

The Sands Care Home

Thursday July 23, 2026

10am-2pm



Disclaimer: This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff, visitors and patients who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

Contact Details

Address

390 Marine Road East

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Registered Manager:

Tracey Burrell

Date and Time of our visit:

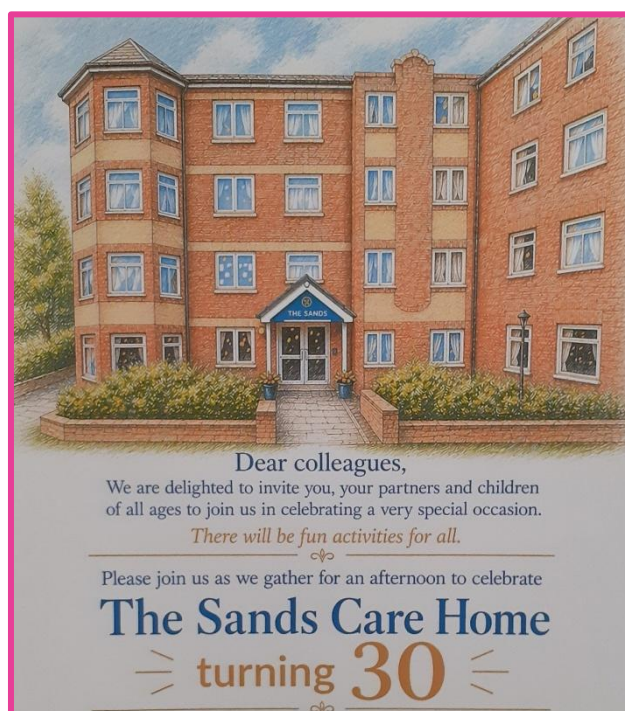
23 July 2026

10am-2pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Sue Edwards (Senior Engagement Officer)

Austin Staunton (Healthwatch Lancashire Volunteer)



Introduction

Healthwatch Lancashire is the independent public voice for health and social care in Lancashire and exists to make services work for the people who use them. We believe that the best way to do this is by providing the people of Lancashire with opportunities to share their views and experiences.

Healthwatch Lancashire has statutory powers to listen, act, challenge and gather feedback to improve local services and promote excellence throughout the NHS and social care services.

To help achieve this Healthwatch have a statutory power to 'Enter and View' health and social care services that are publicly funded. The purpose of an Enter and View is to listen to people who access those services and observe service delivery.

Following the Enter and View visit a report is compiled identifying aspects of good practice within the service visited along with any recommendations for any possible areas of improvement.

As we are an independent organisation, we do not make judgements or express personal opinions but rely on feedback received and objective observations of the environment. The report is sent to the service provider providing an opportunity to respond to any recommendations and comments before being published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at:

www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

The report is available to members of the public along with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations. Where appropriate Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to monitor the progress of improvements and celebrate any further successes.

General Information

The Sands Care Home has capacity for 97 residents; at the time of the visit there were 96 people residing at the home.

Needs catered for range from independent residential through to those with advanced dementia/Alzheimer's and palliative care.

Services include round-the-clock care, meals and nutritional support, laundry services and various activities.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank residents, staff and management, for making us feel welcome and for taking the time to speak to us during the visit.

What did we do?

Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View Representatives made an announced visit to The Sands Care Home on Thursday July 23, 2026, and received feedback from:



Introductory meeting with manager

At the beginning of the enter and view visit, Healthwatch Lancashire met with the manager to discuss the care home and view the facilities. This involved discussing the different areas of the home and aspects of the daily routine, and to hear the manager's perspective on what is currently working well at the care home.

One to one discussions with residents

Conversations with residents were structured around four themes (Environment, Care, Food and Activities).

Discussions with members of staff

Staff were asked about their experience working at the care home, what they thought was working well, and anything they thought could be changed to improve the experience for themselves and the residents

Observations

The Enter and View team also recorded their own observations on the environment and staff-member interactions. To retain confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, names, pronouns and any identifiable details have been removed from quotes.

Summary



An announced visit was carried out at The Sands Care Home, Morecambe, on Thursday July 23, 2026, 10:00am-2:00pm. Healthwatch Lancashire representatives spoke with nine residents, seven members of staff and one external service provider.

The care home has the capacity for 97 residents. At the time of the visit there were 96 people residing at the home.

