



healthwatch
in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

**"Something Someone Told Me"
Care Home Lay Visiting Project**

Plymbridge House Care Home

Lay Representative Report

November 2025



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About us

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay (HWDPT) are the three local independent consumer champions for people using health and social care services across Devon.

Local Healthwatch organisations were established as independent bodies run by local people, for local people. They are part of a national network of local Healthwatch in England that was set up under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Healthwatch engages with the local community effectively and gives residents of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided for them.

Background

In July 2024, Healthwatch Plymouth held discussions with the Social Care Quality Assurance & Improvement Team (QAiT) at Plymouth City Council to discuss ways of increasing feedback from residents in care homes by re-establishing a programme of care home lay visiting that was curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

The “Something Someone Told Me” project is a joint initiative delivered by Plymouth City Council and Healthwatch Plymouth. Its purpose is to gather thoughts, views and ideas from residents, relatives and providers of local care homes and is based around the ‘My Home Life Programme’. It allows Healthwatch Plymouth to have conversations with residents and their relatives of local care homes, covering aspects of the ‘My Home Life Programme’. Healthwatch Plymouth also sought feedback from care home providers and managers to give them a say on the challenges they face in delivering the programme.

Feedback is gathered around five key themes:

- Maintaining identity
- Creating community
- Shared decision making
- Improving health and healthcare
- Promoting a positive culture.

To help in gathering feedback and to provide a consistent process, Healthwatch Plymouth devised a series of points to aid in the discussions with residents, relatives and providers. A list of these points is available in the Annex.

Healthwatch Plymouth volunteer lay representatives undertake the care home visits. They speak to residents and staff, collate the feedback gathered and present it in this report themselves. Any observations made by them, or the findings and quotes included within this report, are not necessarily the view of Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.

About Plymbridge House Care Home

Plymbridge House Care Home is a residential care home situated in Plymouth. It offers care for people over 65, with some residents having low-level dementia.

There are currently 40 single rooms, 37 of which are occupied. Some rooms have en-suite facilities, while others do not, but are equipped with a commode and washbasin. They achieved a 'good' rating on their last CQC inspection.

Plymbridge House Care Home is situated in the Plympton area of Plymouth and is set off the main road. From the outside, it looks grand and is in good condition. To the front of the care home, there is a car park, and the entrance is easily found.

The building was formerly a vicarage. Inside the main entrance, it appears somewhat rundown, with scrapes and marks on walls and doors, and worn carpeting. It consists of three floors, which we viewed, and the layout is a little winding to navigate. An extension has been added to the main building, and overall, the property has been well adapted for its current use. The main kitchen has been refurbished recently. A large conservatory for residents has been attached to the exterior of the original building, creating a bright, airy space that makes the whole area feel lighter and more cheerful. All rooms are compact but homely.

Executive Summary

On the 11th November 2025, Plymbridge House Care Home was visited by two lay representatives from the Healthwatch Plymouth Volunteer Team. This report summarises insights from resident conversations with our lay representatives, focusing on five key themes:

- Maintaining identity
- Creating community
- Shared decision making
- Improving health and healthcare
- Promoting a positive culture.

Despite requests for the registered Manager to complete the Provider Survey, no response was submitted.

Summarised Key Findings

- While some areas of the home showed signs of wear and tear, conversations with staff and residents highlighted a warm, welcoming, and very positive atmosphere.
- Daily activities are provided through a varied programme, and with families also able to visit at any time through unrestricted 24-hour visiting.
- Residents we spoke with stated they felt happy, settled and supported in their decision-making.

Summarised Key Recommendations

There are no specific recommendations for Plymbridge House Care Home. Our observation is that it appears to be a well-managed care home with a warm and friendly environment. ☒

Conversational Findings and Survey Responses

The following is a summary of the conversations held with residents and relatives during the visit, around the five key themes outlined previously. Despite requests for the Registered Manager to complete the Provider Survey, no response was submitted.

Maintaining Identity

Findings from our visit

During our visit to Plymbridge House Care Home, we found that staff and residents use first names when addressing each other, which helps create a genuine, family-like atmosphere. As a result, staff know the residents well and can meet their individual communication needs. Staff members support one another and are always ready to assist residents with moving around the home and taking part in activities.

