

Enter and View Final Report

Name of Service Provider: Linden Grange Residential Home

Premises visited: 14-16 Grange Road, Hartshill, Nuneaton, CV10 0SS

Date of Visit: 11th February 2025

Time of visit: 11.00 am – 2.30 pm

Registered Manager: Julie Hopkins

Authorised Representatives: Robyn Dorling, David Alexander, Sue Roodhouse, Collette O'Connor.

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Disclaimer: Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the date above. Our report does not represent the experiences of all service users, their relatives, and staff; it only accounts for what was observed and contributed during our visit.

Purpose of visit: We visited Linden Grange because the Care Quality Commission (CQC) had not visited the home since 2018. Our purpose was to ensure that the people living in the home were treated with dignity and care.

Approach used: The visit was unannounced. We interviewed the Registered Manager, observed activities in communal areas, and talked to residents, visitors, and staff throughout our visit. We also heard from the Management Advisor on Health and Safety, the Activities Coordinator and the Chief Chef.



Summary of Findings:

- Linden Grange Care Home is a modern, purpose-built care home in the village of Hartshill, on the outskirts of Nuneaton. It is one of three homes owned by Linden Care Homes. The home is on a residential street opposite a local pub the residents can visit.
- The home cares for 34 people who need support with daily living activities. Some of the people living at the home have Dementia. On the day of our visit, there were 32 residents, with another due to move in shortly. There is one room for a couple.
- The home is clean, feels comfortable and is well-maintained. It has a secure enclosed garden area. The rooms are personalised, spacious, and ensuite.
- Relatives and friends can visit at any time. The Registered Manager has built strong relationships with relatives and staff, which is reflected in the home's culture and practices.
- Staff turnover is notably low, with many employees having worked at Linden Grange for a long time. The staff are a strong team who support each other and speak highly of the residents, each other, the Manager, and the owner.
- The staff appear to know the residents well, and everyone seems to get along and be actively involved and included in the activities and goings-on at the home.
- Linden Grange Care Home exemplifies high standards in care, training, and overall resident satisfaction, resulting in a vibrant, family-like atmosphere that benefits residents and staff.
- The home has accomplished significant achievements in providing Quality End-of-Life Care for All (QELCA). Myton Hospice trained the registered manager and some senior staff in end-of-life care.
- Residents shared positive experiences, often describing the care as excellent.
- Staff echoed similar praise for the Registered Manager, noting she is approachable, supportive, and instrumental in fostering a positive team environment.
- The Registered Manager is committed to mentoring and training staff, which is reflected in the career progression staff have made.



Recommendations:

We want to highlight the following excellent practices:

- End-of-life care Best Practices include providing boxes containing care items for staff and relatives to use and information sheets on what happens before and after death.
- Mouth Care Kits: Dental and oral care kits for comfort and hygiene up to the end of life.
- Career Advancement Opportunities: Promoting career progression for staff members and providing ongoing training and development.

Report Overview:

Healthwatch Warwickshire Enter and View Lead, and three volunteer Authorised Representatives arrived unannounced at the Care Home, meaning no one at the home knew we were coming. When we arrived, a staff member welcomed us and told us the Manager was delivering training. The Manager invited us into her office, where she spent time with us, telling us about the home and answering our questions. We were then given a tour of the home and spent time hearing from residents, relatives and staff. We were present during lunch.

Everyone we met at the home appeared keen to talk to us and tell us how proud they were of the home and how much they enjoyed living or working there. We spoke to many people living at the home and one person at length in their room. We interviewed the Registered Manager, talked to most of the staff working that day and heard from visiting relatives. We also spoke at length to the Chief Chef and the Maintenance Advisor. At the end of our visit, as we were meeting to discuss our findings, staff who had not spoken to us came to find us to talk to us about the home and the career opportunities and progression they had achieved there.



Interview with the Registered Manager:

Julie Hopkins, Registered Manager (RM), has managed the home since 2017. Julie is a nurse who is trained in end-of-life care. Julie was welcoming, talked to us at length and answered our questions. Julie told us:

“Our goal is to care for residents well.