The Sands Care Home is located on Marine Road East in the town of Morecambe. The home is situated in a contemporary, purpose-built four-storey building which overlooks Morecambe Bay.

The care home caters for older people needing day-to-day support, many of whom have dementia/Alzheimer's. Services include round the clock care, meals and nutritional support, laundry services and various activities.

Care is provided over four floors with differing levels of need on each floor

- **Keswick** – ground floor: for those more independent, with some residents able to come and go as they so choose
- **Grasmere** - first floor: general nursing care
- **Langdale** - second floor: general nursing care
- **Derwent** - third floor: for those with advanced dementia/Alzheimer's. Offices/administration, the main kitchen, a hairdresser's salon and the laundry service are also located on the fourth floor.

Several of the residents spoken with were deemed not to have capacity to understand what was being asked or be able to recall their day due to having advancing dementia/Alzheimer's. However, those who were able to provide feedback were positive of their care. Residents had mixed views around meals with some stating the food required improvement whilst others were satisfied with the food provided.

Staff spoken with were generally positive about the care that is provided at The Sands, with some issues around staffing levels and the need for more activities raised as issues which need addressing. All staff who provided feedback stated that they would recommend the care home to a close relative.

It was felt by the Healthwatch representatives that the communal bathrooms/toilets are in need of improvement, and that the residents would benefit from a more vibrant environment (where appropriate), as well as more sharing of good practice between floors. Observations showed good staff and resident interactions, with staff appearing to know the residents well, and there was a pleasant atmosphere overall.

Service Overview

Location and public access



The Sands Care Home is located on Marine Road East in the town of Morecambe. Marine Road runs along the sea front, linking Heysham to the south, and Hest Bank, Bolton-le-Sands and Carnforth to the north. Lancaster is located to the south-east of Morecambe with an approximate fifteen-minute drive to the city centre.

There are good public transport links to/from the neighbouring towns and cities, and there are bus stops directly outside the care home.

The care home has a small car park and there is street parking available along Marine Road East and the neighbouring side streets. A reserved space in the car park allows for easy pick up/drop offs close to the home.

The Sands Care Home is located in close proximity to local amenities enabling residents to have easy access to the local community. As the home is situated on the seafront residents are also able to easily access the promenade and beach.

The Sands is easy to find with a clear entrance and good signage.

Background of the home

The Sands is owned and managed by The Sands Care Group, who also own and manage The Sands Meadows, a specialist dementia care home, in nearby Hest Bank.

The care home is located within a purpose-built, four-storey building, completed and open in 1996. At the time of the visit The Sands was celebrating its 30th year of being open, with an open day planned for the following week.

Healthwatch Lancashire carried out an Enter and View with The Sands Care Home in June 2024 and made various recommendations in order to enhance the resident experience. Due to the time which has passed since the last visit it was decided a second Enter and View would be carried out rather than a revisit summary. However, some comments included in this report may take into account previous recommendations and any improvements/changes made since the previous visit. The 2024 report can be found here:

<https://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/assets/page-images/The-Sand-Care-Home-Final-Report.pdf>

Services available

The Sands Care Home has capacity for 97 residents; at the time of the visit there were 96 people residing at the care home. Many of the current residents have dementia or Alzheimer's, with the majority being 65+.

Services at The Sands include meals, with nutritional advice and support, laundry services, activities and entertainment. Other services such as hairdressing are available from external professionals who visit the home on a regular basis.

Care is provided over four floors with differing levels of need on each floor

- **Keswick** – ground floor: for those more independent, with some residents able to come and go as they so choose
- **Grasmere** - first floor: general nursing care
- **Langdale** - second floor: general nursing care
- **Derwent** - third floor: for those with advanced dementia/Alzheimer's. Offices/administration, the main kitchen, a hairdresser's salon and the laundry service are also located on the fourth floor.

Each floor has a communal lounge, dining room, communal bathrooms, a nursing station and a small kitchen area; with meals being prepared on the fourth floor in the main kitchen and transported to the other floors at mealtimes.

Enter and View observations

External Environment

On arrival The Sands appeared well maintained and nicely presented. The building is modern in appearance but sits comfortably with the neighbouring buildings and overall appearance of the area. Due to its location there is limited opportunity for gardens but external spaces have been used effectively to create some green spaces and external seating.