The residents' compact rooms reflect their personal tastes and feel homely. The residents' names are posted on the door of their room.

The common areas are decorated with photos, paintings, and posters, which help to visually improve the environment. The main common room is large and airy.

The current menu is being trialled from Apetito and is on a four-week revolving system. There are alternative options to what is on the main menu, and when speaking to the residents, they said the food was good, and they were able to ask for something else if they did not like the items on the main menu. On the day of our visit, some residents were still having breakfast and were allowed to finish at their own pace.

A local pastor from the nearby church visits the home regularly, and residents are supported to attend church services where they are physically able to do so.

Provider's Response to Maintaining Identity

No response received.

Creating Community

Findings from Our Visit

Plymbridge House Care Home has open visiting times, and we were able to meet a resident's relative, who was very positive about the home and staff. All the residents that we talked to said they felt it was their home, and they felt comfortable there.

The home employs an Activities Coordinator who explained that residents are encouraged to take part in a range of daily activities, including quizzes and music sessions. Local musicians are also invited to perform for residents. Alternatively, residents may choose to spend time in their own rooms, where they have access to a television. There is a communal day room available, as well as a quiet area.

There was evidence of access to adapted books, e.g. large wording, pictures. They also provided tablets for the residents to listen to books if required.

Staff timetables, which included names and the type of nursing staff on duty, were publicly available.

Provider's Response to Creating Community

No response received.

Sharing Decision Making

Findings from Our Visit

We did not see clear evidence of regular meetings taking place between residents and the management team to formally discuss the running of the home or to gather feedback on services provided. However, residents reported that they felt listened to and supported in making choices about their daily lives. For example, they were able to decide how and where they spent their time, whether that was relaxing in their own rooms, socialising in the communal day areas, or accessing quieter spaces within the home.

Family visiting is available 24 hours a day, with no restricted visiting.

Provider's Response to Sharing Decision Making

No response received.

Improving Health and Healthcare

Findings from Our Visit

Community services also visited residents, such as a Physiotherapist, Occupational therapist and Dietician. The manager also stated that dental services were available.

The home is registered with a local GP surgery (Pathfields), and a weekly online "ward round" takes place. The GP will also attend the home in person if there are any concerns regarding a resident's health. Access to dental services are available, although some residents have chosen to remain registered with their own dental practices. In addition, a chiropodist visits the home regularly.

We also noted that staff had access to a range of information leaflets to support them in identifying and responding to potential health concerns. For example, guidance was available on what actions to take if blood was observed in a resident's bowel movement, as well as information on recognising and reporting other physical health issues.

Given the age profile of residents, the LiveWell team has attended the home to administer COVID-19 and flu vaccinations to those who consented. A dedicated staff member is also in place to support

activities and exercise, helping to promote both the social engagement and physical well-being of residents.

The home has access to a range of disability equipment, including wheelchairs, hoists, and bariatric equipment to meet individual needs. Lifts and stairlifts are available between floors, and there are accessible bathrooms, showers, and toilets throughout the home to support residents with mobility needs.

Provider's Response to Improving Health and Healthcare

No response received.

Promoting a Positive Culture

Findings from Our Visit

Plymbridge House Care Home was observed to provide a warm and positive environment, with interactions between staff and residents noted to be friendly and respectful. Staff were seen to be attentive and supportive, particularly when assisting residents with meals and mobility.

When speaking with a resident's daughter, she commented positively on the quality of care provided. She jokingly remarked that she "would live at the home" herself, and shared that her father was very happy and felt well cared for.

Daily activities are available for the residents to participate in, with an engaging activity coordinator encouraging and supporting the residents to take part in a range of activities. Televisions and other activities were available in communal areas. All residents' rooms have their own TV.

Provider's Response to Promoting a Positive Culture

No response received.

Healthwatch Volunteer Visiting Team Observations

We observed a home that, although looking dated in some areas, had an atmosphere that appeared to make the home a real, caring place.

