and communal areas in the near future. This could also be a good opportunity for the home to improve signage for toilets and bathrooms, using dementia-friendly signs with pictures as well as text to help residents recognise and identify bathrooms and toilets.
    - As well as refreshing paintwork and flooring, the home could add more artwork, posters, photographs or other decoration to communal areas and corridors to ensure the environment is homely and welcoming throughout. Where possible, this could include photographs of current residents, or posters and artwork reflecting current residents' interests and hobbies to ensure that decoration feels personal for residents.
  - Ensure that equipment such as wheelchairs are not stored in bathrooms.
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# Appendix

## Healthwatch Liverpool – Powers to Enter and View Services

Healthwatch Liverpool was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and came into being in April 2013. We work to give local residents a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided.

We enable people to share their views and concerns about local health and social care services, helping build a picture of where services are doing well, and where they can be improved. Enter and View visits are undertaken in accordance with the remit of Healthwatch Liverpool, and assist us in carrying out our statutory functions under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Enter and View visits are not designed to be full inspections, audits or an investigation of the service, rather they are an opportunity for us to get a better understanding of the service by seeing it in action and by talking to staff and service users.

We aim to identify and share good practice wherever possible. However, if during a visit we identify any aspects of a service that it has serious concerns about, then these concerns are referred to the appropriate regulator or commissioners of the service for investigation or rectification.

Any safeguarding issues identified will be referred to the Local Authority for investigation. Addressing issues of a less serious nature may be done directly with the service provider.

For more information about Healthwatch Liverpool, please visit our website [www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk) or contact us using the details at the end of this report.





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