

Fountain Court Enter & View Report June 2026



This report is structured in four main parts: an introduction to Healthwatch Sandwell and Enter and View, background information about Fountain Court, findings from the visit, and recommendations with provider feedback.

Introduction

Healthwatch Sandwell (HWS) is the independent voice of people who use health and social care services in Sandwell. We gather feedback about people's experiences, share what we hear with providers and commissioners, and use this evidence to support improvements in local services.

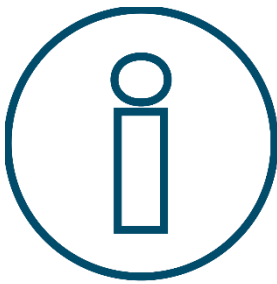
What is Enter & View

As part of its remit, Healthwatch Sandwell carries out Enter and View visits to health and social care premises. Authorised Representatives observe how services are delivered, speak with people who use services, relatives, carers, and staff, and make recommendations where improvements are needed. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 allows Authorised Representatives to visit settings including hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, opticians, optometrists, and pharmacies. Visits may take place because concerns have been raised or because a service has a good reputation and may offer examples of good practice. Enter and View visits are not inspections and are not designed to investigate safeguarding concerns. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in line with Healthwatch Sandwell's Safeguarding Policy, the service manager is informed, the visit ends, and the Local Authority Safeguarding Team is notified.

During Enter and View visits, Healthwatch Sandwell seeks feedback from residents, relatives, friends, and staff who provide care. This helps us understand people's experiences of the service and identify examples of good practice, as well as areas where improvements may be needed.

- Healthy Environment – The right to live in surroundings that support health and wellbeing.
- Essential Services – Access to high-quality preventative, treatment, and care services to avoid crisis.
- Access – Equal access to services without discrimination, tailored to individual and family needs.
- Safe, Dignified, Quality Services – Services that are safe, confidential, and delivered with dignity and respect.

- Information and Education – Clear, accurate information and education to support informed decisions and self-care.
- Choice – The right to choose from a range of high-quality services and providers.
- Being Listened To – The right to have concerns and views heard and acted upon.
- Being involved – To be treated as an equal partner in determining my own health and wellbeing. I want the right to be involved in decisions that affect my life and those affecting services in my local community.



Healthwatch Sandwell will compile a report following the visit. The report will be shared with the provider, regulators, the local authority, NHS commissioners and quality assurers, Healthwatch England, the public and any other relevant partners, based on what was found during the visit. It will also be published through

Healthwatch Sandwell's social media channels.

On this occasion we have conducted an Enter & View visit to **Fountain Court in Bearwood**.

Fountain Court

Fountain Court is a Sandwell local authority-run residential care home in Bearwood, Smethwick, providing specialist support for older adults with dementia and mental health needs. It offers long-term residential care and dementia support.

The home offers 24-hour person-centred care in a safe, homely environment for up to 16 residents, promoting dignity, independence, wellbeing, and social inclusion.

The home was rated "**Good**" by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), with positive ratings across safety, effectiveness, caring, responsiveness, and leadership.

Executive overview

Overall, Healthwatch Sandwell found Fountain Court to be a welcoming, safe, and well-maintained residential care home where residents appeared comfortable, respected, and well supported. The visit identified strong person-centred practice, positive staff interactions, accessible communal spaces, and good use of sensory and reminiscence resources. The recommendations focus on strengthening dementia-friendly

wayfinding, expanding life story documentation, and sharing observed good practice with other services.

Report snapshot

Key findings: Fountain Court was observed to be safe, welcoming, and well maintained, with positive staff interactions and strong person-centred practice. Areas for further development include dementia-friendly wayfinding, fuller life story documentation and sharing effective practice with other residential services.

Our report

This report outlines the observations and insights gathered during the Enter and View visit carried out on 16th June 2026. The findings reflect the views and experiences of those who chose to share their feedback during the visit and may not represent the perspectives of everyone within the service. It is hoped that the recommendations included will support the ongoing development of the service and help enhance outcomes for individuals who use it.

HWS Authorised Representatives (AR) conducted the visit:

Helen Bennett & Paul Higgitt.

Methodology

During the visit, Authorised Representatives spoke with residents, relatives and staff members using a structured set of questions focused on two key areas: service user experience and staff responsiveness to individual needs.



Service User Experience

Including feedback on care provided by staff, accessibility of the building, availability of information, and suggestions for service improvement.



Staff Responsiveness to Individual Needs

Exploring how staff address communication needs of service users with impairments, manage anti-social behaviour from service users or relatives, support individuals wishing to raise concerns or complaints, and gather suggestions for enhancing service delivery.

