

Care homes & residential living facilities

*What people told us &
what's changed*

May 2026



Introduction

Between December 2023 and April 2026 we carried out a series of Enter & View visits across care homes and supported living facilities within the borough.

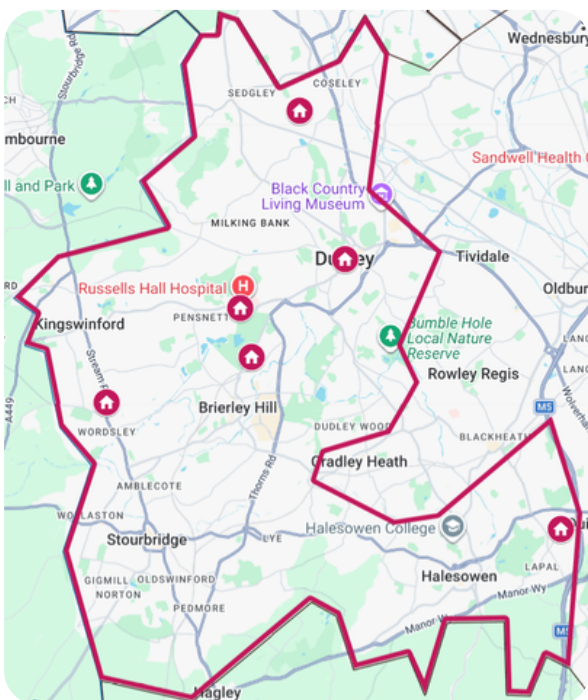
During visits we captured a range of feedback about things that matter most to residents and their families, such as how they feel about the care, meals, activities provided and whether they feel safe and comfortable.

Enter & View allows people to provide feedback on services within the care setting. We spoke with residents and their families to gather feedback of experiences of care and the environment.

To ensure that as many people as possible could take part, we used a range of engagement methods. This included conversations with residents, as well as online and paper surveys for people and visitors who may not have been present at the time of our visit or those who did not wish to give feedback in person.

The settings we visited were identified through local insights received at Quality Partnership Meetings, where we work alongside local council colleagues and partners to share information.

This report highlights service responses to our findings and updates on how the settings have acted on our feedback and recommendations.



Locations of residential settings visited from 2023-2026





Activities

What we heard

- There was often a lack of varied and enriching activities.
- Some residents would prefer to remain in their rooms than socialise in communal areas.
- Activities didn't always match people's interests.

"I tried the lounge but people don't really chat... I'm happy in my room"

Recommendations



- Offer more meaningful, personalised activities.
- Support people who prefer to stay in their rooms with one on one activities.
- Improve communication about activities with residents.

What's changed

- Some setting report offering more personalised activities.
- This includes regular activity timetables, resident led activities and one to one support for those who stay in their rooms.

"Our activity staff member has asked our residents what activities they would like within the home and has helped form the activity schedule. We are currently in the process of purchasing more high-rise planters so the residents can help grow their own fresh produce or flowers." - manager

"Staff actively promote activities through one to one conversations and personalised planning." - manager

"Additional leaflets and information have been made available to residents highlighting local events and opportunities that are specifically autism friendly and learning disability inclusive within the community." - manager



Personalised Care

What we heard

There was often a lack of varied and enriching activities. Some residents would prefer to remain in their rooms than socialise in communal areas.

Recommendations



- Support residents to personalise their rooms and surroundings
- Using different communication tools personalised to individuals to enhance choices and independence
- Ensure policy and procedures including fire safety and health and safety are followed and understood by staff

What's changed

- Services told us they are involving residents and families more in care planning and reviews. Care plans are now completed within agreed timeframes in some services and relatives able to view and contribute to care plans where appropriate.
- Some services have introduced tools such
 - "All About Me" forms
 - One-page profiles
 - Communication passports and personalised support plans to help staff better understand people's preferences, interests and communication needs.
- We have been reassured that residents and families continue to be encouraged to personalise bedrooms with familiar items including photographs, bedding, pictures and soft furnishings.
- "All family members are made aware that they are able to view care plans at any time." -manager



Communication

What we heard

“It was difficult to get updates.”

“More use of email (blind copied to named contacts re: data protection) would be an efficient and effective way to communicate.”

“Last time [my loved one] went into hospital I wasn't contacted for two days by the home and told there had been an incident.”

Recommendations



- Involve residents and families more in care planning and decisions, sharing care plans where appropriate
- Make sure feedback and complaints processes are clear and easy to access
- Improve the use of technology and digital communication as a way to share information with families
- Improve staff consistency, handovers and communication

What's changed

- Some services told us they had improved communication with relatives through more regular updates, open communication approaches and greater use of digital systems.
- More frequent email updates, daily diaries and photo sharing to help families stay informed about day to day care. Families are reminded they could access care plans and raise concerns through open door policies and complaints procedures.

“Residents and families are able to view daily diaries, offering transparency and reassurance.” -manager



Feedback

What we heard

"I have completed a survey about the care provided, I will tell the staff directly, but I am unsure if they take any notice."

