



# Enter & View

Station Villa

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Details of visit

Service provider	Station Villa
Service Address	18 Station Hill, Hayle TR27 4NG
Date and time	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 10am–1pm
Authorised representative	Abi Harding-White

## 1.2 Purpose of visit

This visit was conducted in response to feedback received about the service. Our goal was to observe the service in action, hear directly from residents, and make recommendations for improvement.

## 1.3 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cornwall would like to thank residents and staff for providing a warm welcome and their positive contribution to this Enter and View visit and the subsequent report.

## 1.4 Disclaimer

This report relates to findings observed on the specific date above and is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all residents and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of the visit.

## 1.5 About Healthwatch Cornwall

Healthwatch Cornwall is an independent organisation committed to amplifying the voices of Cornwall's residents in the planning and delivery of health and social care services. Through public engagement, we gather their views and experiences with these services. We ensure these perspectives are represented in decision-making processes both locally and nationally, driven by the belief that community feedback is vital to improving standards of care.

## 1.6 What is Enter and View?

As a local Healthwatch we are authorised to “Enter and View” health and social care services through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Local Authorities Regulations 2013 (part 4). These services can include hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits are an opportunity to see services in action, listen to and understand the experiences of individuals who use them, and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The visits are organised based on feedback received about individual services or in response to themes identified in our research.

# 2 Visit Summary

## **Meeting with manager**

At the beginning of the visit, Healthwatch Cornwall met with the manager to discuss the home and view the facilities.

## **Conversations with residents**

We were able to speak with one resident about their experiences with the home, whether they enjoy living there and what they like about the home.

## **Conversations with staff**

We spoke with five other members of staff about their experience of working at the home.

## **Observation of facilities**

Observations were made throughout the visit, focussing on the condition of the facilities and resident experience.

# 3 Service Overview

Station Villa is a specialist care home which provides long term care for adult residents with a range of learning disabilities. It has capacity for up to fifteen residents with a variety of accommodation options including five chalets for semi-independent living. The home has been rated as 'Good' overall by the Care Quality Commission. It is part of Swallowcourt, an organisation that operates six homes across the county. These include three homes for older people and three specialist homes, all of which work closely together.

# 4 Observations

When we arrived, the front door was unlocked and we were able to walk straight in. We were informed that this is to allow residents the freedom to move around independently. However, it does mean that someone could potentially enter the home without authorisation. A staff member approached us promptly to greet us, check our identification, and ensure the sign-in process was completed.

The home was visibly clean and uncluttered. The notice board displayed the CQC rating, safeguarding information, relevant policies, and details on how to leave reviews, make complaints, offer suggestions, and give compliments. The television was on in the main living room, which we were told is due to be redesigned to reduce disruption for those watching TV when others pass through. There was also a quiet room, which did not have disabled access and was down a few steps, but it offered a calmer space for residents. It was clarified during conversation with the manager that making this space accessible had been explored but was

not feasible. The communal areas were nicely decorated with photos of residents and a memory tree, creating a homely feel.

At the time of the visit, most people were gathered in the kitchen and dining area. A few residents were eating, and the dining tables had been properly laid with tablecloths. Residents appeared to be having meals of their choice, with a variety of food served. They were supported to be as independent as possible, with staff available to assist where needed. Staff were observed chatting with each other and with residents in a friendly and relaxed manner.

Residents seemed to have choice in how they organised their day and at their own pace, with some choosing to complete personal care after meals with staff support. Overall, residents appeared content and relaxed. One resident was particularly enthusiastic to speak with us and was seen engaging well with staff. Another resident became agitated during the visit, and staff responded calmly and confidently, using an approach that showed they knew the resident well and understood how to support them.

Residents were free to move around the home, and a disabled lift provided easy access to the garden and chalets. The garden appeared well tended, and they were planning to remove the sheds which had been erected during Covid-19 for social distancing.