In addition to these discussions, representatives carried out environmental observations both internally and externally. These included assessments of:

- Signage
- Accessibility
- Lighting
- Refreshments
- Cleanliness
- Parking and transport options

Participation was entirely voluntary, and the team respected the wishes of those who chose not to engage.

Premises

Fountain Court is situated within a small, quiet cul-de-sac that provides a peaceful and pleasant environment. On arrival, the exterior of the building appeared to be well maintained and presented a positive first impression. The grounds were clean and free from litter, with trees, shrubs, and planted areas neatly trimmed and cared for, contributing to an attractive and welcoming appearance.

There was ample parking available for visitors and residents, allowing easy access to the premises. A large, clearly visible sign was displayed at the front of the property, making the location easy to identify.

Access to the building was controlled through a secure electronic entry system, requiring authorised access via a digital door-opening mechanism. This provided an additional level of security for residents and visitors while ensuring that entry to the premises could be effectively monitored and managed.

On arrival, we were welcomed by the Registered Manager, Sharon, who greeted us in a professional and friendly manner. She directed us to complete the visitor sign-in process using a digital tablet located at the reception area. This electronic system enabled visitor attendance to be recorded efficiently and supported the home's security and safeguarding procedures.

Sharon informed us that Fountain Court can accommodate up to 16 residents and that 15 people were living at the home at the time of our visit. Residents' facilities are arranged across the ground floor, which supports accessibility and enables residents to move freely and safely throughout the areas they use. We were informed that the first floor contains staff and service areas only and is accessed by staff through an electronically locked door.

We were informed that all residents living at Fountain Court were reported to have varying levels of dementia, with individual needs differing according to the stage and progression of their condition.

The layout of the building is designed in a horseshoe shape, allowing residents to access communal areas and their rooms with minimal restriction while supporting independence, mobility, and social interaction. The ground-floor resident areas reduce barriers associated with stairs and contribute to a more inclusive and dementia-friendly environment for people who may need support with mobility or orientation.

The reception area was observed to be clean, tidy, and well maintained, providing a welcoming first impression. Comfortable seating was available for residents and visitors, creating a pleasant and relaxed environment.

A large interactive screen was also located within the reception area, which residents could use for a variety of activities, including listening to music, participating in games, and engaging in recreational and social activities.

Continuing the walk around the home, the corridors were observed to be clean and clutter free. The walls were decorated in muted colours and adorned with numerous pictures and decorative features.

One particular wall which stood out had been designed with sensory features with a variety of shapes, colours, and tactile objects for residents to touch and explore. These sensory elements are particularly beneficial for individuals living with dementia, helping to stimulate their senses and encourage engagement with their surroundings.

Handrails were fitted throughout the corridors to support residents with mobility needs. The corridors were also observed to be well lit.

As Fountain Court is situated on one level, it creates a predominantly open-plan setting, whereby one communal room leads into another.

The lounge area was spacious and well ventilated, with large windows open to allow fresh air to circulate during the warm weather on the day of our visit. The fully equipped kitchenette was observed to be clean and well maintained. A member of staff was seen preparing and serving cold drinks to residents, ensuring their comfort and hydration.

A large TV was wall-mounted, no trailing wires were observed.

Leading on from the lounge, we entered the garden room, where the walls were decorated with a wide range of artefacts and memorabilia, including vintage telephones, old-fashioned signs, and other nostalgic items. These features create a stimulating and reminiscence-focused environment, which can be particularly beneficial for residents living with dementia.

A resident shared:

"I like it in here, it's lovely, it's all my stuff you know"

The garden room was also observed to be the main hub for recreational activities, housing a variety of resources such as puzzles, games, and other activity materials. These were readily accessible and provided residents with opportunities for engagement, stimulation, and social interaction.

The manager informed us that:

"The manager informed us that there is no dedicated Activities Co-ordinator, so staff involve residents in enjoyable activities. Some residents also like to take part in everyday activities such as cleaning and gardening."

Moving on to the outdoor garden area, we observed that it was spacious and fairly well maintained, featuring a large patio area and smooth concrete pathways which provided easy access throughout. The garden had a variety of mature trees, shrubs, flowers, and planted containers.

The manager informed us that:

"There are plans to make further improvements to the garden, subject to available funding. Proposed work includes replacing the gravelled areas with artificial turf as well as restoring the water feature to full working order"

There was ample shaded seating available throughout the garden, with a range of tables and chairs providing comfortable spaces for residents to relax, socialise, and enjoy the outdoor environment.

The garden was enclosed by secure fencing, which promoted residents' safety.

At the time of our visit some of the residents were out in the garden area and they shared their thoughts with us:

"I like it outside in the garden, watching all the birds and the badgers, do you like badgers?"