The home faces across Morecambe Bay allowing for residents to have clear views of the coast, extending as far as Barrow-in-Furness (weather permitting), and residents are able to easily access the promenade and beach.



Internal Environment – first impressions

Main entry into the care home is via large double doors which are level with the external paving and are seen to be accessible. On entering the building there is a second set of doors which are secure and visitors must either buzz reception for entry or have access to keycodes.

General information is on display in the reception area, including the latest CQC (Care Quality Commission) rating.



There is a large reception desk directly facing the entrance with several awards on display.

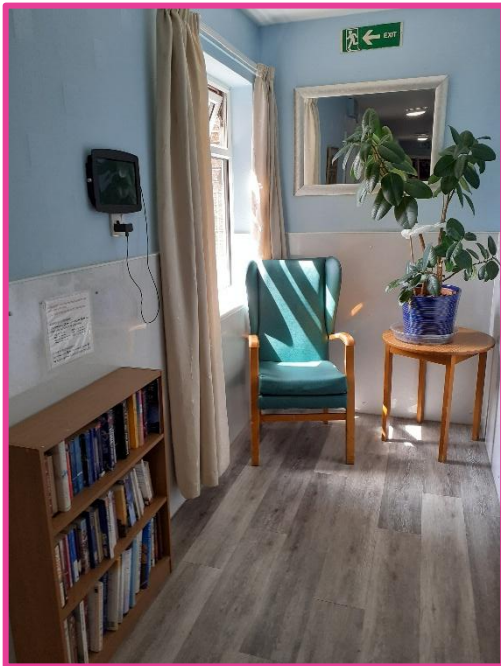
Visitors are asked to sign in/out via an electronic device evidencing good safeguarding policies and procedures.

The reception desk was consistently staffed throughout the visit.

Observation of corridors, public toilets and bathrooms

Corridors appear clean, well maintained and free of clutter. The Healthwatch Lancashire representatives noted that corridor areas have been improved since the previous visit, and discussion with management identified that there has been redecorating work throughout the care home. Small seating areas have been added in various locations, allowing for residents to have some quiet time or chat with relatives/staff.

Handrails are to be seen in some areas of the care home; it is recommended that further handrails are added to all areas in order to help residents move around more freely and thus help towards maintaining independence. In order to support residents with visual impairments and/or dementia/Alzheimer's it is also recommended that handrails are in a contrasting colour to the walls in order to help residents identify quickly that there is a handrail they can utilise (**Recommendation 1**).



Communal bathrooms were seen to be in need of improvement. In order to improve resident experience it is recommended that bathrooms are redesigned and redecorated with up-to-date equipment and aids in order to create a more pleasant environment for residents when carrying out personal care. Residents, relatives and staff should be consulted on how best to improve the resident experience of personal care and communal toilets/baths/showers (**Recommendation 2**).



A lift is available to all floors, and in order to access the lift on Derwent a member of staff is required to use a key ensuring those with advanced dementia/Alzheimer's are unable to wander away from their floor..

Stairs to all floors are also available; and fire evacuation chairs are located in the stair wells for in the event of an emergency. Access doors to the stairs consists of two handles which required simultaneous use in order to open the doors, and as the handles move in different directions this prevents those with limited capacity the ability to be able to open the doors.

Dementia friendly signage was seen in strategic locations allowing for residents with limited/no capacity to be able to identify specific areas.



Artwork and features aimed at stimulating memory recall and cognitive skills is seen in various corridor and communal space locations.

Lounges, dining and other public areas



During the previous visit Healthwatch Lancashire found the lounge areas underutilised and in need of improvement. However, the recent visit showed that these are now pleasant and inviting, with seating of varying types and heights, placed in a way which encourages social interaction, and some residents were seen to be sitting in these lounge areas.

The Sands has good views out over Morecambe Bay and the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives felt that it would be good to have more of the seating by the lounge windows facing outwards in order to allow for residents to sit and enjoy the views, have some quiet time etc. (**Recommendation 3**).



Each floor has its own dining area, set up in a café style layout which encourages social interaction, and residents were seen chatting and enjoying the views out over the coast. Staff have added bird feeders to the dining room windows and two residents were seen to be enjoying watching the birds, stating that one comes every day at lunchtime and that they enjoy watching it. Overall the dining areas are pleasant, nicely decorated and inviting.

