

Minshull House

Have your say

Enter and View Report, April 2025



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.

Our visits give us a 'snapshot' of a service. We are always grateful for feedback from residents, relatives and other visitors to be able to get a fuller picture. You can leave feedback via telephone on 0300 77 77 007, or email engagement@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk. Alternatively, you can contact us via: www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/have-your-say

Details of the Enter and View Visit:

Name of the service visited: Minshull House

Address: Meadow Lane, West Derby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L12 5EA

The Date of the Enter and View Visit: Thursday 3rd of April 2025.

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

- Terry Ferguson, Engagement and Project Officer.
- Alice Lloyd: Engagement & Project Officer (Learning Disability and Neurodivergent Lead).

This was an announced visit.

We would like to thank Minshull House staff and residents 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 Minshull House 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

Minshull House is a short stay respite service which offers autism-specific short breaks care. They are open 365 days a year, including all bank holidays, Christmas and New Year.

Staff advised us that all residents are under a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) during their stay.

During our visit Minshull house was undergoing renovation work and staff advised that all residents were off site during the work and they returned during our visit. The two members of Healthwatch Liverpool staff entered separately. Terry was shown in by a member of maintenance staff and was then greeted by a member of Minshull's staff who checked my credentials and asked me to sign into the visitors' book.

Alice arrived separately and was able to walk in without being challenged, but we were informed that there were no residents on site at this time, and that they were expecting visitors.

Discussion with staff

We were advised that Minshull House has 19 contracted staff, with 7 bank staff available when needed. They also have access to agency staff, if required but we were advised that agency staff are not needed often and normally only for emergency admissions. Many of the staff are long serving with some having worked for the company for over 30 years. Trustees of the service include parents who have used the service for many years. Staff advise that service users sit in on some of the training.

"We are quite lucky because although things are always changing the core staff team is still here"

Staff are all trained in positive behavioural support and use the least restrictive option to help support residents and to keep them safe. Staff say they do not use restraint, and training includes 7 non-physical options. Staff advised that a key skill is recognising that people need space and allowing them that. All residents have a positive behavioural support plan and information on how to go about best supporting them.

Residents

Minshull House has capacity for 5 residents at any one time for planned respite short break stays. Some residents may need 2:1 support, so this is accounted for in admissions planning, ensuring the house doesn't feel overcrowded for residents. Staff advised that the environment tends to feel more homely for residents when it is less crowded. During busier periods there can be a total of 16 people, made up of staff and residents, in the home at a time.

Before a first stay thorough assessments are undertaken and then an introduction of the service takes place at residents' pace. Introductions to the service may include teatime visits, a day visit or a one-night trial. Staff often visit residents at home or schools to help with the transition to staying over at Minshull House. Staff say that residents' assessments are managed on a case-by-case basis and includes DOLS, MCA and best interests' documents. Social worker assessments support Minshull House in assessing mental capacity. Families and other partners such as GP's also help contribute towards assessments.

Each resident has a pre-stay call every visit, even if they have visited before, to assess if there are any changes. These calls help staff understand and supporting residents' needs and interests. Staff advised that residents interests and preferred foods can often change, so these calls support staff in making any necessary adaptations.

Residents access different support, depending on their needs, for some it can include support with personal hygiene, communication and understanding. Staff advised that everyone is given the opportunity to make informed choices which is vital for people under DOLS restrictions. There are a variety of reasons why residents access Minshull House. Some residents stay due to family emergencies or illnesses. At other times it is planned respite for families and the resident.

We were informed that staff are rotated between supporting different residents as they don't like to create any dependency. Staff feel that if the expectations and needs of people are met through their care plans, there is no need for the same people to be assigned to residents each time. Staff always have someone who sleeps on site, and they have an allocated bedroom.

Health and Wellbeing

Staff advised that residents can access the GP at the end of the road which is useful for residents that are out of area of their own GP. This GP is not used often and normally only if people live far out of the area or are there for longer stays. If residents live close enough, they may be able to visit their own GP. Staff work well with the Norris Green Hub and find all the staff helpful and had praised the health facilitators.

Staff also mentioned that they have close links with the learning disability teams and they can support residents in a non-clinical setting to take blood tests while they are in respite care. Staff advised that these reasonable adjustments help improve relationships with families, removing pressures on family carers.

Staff advised that residents visit Minshull with the medication they need. If there are any medication issues, like forgotten prescriptions, staff can access emergency medication via 111 and pick it up from Green Lane Pharmacy. Staff said Green Lane are excellent at labelling things up for a respite home.