"I go to the office if I've got concerns and it is well received."

Recommendations



- Actively collect feedback from residents and their families.
- Ensure complaint processes are clear and accessible.

What's changed

- Services have introduced or continued regular feedback on care, food, activities and the environment.

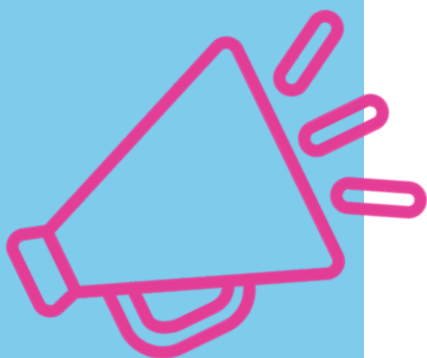
"We maintain a comprehensive complaints log and tracker to ensure that all concerns are documented, acted upon, responded to, and reviewed. This enables us to identify learning across all our services and make improvements where needed." -manager

- One home told us they show "You said, we did" notices to show how they take feedback into account.

"Following the recommendation, we have introduced a dedicated maintenance management system called Limble to provide a quicker, clearer, and more effective way for staff to report and track maintenance issues."

Ways to provide feedback

Residents and friends can provide feedback on care home services through various methods, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are addressed.



Services may provide ways to collect feedback such as suggestion boxes and surveys or you can contact the manager directly



You can contact Healthwatch Dudley in a way that suits you:

03000 111 001 (Local rate number)

hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk

07983728913 (WhatsApp)

www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk/have-your-say



CQC carry out inspections as part of their regulatory compliance.

You can search for a facility here:

www.cqc.org.uk/care-services/find-care-home



Dudley Council

There are different ways you can comment or complain about the council's services or services that are provided by another organisation but paid for by the council

More information:

www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/compliments-comments-complaints

or call Dudley Council Plus on 0300 555 2345



Staff

What we heard

“Staff are fantastic, they’re very nice people and not secretive.”

“Never see the same one twice, by the time you have got used to them they've left.”

“Some of the temporary staff are not too good as they do not know how to move you and communicate with you.”

Recommendations



- Improve handover methods between day and night staff.
- Provide better training and inductions for agency workers.
- Make sure staff have easy access to information on resident preferences.

What’s changed

- Some services shared that staffing had become more stable and faced less reliance on agency staff since our visit.
- Daily meetings with structured handovers and electronic systems support continuity of care. Services also described improvements to recruitment process, reporting systems and compliance of policies and procedures.

“The staff team has all relevant information to hand through an electronic system for care records.” -manager



Privacy & choice

What we heard

"I don't like people looking at my stuff. I don't like people walking through [my flat]."

"Residents come into your room at night when they are wandering."

"I requested to view the care plan and was told I could not have a copy by management."

Recommendations



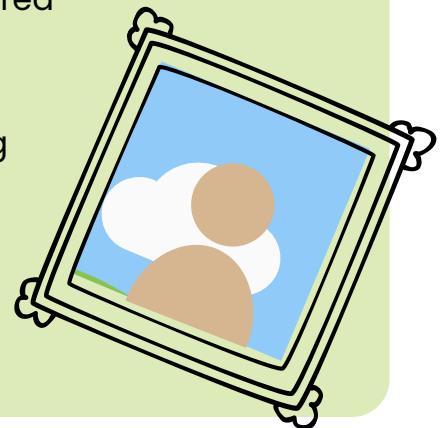
- Ensure residents are consulted and have a say in who enters their rooms.
- Consistently share care plans with residents and their families.

What's changed

- Services told us they had strengthened how they approach dignity, choice and respect. For example residents being consulted before maintenance visits or access to bedrooms and planned around people's preferences.

"Residents are given clear notice before any maintenance visits and are consulted wherever possible." -manager

- With respect to residents environment, it was shared that residents and families are encouraged to personalise bedrooms with familiar items.
- Further improvements include agreed decorating and adding artwork in communal spaces.



Next steps

Following our Enter & View visits, we will look to build on what we have heard from residents and their families.

Working in collaboration with Black Country ICB, the next stage will focus on creating a Care Home Charter that reflects the rights, expectations and lived experience of people across the borough.

We will be working with an artist and local care services to:

- Listen to residents across 6 homes to capture what matters most to them
- Co-design a Care Home Charter with residents and their families
- Create a visual version of the charter with an artist to make it clear and accessible
- Support care homes to promote and follow the Charter

Through this project and the feedback we receive our aim is to turn local voices into practical changes, keeping the improvements we have already seen continuing.



Thank you

Healthwatch Dudley would like to thank all participants and services who took the time to speak with us and share experiences.

We hope our observations and recommendations continue to contribute to improving the experience for residents and staff across the borough.

Individual full Enter & View reports can be found on our website:

www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk/news-and-reports



If you would like this report in another language or format please contact us.

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**Committed
to quality**

Healthwatch Dudley is committed to providing a quality service, from how we collect data, to the information we provide. Every three years we perform an in-depth audit, in conjunction with Healthwatch England, to ensure we meet this high standard.