On the morning of the visit, we observed staff actively supporting residents across all floors. Domestic staff were observed maintaining a clean and tidy environment, while care staff were assisting residents with breakfast and ensuring their needs were met.

We noted residents being offered a variety of activities and experiences, with the Activities Coordinator taking a proactive approach and working hard to encourage participation and engagement throughout the home.

It appeared the staff were aware of the Healthwatch visit and the reason for it. Staff were pleasant, but there was little support for the visiting team. The Healthwatch "We are visiting" poster was on display in a prominent position. There were several staff members evident on arrival, and we had a tour by the resident manager who introduced herself. When the team reminded the registered manager to complete the provider survey sent to her, she stated that they had searched for it and were unable to locate it.

We spoke with residents who stated that staff were kind and listened and felt that this was their home.

Recommendations

There are no specific recommendations for Plymbridge House Care Home. Our observation is that it appears to be a well-managed care home with a warm and friendly environment.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Plymouth would like to thank staff and residents from Plymbridge House Care Home for their time to answer our questions.

Special thanks go to our lay representative volunteers, whose dedication and support continue to make this project possible.

Annex A – Residents/Relatives points for conversation

Maintaining identity

- Do you feel that you are treated as an individual by management and staff?
- If you have communication needs i.e. language, sign language, hearing loop, braille or large print documents, do you feel that the provider meets those needs?
- Do you have access to a fast Wi-Fi connection, computer access, email and internet, as well as phones/devices to video call with family?
- Do you feel that the provider is open to meeting any spiritual, cultural social and sexual needs that you may have in a sensitive manner?

Creating Community

- Does the management and staff promote a sense of community within the home, and do you feel that you have a sense of belonging, purpose and security?
- Do you have a sense of fulfilment from being a resident in that you are treated as an individual, but also a member of the home's community?

Sharing Decision Making

- Are there regular meetings between residents and management that look at how the home is run? If so, are your views residents and those of your relatives gained and considered to improve practice?
- Do you feel that you are empowered to make decisions about your care and daily living i.e. flexibility when you go to bed or get up, are you able to control the amount of lighting or temperature of your room?

Improving health and healthcare

- Are you registered with and have access to a GP, and do you receive annual health/medication reviews?
- Do you have access, if required, to support from specialist services i.e.: Parkinson's nurse specialist, heart specialist, dentist, optician, etc?

- Do you believe that your health needs are met, and you are taken seriously if you become unwell?
- Are your relatives/carers informed when you become unwell or any changes are made to your treatment?
- If needed, are you provided with specialist equipment i.e., walking aids, specialist chairs, pressure relieving mattress/aids?
- Is assistance readily available to help you with activities of daily living – getting in and out of bed, to the dining room, eating, etc?
- If you have a disability and need easy access shower/bath facilities, are they available for you to use with assistance if required?
- Are you encouraged to have regular showers or baths?

Promoting a Positive Culture

- Do you feel that the staff supports you to play an active role in the running of the home?
- Is an activities programme provided by the Home? If so, are you encouraged to take part in any activities with others?
- Does the Home encourage people from outside to visit i.e. someone playing music, simple exercise, Arts and Crafts?
- Equally are trips out organised for residents i.e. to local community venues?
- Are you able to access all resident's areas of the home, especially if you have a disability?
- Can you choose your meal from a menu and if you need a special diet, is this catered for?
- Can your family and friends bring in food?

Annex B – Provider Survey Questions

Personal details

- Care Home Name:
- Your Name:
- Job Title:
- Number of Residents:
- Patients: tick all that apply
 - Nursing
 - Residential
 - Dementia
 - Learning Disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Mental Health
 - Older People
 -

Maintaining identity

- As a provider are you open to meeting any spiritual, cultural social and sexual needs that residents may have in a sensitive manner? [Yes/No]
 - If 'yes', What are you able to facilitate?
- If a resident has communication needs i.e. language, sign language, hearing loop, braille or large print documents, are you able to meet those needs? [Yes/No]
 - If 'yes', What processes or systems do you have in place?
- Do your residents have access to a fast Wi-Fi connection, computer access, email and internet, as well as phones/devices to video call with family? [Yes/No]
 - If 'yes', What items do they have access to and how often are they used?

