

## Enter and View Report

### Vale Court



#### Care Home Contact Details:

**Vale Court,  
9b Chester Road,  
Whitby,  
Ellesmere Port  
CH65 9BD**

**Date of Visit: 13<sup>th</sup> Sept 2018**

**Time of Visit: 1:00pm**

**Healthwatch Cheshire Authorised Representatives:**

**Chris Banfi, Pat Clare**

**Vale Court Staff Present: Cherry Quinto - Registered  
Manager**

## What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch Cheshire (HWC) is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across England established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. HWC represents the consumer voice of those using local health and social services and trades as both Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West.

The statutory requirements of all local Healthwatch include an 'Enter and View' responsibility to visit any publicly funded adult health and social care services. Enter and View visits may be conducted if providers invite this, if HWC receive information of concern about a service and/or equally when consistently positive feedback about services is presented. In this way we can learn about and share examples of the limitations and strengths of services visited from the perspective of people who experience the services first hand.

Visits conducted are followed by the publication of formal reports where findings of good practice and recommendations to improve the service are made.

**Contact Details:** Healthwatch Cheshire, Denton Drive, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 7LU Tel: 0300 323 0006

---

### 1. Description & Nature of Service

Vale Court is a purpose built Care home, privately owned, which provides care for patients with dementia and/or nursing care.

There are 57 rooms of which 53 are currently occupied. Ages vary from 60 to 99 years.

**Group:** [Assured Healthcare Solutions Ltd](#) (AHS)

**Person in charge:** Cherry Quinto (Home Manager)

**Local Authority / Social Services:** Cheshire West and Chester Council ([click for contact details](#))

**Type of Service:** Care Home with nursing - Privately Owned , Registered for a maximum of 57 Service Users

**Registered Care Categories:** Dementia • Old Age • Physical Disability

**Single Rooms:** 57

**Rooms with ensuite WC:** 57

**Facilities & Services:** Respite Care • Own GP if required • Own Furniture if required • Pets by arrangement • Close to Local shops • Near Public Transport • Lift • Wheelchair access • Gardens for residents • Phone Point in own room/Mobile • Television point in own room

(Information taken from [www.carehome.co.uk](http://www.carehome.co.uk) and providers website if available)

**Latest Care Quality Commission\* Report on Vale Court Care Home:** In its latest published report ([July 2018](#)) the home was rated Good overall with all categories judged as Good.

## 2. Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cheshire would like to thank the service provider, care home manager, residents, visitors and staff for their contributions to this Enter and View visit.

## 3. Disclaimer

This report relates to findings gathered on a specific date of visiting the service as set out above. Consequently, the report is not suggested to be a fully representative portrayal of the experiences of all the residents and/or staff and/or family members/friends but does provide an account of what was observed and presented to Healthwatch Cheshire Representatives at the time of the visit.

## 4. Purpose of the Visit

- To enable Healthwatch Cheshire reps to see for themselves how the service is being provided in terms of quality of life and quality of care principles
- To capture the views and experiences of residents, family members/friends and staff
- To consider the practical experience of family/friends when visiting the service in terms of access, parking and other visitor facilities
- To identify areas of resident satisfaction, good practice within the service and any areas felt to be in need of improvement
- To enable Healthwatch Cheshire reps to observe how the service delivers on the statements it advertises on its website

## 5. Introduction/Orientation to Service

Representatives met Cherry Quinto, the registered manager. She told us that she has been nursing at the home since 2005 and has been manager from 2012.

She felt that the home had improved since AHS have taken over - her office has been extended and more staff have been employed.

She went on to explain that the company has tried a few agencies and now use particular ones that have proved the most successful. Cherry said they have to use them quite often, ***“As nurses are scarce!”***

Her main concern is the recruitment and retention of caring staff, especially for the Health Care Assistants who are paid the minimum wage.

She explained that she is in competition with other local employers - ***“Who can offer the same money for easier work,”*** and also with the agencies who can charge more and therefore, can pay a higher wage.