At the time of the visit the café areas were seen to be busy with some residents utilising the space to sit and chat, look out of the windows and have lunch. There were some activities such as colouring books available for residents without the need to ask.

Meals are prepared in the main kitchen and taken to each floor via the lift. The manager explained that The Sands is currently in the process of updating their Care Management System, following which there will be photographs of menu choices for residents who have limited/no capacity to read a written menu.

Each floor has a nursing station where residents and visitors can talk with staff and also allows for staff to be a visible presence and accessible.

The nursing stations were seen to be staffed as and when needed, with staff observed to be busy supporting residents and using the nursing stations as an admin base.

Each floor has a team leader who is easily identified by differing uniform colours. This enables relatives to have a point of contact when wishing to discuss their loved ones care.



Activities calendars were seen to be in place close to the dining area, with good use of visual prompts for those who struggle with written information.

Each floor has its own staff team and residents with differing needs. It was felt by the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that there is good practice, such as 'Resident of the Day' on Derwent, which can be further shared between floors (**recommendation 4**).

Several of the communal spaces would benefit from a more stimulating environment, by ways such as brighter colours, more features for memory recall/cognitive stimulation etc. As each floor is meeting differing needs it is important that residents, relatives and staff are consulted on the communal environment (**Recommendation 5**).

Resident rooms

During the visit the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives had the opportunity to view a vacant bedroom. Resident rooms are a mix of with and without an en-suite bathroom. None of the resident bedrooms have a shower and all residents utilise the communal bathrooms for bathing or showering.

Rooms appears spacious and nicely decorated. Residents are able to personalise their rooms as they so choose. Bedroom doors have a photo of the resident and coded information for in the event of emergency, i.e. DNAR (Do Not Attempt Resuscitation), End of Life etc.



Staff and resident Interactions



The care home appeared sufficiently staffed. Interactions between staff and residents were seen to be pleasant, and residents appeared comfortable approaching staff with requests or for a chat.

The Healthwatch Lancashire representatives observed a lunchtime meal across all floors during the visit. Staff were seen to be supporting residents as required and were heard offering alternative choices. Staff appeared to know residents likes/dislikes and mealtime needs well. Dining rooms were seen to be busy throughout the mealtime, but residents appeared relaxed and comfortable asking for drinks etc.

Throughout the visit staff were seen to be chatting with residents, asking about their day and supporting them where they wished to go.

Staff were seen to be very patient with residents, especially when moving around the care home with poor mobility, and there was a pleasant atmosphere overall.

All staff were very welcoming to the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives.

Resident feedback

Healthwatch Representatives received feedback from nine residents during the visit. Several residents spoken with had advancing dementia/Alzheimer's and therefore had limited or no capacity to discuss their care in detail. Conversations with these residents were kept brief to reduce any potential distress or confusion, and where appropriate reactions such as responding smiles enabled the Healthwatch representatives to gain some level of feedback.

Tell us what you think about the home

Most residents spoken with indicated that they are happy living at The Sands, and those who appeared unable to verbalise their response smiled or nodded to this question.

"It's good, the staff are ok"

"The [bed] rooms are lovely"

"Room is always kept clean, and the laundry is very good, it's usually back the next day"

One resident stated *"we used to have meetings to air our grievances but not anymore"*. Discussion with management identified that they have previously tried to include residents in decision making but there had been a lack of interest. This could however be revisited and re-evaluated to better understand why residents don't wish to be involved. The objective would be to see if there are any barriers which could be addressed in order to ensure that their voice is heard (**Recommendation 6**).

What activities are on offer and do you join in?

Several of the residents who provided feedback felt that there is a need for further activities.

It should be noted that at the time of the visit the activities coordinator had recently left employment with The Sands. A new part-time activities coordinator was undertaking induction at The Sands Meadow and will be moving over to The Sands in the near future. The Sands Care Group are also actively looking to recruit a full-time activities coordinator for The Sands so it is anticipated that further activities will be on offer for residents in the foreseeable future.

"There's nothing to do, people are just sitting there"

"...more things to do, I don't want to be just sitting"

How do you find the care you receive?

Overall feedback from residents around the quality of their care was positive and that individual needs are being met. Some residents were less able to vocalise their views but smiled and nodded in response to this question.