- Have you had recent experience (within the last 12 months) of making a safeguarding alert to the Plymouth Safe Guarding Adults Board? [Yes/No]
 - If 'yes', Is information on how to make a report clear?
 - If 'yes', Did you find the process to make the report easy?

Creating Community

- Do you feel that management and staff promote a sense of community within your home so that residents feel that they have a sense of belonging, purpose and security? [Yes/No]
 - If 'yes', What measures and activities do you have in place?
- How do you measure the sense of fulfilment a resident has, not only by being treated as an individual, but also as a member of the home's community?

Sharing Decision Making

- Are residents and relatives encouraged to have an active role in the running of the home? [Yes/No]
 - If yes, Are there regular meetings between residents and management (group and 1:1) that look at how the home is run? [Yes/No]
 - If yes, How often are these meetings held?
- Are the views of residents and their relatives considered to improve practice?
- Are residents empowered to make decisions about their care and daily living, for example, flexibility when they go to bed and get up, able to control the amount of lighting or temperature of their room? [Yes/No]
 - If 'Yes' what processes are in place to encourage this? [Free text]

- What processes are in place when an individual is approaching end of life?
- Do you initiate conversations to help someone plan their end of life care?
- Do you develop support systems for individuals, staff, friends and relatives as part of compassionate communities?
- Are End of Life patients, if appropriate, able to self-medicate?
- If a resident has a TEP (Treatment Escalation Plan) where are these kept?
- If applicable, do you recognise the challenge, and develop systems, for end of life care in dementia/those with learning disabilities?

Improving health and healthcare

- How are residents registered with a GP and what routine access to a GP do they have?
- Do they receive annual health and medication reviews from their GP [Yes/No]
- How is your relationship with GP practice(s) that support the home?
- If you request a GP visit, is this responded to in a timely manner? [Yes/No]
 - If no, when does the visit occur?
- Do residents have access to dental services and opticians? [Yes/No]
 - If 'yes', Will these services attend the home if the resident's mobility is severely restricted? [Yes/No]
- Is the home affiliated to any dental practice and optician service? [Yes/No]
 - If 'yes', what are the names of these practices
- Can staff and patients access support from specialist services, for example, Heart Failure, Parkinson's nurse specialist, tissue viability nurse specialist? [Yes/No]
 - If 'yes', what specialist services are you currently accessing?
- What processes are in place to meet residents ongoing health needs i.e. podiatry, dementia, mental health?

- Are residents' relatives/carers informed when they become unwell, or any changes are made to their treatment? [Yes/No]
- If needed, are residents able to access or are provided with specialist equipment, for example, walking aids, specialist chairs, pressure relieving mattress/aids? [Yes/No]
- Are residents encouraged to have regular showers or baths? [Yes/No/N/A]
- If residents have a disability and need easy access shower/bath facilities, are they available for use with assistance (if required) when requested by the resident? [Yes/No/N/A]

Promoting a Positive Culture

- Do you provide an activities programme for residents? [Yes/No]
 - If 'Yes', are residents encouraged to take part in the activities with others? [Yes/No]
- Does your care home encourage people from outside to visit i.e. someone playing music, simple exercise, Arts and Crafts? [Yes/No]
 - If 'No', what are the reasons for this?
- Are trips out organised for residents i.e. to local community venues? [Yes/No]
 - If 'No', what are the reasons for this?
- Are residents able to access all common areas of the home, especially if they have a disability? [Yes/No]
 - If 'No' What are the barriers to this?
- Can residents choose a meal from a menu? [Yes/No]
- If they need a special diet, is this catered for? [Yes/No]
 - If 'No', what are the barriers to this?
- Can family and friends bring in food? [Yes/No]
 - If 'Yes' is there a facility available for items to be stored in a fridge/cupboard? [Yes/No]

Additional Comments

- Is there anything you are currently doing in your care home that you are really proud of, has made a significant difference for residents, or that you feel is best practice in the industry? And is something you would be happy to share with other homes?
- Finally, do you have any additional comments you would like to share or any other general feedback?

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