"Look at the pink flower over there, I planted it, it's lovely"

"I'm walking round and then I will eat my pudding"

"It's good when the sun's out, it's nice and you can dry the washing"

"I like to get up early so I can feed all the birds"



A Support Worker who had been employed at Fountain Court for a number of years spoke very positively about their role. They presented as calm, professional, and courteous, and demonstrated a genuine commitment to supporting residents.

When discussing the people they cared for, they spoke with warmth, respect, and a clear understanding of residents' individual needs and



A senior staff member provided information about the four daily medication rounds and the daily activities undertaken within the service. They highlighted the importance of maintaining good communication with District Nurses and explained that staff work closely with the Palliative Care Team when required to ensure individuals receive appropriate care and support.

As some residents were having lunch in the dining room, we observed from a respectful distance to maintain their privacy and dignity. Care staff were attentive and provided appropriate support to residents who required assistance with eating.

We were informed that all meals are freshly prepared using fresh ingredients. The food observed appeared to be of good quality, nutritious, and well presented.

A staff member shared:

"If a resident is unwell or has mobility issues then meals will be taken to their rooms"

Other Observations

Other areas shown to us by the manager included a communal toilet, which was clean and clearly identified with pictorial signage on the main door. We also viewed a quiet/library room, which benefited from a large picture window, and a small hair salon where a hairdresser visits once a week to provide services. We were informed that this service is chargeable.

No residents' rooms were entered by the Authorised Representatives during the visit. However, it was clearly observed that each room had a personalised display outside the door, including a picture frame with the resident's name, family photographs, and images of places that were meaningful or of particular interest to them.

This helps to create a homely environment and supports residents in identifying their rooms.

Staff interaction & quality of care

The quality of care provided to residents appeared to be of a good standard. Staff were observed treating residents with dignity, respect, and

kindness, while remaining attentive to individual needs. Positive interactions were seen throughout the visit, with staff offering reassurance, support and encouragement where required. Residents appeared comfortable in their surroundings, and staff demonstrated a good understanding of their care needs, helping to promote wellbeing, independence, and quality of life.

As all the residents were living with dementia, staff recognised that their daily experiences and support needs differed from those of individuals without dementia. Care was observed to be tailored to each resident's abilities, preferences, and level of cognition, with staff providing reassurance and prompts.

The environment and support given by staff members appeared to be designed to reduce confusion, promote familiarity, and support residents in feeling safe, comfortable, and engaged in their day-to-day lives.

A staff member shared:

"I love my job and enjoy working here, it's a lovely place to work, we work as a team"

Choice

Providing choice is an important part of person-centred care for residents living with dementia at Fountain Court. Staff support residents to make decisions wherever possible, including choices about daily activities, meals, clothing, routines, and social interactions. These choices help maintain independence, dignity, and a sense of control, while supporting care that reflects each person's preferences, abilities, and life history.

The manager advised that Fountain Court has a positive working relationship with both the District Nursing team and the GPs at Cape Hill Medical Practice, who are able to carry out home visits when required. Bhandal Dental Practice provides dental care. Occupational Therapists (OTs) are involved on an individual basis according to residents' specific needs. A podiatrist also visits the home regularly to provide foot and nail care for residents; however, this service is chargeable.

We were also advised that none of the residents require support from the Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) team. However, referrals will be made if a resident's needs change and a specialist assessment or intervention becomes necessary.

The manager informed us that all residents currently living at Fountain Court have **DoLs**

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) is part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and is designed to protect adults aged 18 and over who lack the mental capacity to consent to their care or treatment arrangements in hospitals or care homes.

DoLS ensure that any restrictions placed on a person's freedom are lawful, necessary, proportionate, and in their best interests.

Residents' friends and relatives are welcome to visit their loved ones at Fountain Court at a time that suits them, however, to help ensure residents can enjoy their meals without interruption, visitors are kindly asked to avoid visiting during mealtimes wherever possible.

Information & Education

All required regulatory information, including the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating, was displayed on the notice boards at Fountain Court. We were informed that Sandwell Council carries out quality audits of the home, with the next audit scheduled for July 2026, focusing on Health and Safety.

A Fountain Court newsletter was also observed during the visit, highlighting a variety of activities and events available to residents. These included exercise sessions aimed at promoting health and wellbeing, as well as entertainment provided by guest singers.

The newsletter also featured celebrations for Armed Forces Day and information about activities planned around the upcoming World Cup.

A letter from Healthwatch Sandwell regarding the visit was displayed on a notice board.

With regard to infection prevention and control, the manager informed us that the home has not experienced an infectious disease outbreak for many years.

It was noted that the newly fitted kitchen had received a 5-star hygiene rating, demonstrating high standards of cleanliness and food safety.