Staff also said they have a relationship with Everton Road Dental Access Centre who support residents with dental desentistation work to help support families, when required:

“Everton dental are really good at making adaptations for the people we support and will attend in their own clothes rather than uniforms which helps residents. They have even seen residents that were sat in the car”

Activities

Some residents prefer keeping to the routine they follow at home such as accessing local day centres and this is supported by staff. Other residents like to use their stay to have a break from their routine. Staff are guided by residents' preferences. Staff described their approach as being similar to a self-catering vs all-inclusive holiday approach:

“Some like self-catering, some like all inclusive”

Religion and Faith needs are supported on a case-by-case basis and staff will support a resident in attending a place of worship, if required.

Staff advised activities that residents access includes cycling, cinema, meals, walks, bus ride, museum visits etc. Residents have previously been supported to go on holidays to caravans and cottages. Activities are created to be bespoke for residents. There are also activities within the home which include; cooking, sensory activities. Some residents will bring their own instruments and computers. Minshull house has access to an accessible minibus for outings as well as other adapted vehicles if needed, when planning activities.

Residents belongings

Staff say they have a daily report for resident's belongings and all items and clothes are booked in and out when people come to stay. Washing is managed in individual baskets to prevent clothes being lost or mixed up.

Food

Residents choose their own meals and shopping is done regularly. Part of the pre-stay call to residents is used to check if there are any new dietary requirements, or if the residents has any altered preferences.

Cooking tasks are shared between all staff and they informed that they often make multiple meals, as residents have their own preferences or dietary requirements.

Maintenance

Staff advised that regular maintenance work is carried out during quieter periods for the service, which is usually at the end of the financial year when many residents have used up their annual entitlements for visits.

Observations

During our visit to Minshull House we found the environment to be clean and well maintained with no strong smells. The property looked well decorated throughout and maintenance staff were decorating the property as we visited.

Staff had excellent rapport with residents who seemed relaxed during our visit. Staff wore everyday clothes during our visit, which made the environment feel less clinical.

Staff advised that access to all public facing doors are key-coded but residents always have access to outside spaces and have the freedom to move around the home. One resident was playing football outside during our visit.

Observations of the building and facilities

Lounge

We saw Residents spending time in the lounge with staff members. Residents were watching a football game on the television, and one resident was enjoying the game and was wearing the kit of the team playing.

The Lounge was a good size and well decorated with plants, comfortable sofas and a large beanbag providing plenty of seating. There were large windows and an external door to the garden, letting in lots of natural light.

Quiet space

Placed at the quieter end of the house this is a very open and airy and well-lit space with two comfortable chairs. There are also access to games in this space.

Garden

The garden area looked well used and had a football goal set up, which was being used by a resident during our visit. The garden offers a large space and looks well maintained. The garden has plenty of fencing and looked secure.

There is covered decking and plenty of seating for residents and staff to access the outside areas. Staff informed us that they will often use the outside space for BBQs in good weather, which both staff and residents enjoy.

Bedrooms

We were shown all the bedrooms and the layout for each one is the same, but with slight differences. Staff informed us this is to assist people in having familiarity during their visits. All bedrooms felt newly decorated, light, airy and clean.

All the bedrooms have lockable cabinets; residents can request to lock their things away. It also can be used to store medications if needed.

The televisions in the rooms are in lockable transparent cabinets to prevent damages, but residents can access them on request. Some residents bring their own televisions or games consoles from home.

Summary and recommendations

Summary

During our 2-hour Enter and View we observed that Minshull House appears to be a well-run care home providing short respite breaks. The environment was clean and well maintained and staff interactions with residents seemed personalised, positive and caring. Staff seemed confident in their knowledge of regulations and their duty of care but also spoke lovingly of the people they support.

The 2 residents we spoke too seemed comfortable and happy in the environment and appeared to be winding down from a full day of rewarding activities. One of the residents was sharing in-jokes with the staff and seemed to have built a real rapport with them.

Minshull House provides a specialist service in providing these short-term respite breaks for people with autism and seems to be a real asset for families. Staff discussed how short breaks allow families that support those with autism to receive their own medical care, go on holidays or simply take a breather knowing that their loved one is receiving the specialist care they need.

Recommendations

Following our visit we make the following recommendations for Minshull House:

- At this time, we have no recommendations to make for Minshull House and are pleased that during our short visit the service seems to be running well.

Positives and good practice

We found during our visit to Minshull House examples of positives and good practice which included but were not limited to:

- Minshull House seems to have created a good working relationship with both health partners and families. Having these strong relationships means residents access health care as needed.
- Having families on the governors' board and residents involved in supporting training opportunities shows a commitment to a collaborative working relationship with service users. It also should enable staff to get feedback from the people that use the service.
- The activities on offer at Minshull House seem varied but also personalised for residents. There appeared to be lots of opportunities for residents to enjoy themselves with external activities, or if they prefer to have more low-key activities staying inside of the home. The excellent garden space with Croxteth Hall backing onto the home adds even more opportunities for time outdoors.

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 or contact us using the details at the end of this report.



healthwatch

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