## **6. Methodology**

Representatives were equipped with various tools to aid the gathering of information. The following techniques were used by the representatives:

- Direct observation of interactions between staff and residents
- Participant observation within therapeutic/social activities where appropriate
- Assessing the suitability of the environment in which the service operates in supporting the needs of the residents
- Observing the delivery and quality of care provided
- Talking to residents, visitors and staff (where appropriate and available) about their thoughts and feelings regarding the service provided
- Observing the quality and adequacy of access, parking and other facilities for visitors

## **7. Summary of Key Findings**

Authorised Representatives were impressed by the high standards of care evident at Vale Court and feel this in part is due to the leadership of Cherry Quinto and her senior staff.

Also the commitment of all members of staff to create a personal, calm and comfortable home for their residents should be commended.

All visitors we spoke to were completely happy with the service their family members receive, and the residents themselves were happy with the home and felt comfortable and safe. This is a credit to the staff.

It would, therefore, be a great shame if influences beyond the control of the manager led to poor staff retention which could compromise this high standard.

## **8. Detailed Findings**

### **8.1 Location, external appearance, ease of access, signage, parking**

Located close to a bus route in the heart of a residential area of Ellesmere Port and very near to local service and shops, Vale Court is set back from what is a busy main road and accessed via a narrow lane between a row of shops. As a result signs for the home can be difficult to spot on first approach. This aside, the home is near to a bus route and situated in the heart of the community.

There is limited parking at the side of the home.

First impressions are of an attractive modern building with colourful planters at the front which had been recently donated by volunteers.

## 8.2 Initial impressions (from a visitor's perspective on entering the home)

On arrival we were warmly welcomed by Vivien, the admin assistant, who invited us to sign the visitors' book and offered us a drink.

Attractive refurbished reception area with notice boards displaying activities, newsletter and available staff.

Manager, Cherry Quinto, invited us into her office which has recently been extended and decorated to provide a seating area for visitors. All areas were clean and carpeted. There were no unpleasant odours.

## 8.3 Facilities for and involvement with family/friends

We noted lots of information available for visitors, including newsletters, notices about meetings and evening events e.g. cheese and wine. (These notices were also on view in the lifts to maximise effect.)

There is a list of the named staff who are available each day.



*(Left) A welcoming, bright reception area with signing in book.*



*(Right) A published list of main staff available on the day.*

There is a refurbished quiet room/visitors' room which contains a stocked kitchenette and bed settee for use if a relative wishes to stay close (for instance, if a resident is ill). This also provides an area to allow visitors to share a meal with residents and even hold celebrations - this recently included a wedding.

It has also been used hold wakes. The manager commented, ***“Our relatives are very close and very supportive. When a resident passes away we miss the family as well.”***

Visitors can take residents to the local shops or to a nearby town and outlet

## 8.4 Internal physical environment

### 8.4.1 Décor, Lighting, heating, furnishing & floor coverings

Residents with dementia are on the ground floor. All areas were carpeted and clean with lots of fresh flowers on display - provided free of charge by local supermarkets.

There are key coded locked doors at end of each corridor which provides a safe and secure environment.

Each door has a name and photo. We also saw relevant picture clues on some of the doors at the request of family. Bedrooms seemed clean and well furnished to the taste of the resident.

No adverse smells were noticed.

The lounge was big and airy - we observed dancing and singing and residents were well dressed and happy. Many of the ladies had had their nails manicured. Chairs were grouped together to encourage communication.



*Photographs showing two of the smaller 'quiet' lounges at Vale Court.*

The dining room was large and bright with a hard laminate floor. Representatives noted that this covering was rather sticky underfoot even after cleaning.

There is a display for menu cards at the entrance to the dining room which at the time of our visit had not yet been filled in. It was done while we were there - although the cards were not very colourful. The room itself was rather bare and Representatives felt that it could do with wall decorations.

The corridors are painted beige looking with some contemporary pictures dotted about.

Nursing care takes place on the first floor. Here Representatives felt that the dining room was in need of decorating. Cherry told us, ***“They are refurbishing all rooms eventually.”***

There are spaces at the tables to enable wheelchair users to take part in a communal meal time. Residents can also eat in their rooms if required. A resident told a Representative, ***“I couldn’t praise them highly enough. I’m quite happy. I have meals in my room.”***

There is a smaller dining room for friends to share.