*We pride ourselves on building **strong relationships with relatives**. We have an open-door policy and encourage visitors. I am here to stop problems before they start. People can visit whenever they want. It's a family; Our eldest resident will be 100 years old in a few weeks.*

*The staff here are amazing. **Staff turnover is very low** because this is a supportive work environment. I know the staff well and give them time off when needed, as they have families to support, too. We do not use agency staff; we don't need to because the staff support each other. They will swap shifts and take on shifts when someone needs time off. We are a team. The owner is very supportive, and that helps.*

*We hold weekly sessions on various topics, and **I manage ongoing staff training**, ensuring that infection control, moving and handling, and dementia care are priorities. Our home avoided any deaths from COVID-19. We have our own training room.*

The local GP from Hartshill Medical Centre visits once a week. District Nurses and a chiroprapist also come in.

***A key focus is End-of-life care**, for which we offer comprehensive support and training to staff and relatives.*

I took the Quality End-of-Life Care course at Myton Hospice. Some of the senior staff have also taken this course.

Everyone who lives here has a death and dying care plan.

*We use **oral health care kits** for end-of-life care to support comfort and hydration and prevent problems, and we have a **care box** that contains things to help people care for a person at the end of their life. It has fluffy socks, hand cream, Vaseline, a poem, and a guidance sheet on what to expect at the end of life. This is for staff and relatives; it helps them understand what is happening. We put a sunflower picture on the person's door, so everyone knows they are receiving end-of-life care. We also give relatives practical information about what happens after death to help them understand what to do.*

I am qualified to verify when a person has died, so we don't have to wait for the Doctor to arrive. Staff can attend residents' funerals.”



During our interview with the Registered Manager, Jim Rocks, the **Health and Safety Consultant** for Linden Grange, came to talk to us about the organisation's legal requirements related to safety, security and environmental matters. Jim told us:

“Linden Grange meets ISO standards. This is the only care home in the country to have all these accreditations. Linden Care Homes has achieved remarkable accreditations and awards from independent regulatory bodies. Our health and safety measures are thorough, with regular audits and risk assessments conducted to ensure the safety of our residents. Quality assurance comes in every six months and does an audit. We use ISO-approved suppliers from a list, and permit systems are in place, for example, to go on the roof and do electrical work. Risk assessments are always asked for. The home uses the same contractors all the time. The company is very family-oriented; they are good at giving us equipment, if we need it, we get it.”

ISO standards are internationally recognised guidelines that help organisations improve their performance in quality management, health and safety, and information security: Exemplary Business Practices ISO 9001 and Commitment to Safety ISO 45001.

We were also told that enough staff are trained portable appliance testers (PAT) to be able to test things brought into the home for residents, straight away.



Observations/Findings:

Physical Environment

The building was very well maintained both inside and out. Upkeep extended to the exterior, featuring a well-maintained internal courtyard garden area that provides residents with a safe, sociable and comfortable place to sit outside.

The home is clean and well-decorated, with modern furnishings throughout. It has been thoughtfully put together and feels like a home where people can socialise when they want to. The communal areas are modern, with furniture organised so people can sit and socialise in small groups.

Residents' rooms all have ensuite bathrooms. The rooms we were invited into were very personalised and clean, with amenities promoting independence, such as a well-stocked mini fridge with favourite snacks and drinks.

Service User Experience, Dignity and Respect:

Residents seemed comfortable and happy, enjoying meals together in a lively atmosphere where staff participated and ate with the residents. The home's ethos is that people will be encouraged to eat if they see staff enjoying the same food as them. The meals looked appetising:

“How can we encourage residents to eat if we won't eat ourselves?”

We spoke with the Chief Chef who has been with the home for 22 years and provides 140 meals three times a day across all three care homes. The kitchen was spotlessly clean. The local butcher delivers meat and fresh fruit, and vegetables come from a local supplier.

People living at the home spoke highly of the staff and the manager. Everyone seemed to know each other well. Residents told us they felt lucky to be there and had been to other homes they did not like. The atmosphere was very welcoming and sociable. Residents who chose to stay in their rooms had call bells, but staff also regularly popped in to see if they wanted anything.