While it was clear that many residents were out working or involved in voluntary roles, it seemed that fewer activities were available or planned for those remaining in the home during the day. This observation may not fully reflect the individual choice of residents, but it could be beneficial to see clearly planned activities displayed within the home and know that all residents, including those with mobility needs, are supported to go out.

Staff appeared to genuinely enjoy supporting the residents, which was reflected in their demeanour and interactions. However, conversations with staff raised some concerns about the current team dynamic behind the scenes.

## 5 Resident Feedback

We were able to speak with one resident who wanted to talk with us and was happy to share their views on the home. They said they enjoy living there and could not think of anything that needed to be improved. They felt the staff were kind, and said they have choices about what they do when they go out a couple of times a week. They also shared that they enjoy being able to go shopping with their parents and specifically mentioned how much they enjoyed the Christmas meal organised for all the residents.



# 6 Staff Feedback

## **Residents**

It was clear that the residents were important to every staff member spoken to. Staff consistently described the residents as the main priority and took pride in making their day meaningful. They emphasised the importance of promoting independence and tailoring support to individual needs, acknowledging that every resident is different and constantly changing. One person highlighted that there are challenging days with resident behaviour, but another highlighted the importance of maintaining a calm approach when managing this. Staff valued giving residents choice in what they want to do. A couple of the team also mentioned that residents have a different 1:1 staff member morning and afternoon to allow for variety in their day.

## **Activities**

Outings with residents were viewed positively, with resident choice at the forefront, although some staff felt outings could happen more frequently. It was noted that some staff members seemed to go out more often than others, and at times there was an assumption that residents preferred to stay in, rather than offering the choice proactively. A vehicle is available, but not all staff with licenses had been involved in discussions around using it.

## **Team Dynamics**

Staff feedback on team dynamics was mixed. Some described the team as good and supportive, highlighting a welcoming atmosphere, mutual support for each other, and a strong team effort. One staff member said it “feels like a home” and another expressing they feel they manage behavioural challenges well together.

However, a divide within the team was mentioned and a couple of people mentioned ups and downs. One staff member appeared hesitant when asked about the team. Another referenced past difficulties due to understaffing and reliance on agency workers, but acknowledged that having a full, consistent team now allows for better communication and a more cohesive working environment.

## **Team Support**

Staff shared mixed views about the support they receive. Morning handovers are in place and seen as helpful for continuity. The buddy system for new staff was highlighted as effective and supportive.

However, one staff member described a recent supervision with three people in management including HR, and they felt the meeting was not strengths-focused. They expressed a preference for one-to-one supervision, which they felt would provide a more supportive approach where they could be more open.

It was shared with us that one staff member is currently not working within the team while concerns are being addressed and they expressed a need for clear communication and reassurance from management to help them feel comfortable and supported on the individuals return.

A staff member shared that the team is wonderful although naturally conversations are sometimes needed to help new staff members understand care plans and resident needs. It was also suggested that increasing the use of paper-based documentation in some areas could be helpful for new staff.

Although feedback was generally positive around residents, a few comments hinted at potential underlying tensions within the team. When raised with management at the end of the visit, it seemed that it was not fully known that other team members already knew some confidential details concerning another staff member. Overall, alongside the feedback, it highlighted that improved communication within the team could be needed.

## 7 Manager Feedback

They support a mixed group of residents in terms of age, gender, and level of independence. There are currently 14 residents living at the home, and they are looking to fill one remaining space. New residents can be referred by social workers, and staff carry out an assessment before any move takes place.

Residents go out regularly and take part in a range of activities, including volunteering in some cases. At the time of the visit, the team were preparing for an open day. A Christmas meal had been held, where residents were given the choice to attend, and trips to the Royal Cornwall Museum and the aquarium in Plymouth had also taken place. More activities are planned for the summer and extra staff are brought in to support on special occasions.