All rooms are ensuite.

#### **8.4.2 Freshness, cleanliness/hygiene & cross infection measures**

Representatives felt that the home was well cared for with good standards of cleanliness throughout. In particular the bathrooms we saw were all clean and suitable for a variety of needs.

Our observations were confirmed by a relative who visited the home regularly and commented to a Representative, ***“The home is always nice and clean.”***

#### **8.4.3 Suitability of design to meet needs of residents**

The home is a modern, purpose build structure. As a result all facilities meet the needs of residents.

### **8.5 Staff support skills & interaction**

#### **8.5.1 Staff appearance/presentation**

All staff except the manager wore name badges, and were in uniform. All looked clean and tidy.

We spoke with Suzy Peach, unit manager, who shared her enthusiasm for her role. She has worked her way up from HCA to L5 NVQ. All staff greeted us and was happy to answer questions.

One relative told us that staff contact was, ***“Very personal! Every single member of staff says, ‘Hello, how are you?’”***

Another relative said, ***“The atmosphere is always calm - this is because the staff are so good and calm.”*** She added, ***“There is no drama.”***

We witnessed the home manager talking to residents by name and interacting well with them - she obviously knew them well.

One lady was pushing her trolley up and down and one gentleman was walking with his teddy bear. Both were greeted in a friendly manner by various members of staff.

#### **8.5.2 Affording dignity and respect/Approach to care giving**

It was apparent that all staff members we saw interacted well with residents and enjoyed their jobs.

We noticed a notice board showing, ‘STAFF CHAMPIONS’ - outlining which staff member was responsible for a particular area e.g. DoLs, fire, diet. etc.

A staff member told a Representative, ***“It’s hard work but it is good. I really really enjoy it.”***

Each resident has a key worker, identified on residents’ doors, who communicates with the family, checks toiletries and works to create a special relationship with the resident.

We were told that there is a daily ‘Resident of the day’ when families are contacted and an exchange of views can take place regarding all aspects of the resident’s needs. This is done on a monthly rotation.

We were informed that a residents' feedback form was distributed two weeks ago. Cherry is hoping to get them all back by October. One resident has requested an advocate and this is being arranged.

Cherry told us that she has introduced a '*Reflection of the Day.*' Any problem will be discussed as a group and a solution sought. E.g. - How could this have been avoided?

### **8.5.3 Effective communications - alternative systems and accessible information**

Communication between staff and residents appeared good. It was obvious that systems were in place to talk to residents' relatives as required. We were told that if required alternative communication methods were available.

## **8.5 Physical Welfare**

### **8.6.1 Appearance, dress & hygiene**

All residents seen were dressed appropriately in clothes that appeared as well laundered.

### **8.6.2 Nutrition/ mealtimes and hydration**

Food is provided by Appertito and is served for lunch on six days. It is not liked by some but an alternative is always available.

The cook will use any feedback and make changes.

A homemade Sunday lunch has been introduced and is now available every Sunday because of the positive feedback.

Residents' families often join them for this. A relative told us that her recently deceased father used to visit his wife at the home every day. The staff ensured he ate a proper meal and this was much appreciated. ***"My dad used to love coming here. He always got a lovely welcome."***

### **8.6.3 Support with general & specialist health needs/Maximising mobility & sensory capacities**

Medical care is provided by local GPs from Hope Farm Practice. A doctor visits on a weekly basis. Cherry is happy with the care they provide.

The hairdresser comes in each Friday. There is a separate room available for this. Residents can also have their own hairdresser to visit or can go out to one - with a number of salons nearby to the home. We understand one resident uses the local turkish barber - just a short walk away.

## 8.7 Social, emotional and cultural welfare

### 8.7.1 Personalisation & personal possessions

Residents can personalise their rooms as they wish with pictures, decorative items, ephemera (collectable items) and small items of furniture.

### 8.7.2 Choice, control & identity

Residents do appear to be able to have choice and control over their care. A number commented how attentive care staff were to their needs.

### 8.7.3 Feeling safe and able to raise concerns/complaints

Residents told us that they do feel listened to and feel that complaints are easily resolved.