We spoke to one person at length in their room. They spoke highly of the staff and the home and said, *“They make me feel special.”* Their room reflected them, furnished with their belongings and favourite things. We were told about events they were looking forward to and had outfits ready for. Their daughter visits regularly and helps them get what they want, such as clothes and nice drinks and snacks, which are kept in their fridge in their room. They were dressed very well with a beautiful necklace that the Manager had given them because they liked it so much. We were told they *“They call me ‘the Queen of Linden Grange.’”* which was confirmed by the staff. While



chatting, a staff member came in to see if they wanted anything. They clearly knew each other well and joked and laughed together. We asked about doctors, and the member of staff told me about a time recently when she knew something was wrong:

"I know her well, so I know when she has changed; if this happens, I will insist that the Doctor comes into the home to see her. I can be quite insistent when I need to be."

We spoke to the Activities Coordinator, who told us they have worked for the Linden Care Group for eleven years. The group has a bus with wheelchair access that they share between the three homes. Their approach to activities was very person-centred. They drew up a weekly activities planner but were happy to adapt to whatever the residents wanted to do. Residents are encouraged to ask for what they want; some do armchair exercises. A local organisation, Creative Mojo, were coming in to do arts and crafts on the day of our visit.

Staff told us that for special events, they try to do things differently every year:

"This year, we did Strictly Come Dancing."

"We made Julie (the Registered Manager) a banner for her 60th, and we had a big party."

We were told that relatives of previous residents also came.



Staff observations and feedback:

All the staff working on the day of our visit were keen to talk to us. We consistently heard how well they support each other. They spoke very highly of both Julie, the Registered Manager and the owner.

There is very low staff turnover. Some staff have worked at the home since it opened. The staff members support one another, working as a team, swapping shifts, and giving each other lifts. The home does not use agency staff.

The night shift includes one hour of handover time to the day shift staff. Five or six staff members work in the morning and three or four at night.

We spoke to a senior team leader who was keen to progress career-wise. Having started as a carer, working nights and progressing to Senior Team Leader, they told us *"I would like to manage a home one day."* Several staff told us about career opportunities at the home. One person told us that Julie always asks if any staff members have done exceptionally well, which will be highlighted in their supervision. Opportunities for career progression were a notable feature of this home and appeared to contribute to positive staff morale and commitment.

Feedback from Residents/Relatives/Carers/Visiting Professionals:

Residents shared positive experiences, often describing the care as akin to family.

Residents' quotes:

"I would recommend this home to anyone. If you can get a place here, do it. The staff are wonderful. It is a fantastic place; I cannot say enough good things about it. They really look after you. I was at another home before, and I didn't like it. I am so much happier now that I am here."

Relatives' quotes:

"Mum would not be here if she had not been so well looked after."

"Everything is more than okay."

Staff quotes:

Management:

Everyone we spoke to who was working that day was very complimentary of Julie, the Registered Manager:

"Not a day goes by without Julie, the Registered Manager, asking if you are okay. She's like a friend and our boss; we respect her."



"We have supervision every six months; we discuss our training needs and mental health."

"Julie, the Registered Manager, will ask me (Senior Team Leader) if any staff members have done exceptionally well."

"Staff are given input from the owner to do their job. I am confident."

"The owner is good."

"The manager is so helpful; she cares and was very supportive during a family crisis."

Training:

"I have had training on Dementia; we do online training, too; we are trained on many things."

"Our training is spot on, and we are paid for training."

"Management will try to get the training we want."

Staff Support and Relationships:

"We have a mentoring system in place; Julie, the Registered Manager, picks one staff member so new staff always have someone to go to."

"We make new staff welcome and take them under our wing."

"Staff cover shifts as if it is a work family; staff need care too."

"We are supported and valued; we can change workdays if necessary."

"We talk; in this job, you've got to help each other."

"The residents are like family."

Job Experience:

"I started as a carer on nights, made it up to team leader, started working days and then got promoted to senior team leader. I want to be a manager one day."

"I have worked here for eighteen years. There are no agency staff; we mix with the staff at the other homes. I have worked at the other homes as well."

"I have worked in two other homes; this is the best. It's like family."