Fire exits were observed to be free from obstruction and clearly signposted throughout the home. Fire extinguishers were in place and appeared to be in good working order. We were also informed that the fire alarm system is tested on a weekly basis.

As Fountain Court is a single-storey facility, there are no stairs or lifts within the home. We were also informed that there is no CCTV.

We were informed that residents' meetings are generally well attended by residents, with relatives attending occasionally, demonstrating opportunities for involvement in the life of the home.

A member of staff shared:

"Relatives know how to complain"

The call alarm system was observed to be functioning correctly, and a member of staff responded promptly to the alarm.

Staffing

The management and care support team at Fountain Court consists of both full-time and part-time staff who work collaboratively to provide continuous, high-quality care and support to residents.

Team members are scheduled across a range of shifts, including both daytime and overnight hours, ensuring that residents' needs are met 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

All the team work closely together to deliver person-centred care while maintaining effective communication and continuity between day and night shifts.

The manager informed us that:

"Retention of staff here is excellent"

"If needed, we always try and use the same bank staff where possible who are familiar to the residents"

Care support staff play a vital role in supporting residents with all aspects of daily living, and this was clearly evident throughout our visit. Staff were observed providing attentive, person-centred support, responding to residents' needs with kindness, patience, and professionalism.

In addition to providing day-to-day care and support, staff regularly accompany residents on outings to enhance their quality of life and maintain social connections. This may include shopping trips, visits to local day centres and access to community facilities. Where appropriate, staff may also accompany residents for meals at local cafés or restaurants, giving them opportunities to enjoy social experiences and make choices about how they spend their time.

Staff were asked about the training and development opportunities available to them, and we were informed that training is provided on an

ongoing basis to ensure staff maintain the knowledge and skills required to meet residents' needs effectively.

During discussions, staff demonstrated an understanding of the challenges that can arise when supporting individuals living with dementia. It was acknowledged that some residents may experience periods of frustration, anxiety, confusion, or behaviours that may be perceived as challenging due to the progression of their condition.

Staff reported receiving training in dementia care, managing difficult situations, and responding appropriately to behaviours of distress.

This training equips them with strategies to de-escalate situations, communicate effectively, and provide reassurance while maintaining the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of residents.

Summary

Fountain Court is a residential care service that provides a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for individuals who require assistance with daily living. The home is staffed by a dedicated team of management and care support workers who provide person-centred care around the clock through both day and night shifts.

During our visit, staff demonstrated a caring, compassionate, and professional approach in their interactions with residents. They were observed treating residents with dignity and respect, taking time to engage in meaningful conversations, and responding promptly to requests for assistance. Interactions were warm, friendly, and patient.

Staff appeared to have a good understanding of residents' individual needs, preferences, and routines, enabling them to provide personalised support that promoted independence and wellbeing.

There was clear evidence of positive relationships between staff and residents, with residents appearing comfortable and relaxed in their presence.

Fountain Court's ground-floor resident areas provide an accessible and practical environment for both residents and staff. The layout enables staff to move easily throughout the home, provide timely support and maintain regular observations of residents.

Overall, the visit to Fountain Court was positive and provided a valuable opportunity to observe the environment, meet staff, and gain a better understanding of the support available to those who live with dementia.

Recommendations

Healthwatch Sandwell found Fountain Court to be a welcoming, safe, and well-maintained residential care home where residents appeared comfortable, respected, and well supported. The recommendations below are intended to support the home's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement whilst building upon the many positive aspects of care observed during the Enter and View visit.

1. Consider Enhancing Dementia-Friendly Wayfinding

The home already demonstrates good practice through personalised bedroom door displays and pictorial signage. Consideration could be given to introducing additional dementia-friendly wayfinding features, such as colour-coded areas, themed corridors, or enhanced directional signage, to further support residents' independence and orientation.

2. Introduce Life Story Documentation for All Residents

Where not already in place, consideration could be given to developing or expanding individual life story books for residents. These can support staff in understanding each person's background, interests, routines, achievements, and preferences, helping to deliver increasingly personalised dementia care.

3. Share Good Practice with Other Services

Healthwatch Sandwell recognised several areas of good practice during the visit, including personalised room identification, sensory corridor features, reminiscence resources in the garden room, and positive interactions between staff and residents. Consideration should be given to sharing these approaches across other residential services to support wider learning and service improvement.

Provider Feedback

Provider response to the Fountain Court Enter and View report, June 2026

"Thank you for such a positive report, from your visit"
Just for clarification

"As stated in the report, all the facilities for the people who live at Fountain Court are on the ground floor, but we do have a first floor, which contains staff room, plant room, and electricity cupboard. The door to the first floor is electronically locked and the stairs only be opened by staff"



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