### 8.7.4 Structured and unstructured activities/stimulation

The activities coordinator has just resigned and was using up holiday on the day of our visit but Cherry commented that she hopes to improve the service by employing two part time staff in order to extend the hours of activities and the range of options.

Until this happens Staff now provide the activities.



Newsletter and  
'Activities Board' -  
examples of displays.



We observed good interaction - singing and dancing - and noticed that residents had painted nails and enjoyed one to ones with staff. They can hire a minibus when required and visited the park in the summer.

Cherry told us that a student volunteer will be starting with them soon on the dementia floor as she is studying health and social care. They are waiting for paperwork to be completed.

### 8.7.5 Cultural, religious/spiritual needs

We were told that there are close links with the home and local clergy and also the local Salvation Army are very involved and will come and take residents to church. They also hold coffee and cake mornings every Tuesday.

### 8.7.6 Gardens - maintenance & design/suitability for use/enjoyment



*Garden Views*

Vale Court has a large garden area at the rear of the building. However, it is overgrown and rather unkempt.

A maintenance man works hard inside the home completing works five days a week and is also on call. However, work by a gardener would also improve the views for those overlooking the grounds. Representatives feel that it would be of great value to make the rear of the property as attractive as the front.

## 9 Observations

### 9.1 Elements of observed / reported good practice

- Notice boards appeared to provide useful and up to date information.
- Staff motivation and retention appears good with a number of staff in post for many years.
- Staff appeared to enjoy working at the Care Home.
- Staff very helpful
- Very welcoming to visitors.

### 9.2 Other observations / findings of note applicable

Additional Comments received from residents (R) and visitors (V):

R - ***“I am very happy.”*** - (Came for respite care but liked it so much she decided to stay. Doesn't like the Appertito food but accepts that she has difficulty swallowing.)

R - ***“I couldn't wish for anything better. They are very good here. The food is very good - there is a choice every day.”***

V - ***“I used to work at [another care home] and this is ten times better. They***

*can't do enough for you."*

V - (In relation to relative's care) - *"Being downstairs wasn't meeting her needs so they moved her upstairs... There was good communication with us. They held a room for her."*

R - *"I came with pressure sores but they dealt with the dressings every day and now lots better. I know I could complain but I haven't needed to. There are always lots of books - they do swaps."*

## 10 Comparisons

### 10.1 Comparisons of observations against providers website

On its website Assured Healthcare Solutions states:

*"Person centred care is at the heart of our philosophy, so families and loved ones are encouraged to help us compile individual care plans with life histories, which ensures that there is plenty of mental and physical stimulation."*

Representatives do feel that this philosophy is replicated at Vale Court .

### 10.2 Comparisons with previous Healthwatch visit (s) where applicable

On our previous visit (July 2015) Healthwatch Representatives suggested that training developments at the home should have a higher priority. An initiative on training at the home seems to be making a difference.

## 11 Recommendations

- To improve the look of the notice board in the reception area - Which would attract more attention and emphasize dates of meetings etc?
- To create more interest in the corridors and dining room by introducing residents' own craft work or more relevant photos/posters to decorate the walls. There is a variety of dementia friendly features that could also be used e.g. tactile areas, door knockers, bunches of keys etc. (Pinterest is a good source of ideas). Also some homes have residents' wedding photos or family trees as decoration.
- Cherry told us they were hoping to introduce memory books or boxes for each resident. This would be beneficial for the residents but also for staff to share memories with them, especially for agency staff.
- To expedite the appointment of the new activity staff and to encourage more local interaction with the home. Perhaps links with local schools or colleges could be made?
- To improve the look of the gardens at the rear of the property by using a gardener or volunteers. Perhaps a local volunteer group would help?
- For those residents who enjoy reading enquiries about the local mobile library could be made? Is there a volunteer group that will bring books for borrowing/swapping? Maybe The Royal Voluntary Service who do help in

- certain parts of CWaC?
- Could incentives be offered to encourage appropriate staff recruitment and retention?
  - Perhaps residents' own art work/activity work could be displayed or a more personal use of photos or pictures.

**Feedback from Provider of Service**

*At time of publication - No feedback received.*