There had been some staff turnover previously, and recruitment became a key focus. Temporary management was brought in to make sure the team felt supported during that period. While residents can feel anxious about new faces, management shared that recruitment of new staff had gone well. New staff receive a week's induction at the head office and two weeks of shadowing. Staff seemed to feel at home in the service, and a buddy system was introduced to support new team members. There was a strong view that when staff feel supported, they are better able to support residents. Team meetings are regularly held to offer guidance and maintain consistency as well as individual supervision.

When describing the home, management said they aim to support residents to live fulfilled and meaningful lives, with a mindset of "their home, their choice". Residents are encouraged to be included and to take part in day-to-day life and decision-making. The service takes a holistic approach to care and residents have access to advocacy to help ensure their voices are heard. Some residents also have families who are actively involved. Regular resident meetings and surveys are used to gather views and feedback. They try to think outside the box

to meet individual needs and introduce new things gradually so residents can go at their own pace.

# 8 Recommendations

Healthwatch Cornwall have offered some recommendations based on observations and feedback from residents and staff to improve experiences at the home.

1. **Review access to the home**

The current open-door policy supports residents' independence. It may be helpful to explore ways to improve security by preventing unauthorised access, while still allowing residents to come and go freely.

2. **Display planned daily activities**

Consider displaying a daily or weekly activity board in a communal area to encourage engagement and ensure there are a variety of options for those who remain at home during the day.

3. **Support equal resident access to outings**

Ensure all residents are regularly and proactively offered the opportunity to go out, and are actively encouraged to do so, taking into account their individual needs and preferences.

4. **Improving communication within the team**

- **Encourage equal involvement in outings for staff**

Aim to share responsibility for supporting outings fairly across the team. When this is not possible, explaining how decisions are made can help staff understand why they are, or are not, asked to support.

- **Clarify staff use of transport for outings**

Ensure that staff with driving licences who are not currently permitted to use the home's vehicles, but would like to, are informed whether they can support with driving and understand the reasons behind the decision.

- **Supporting a positive team dynamic**

Given recent staffing changes and the arrival of new team members, it may be helpful to hold team activities focused on improving communication, building trust, and encouraging teamwork.

- **Communicating staffing changes**

When there are significant staffing changes, as well as informing the wider staff group, it could be helpful to offer individual support to those who need clarity or reassurance to minimise speculation within the team and help keep communication clear and accurate.



# 9 Provider Response

Following this report we have taken the following actions. Completed team meetings and team building exercises including summer fun days which brought the residents and staff team together with their community and raised money to support further activities for the residents.

"The recent community Summer Fun Day at Station Villa was a fantastic success. In preparation for this, staff and residents pulled together to give the garden and grounds a beautiful make over. It was great to see the residents taking ownership of this, planting, painting fences and having a say in what they wanted for their home. The day itself was filled with fun, laughter and a real sense of community – I loved it. The staff are now talking about 'what else we can do' and reviewing the activities the residents are able to enjoy."

We have reviewed security and further developed the gardens.

The team now feel that while there has been a divide in the past, there has been a lot of work and staffing changes that have worked to decrease this divide. The team is generally much more cohesive and work together to solve any problems, and provide a good level of care to the residents.

"Having been in the home when the divide in the team was very apparent there were times it was uncomfortable to work or talk to colleagues. However it is much better now and a far more positive environment. There is still some more work to be done but this is now minimal amount needed rather than substantial.

It is a pleasure to work in Station Villa now and a true privilege to support the residents here to lead a fulfilling life and even watch them grow more independent with gentle encouragement."

"As part of the operations team, I have been working more closely with Station Villa over recent months. I can honestly say that it has been a pleasure. The staff are so friendly and welcoming, and there is a lovely atmosphere whenever I am in the home. It is so lovely to see the way the staff support and interact with our residents – there is such warmth, care, understanding and patience in their approach."

We are proud of what the staff and residents of Station Villa have achieved since this report and look forward to continuing to develop our resident focused service.

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