“I think they’re doing very well”

“Sometimes the young ones can be bossy”

“Staff work very hard, ...[staff] used to be properly trained but now you have to tell them what to do”

How do you find the food provided?

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives joined residents in the dining rooms and observed a mealtime.

Residents were seated in a way that encouraged social interaction and some chatting was observed.

Many residents appeared generally satisfied with the food, with staff being heard offering other options throughout the mealtime. However, some residents were less satisfied with meals and raised this as requiring improvement (**Recommendation 7**).

One resident stated *“the food is appalling; they don’t cook it properly... just getting more and more sandwiches and less cooked meals. They need to do something different – it’s boring”*. It’s important to note that at the time of the visit the UK was in the midst of a heatwave so sandwiches may have been an appropriate alternative to a hot meal at that time.

“Food is fine, chips are good but fish and chips are awful”

“By the time you’ve had breakfast it’s nearly lunchtime, and if you’ve had a cooked breakfast you’re not hungry”

“Food is good”

 *They’re very caring* 

Relative feedback



At the time of the visit there were few relative visitors, and those that were visiting were seen to be supporting their loved ones, which the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives did not wish to distract them from. Therefore no relative feedback was gained; it is therefore recommended that The Sands carries out its own method of gathering relative feedback (**Recommendation 8**).

Staff feedback

Healthwatch Lancashire received feedback from seven members of staff during the visit. One external service provider was also engaged with, and to maintain anonymity their feedback has been incorporated into the staff responses.



Do you have enough staff when on duty?

Five people who provided feedback felt that the care home was sufficiently staffed and three felt that there is a need for more staff.

“Not all the time, I sometimes feel overworked. One extra person would help people get up between 8am and 11am”

“Most of the time, yes”

“Maybe not enough staff...”

“Twelve hour shifts can be tiring”

Do you feel supported to carry out a person-centred experience?

All staff who provided feedback felt supported in order to carry out person-centred care, although one person felt that some staff are seen to be *“...rushing and look like need a bit of support”*

“With certain people yes, but not always”

“Management are amazing”

“Very supportive”

Do you feel you have enough training to carry out your duties well?

All seven members of staff felt sufficiently trained in order to carry out their duties and are able to ask for further training if they feel it would be beneficial. Online, in person and shadowing more experienced members of staff were discussed as training methods.

What measures are in place for people with additional communication needs?

Makaton (a way of communicating using signs, symbols and speech which can be personalised to an individual) and BSL (British Sign Language) training, picture cards and apps were discussed by staff as ways used to communicate with residents dependant on individual needs and levels of comprehension. One staff member commented on the use of hearing aids by some residents.

What is your experience of working here?

All eight people who provided feedback to this question were happy working at The Sands overall, and all would recommend to a close relative.

"I am very happy working at The Sands. I wouldn't hesitate recommending this service to a loved one"

"It would be better if we were recognised for our hard work"

"Such a happy environment to work in"

Are there any changes that can be made to improve the resident experience?

The need for more activities was raised by all seven members of staff. As discussed previously The Sands is currently actively seeking to recruit a full-time activities coordinator, and a part-time coordinator is currently undergoing induction. This should ensure that more activities will be available for the residents in the foreseeable future.

"Nice to be able to get people out"

"Manicures etc."

"More baths/showers"

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been formulated based on observations of the environment and feedback gathered from residents, relatives and staff.

1. Add further handrails in corridors in order to help residents move around freely, and consider making handrails a contrasting colour to the walls for quick identification
2. Look at how the communal bathrooms/toilets can be improved in order to improve resident experience of personal care. Residents, relatives and staff should be consulted to ascertain the most appropriate action
3. Consider having some seating in the lounge areas facing outwards so residents can enjoy the views out to Morecambe Bay
4. Look at effective sharing of good practice between floors, such as 'Resident of the Day' on Derwent
5. Look at communal spaces and how these can be utilised more to create a stimulating environment which aids with memory recall and cognitive stimulation. Residents, relatives and staff should be consulted around this
6. Identify why residents aren't wishing to be involved in decision making, and as to whether there are barriers to residents participating in discussions about the home and their care which could be addressed in order to ensure that the resident voice is heard
7. Carry out investigation around food and mealtimes to identify where there can be improvements to the resident experience. This should be done with resident and relative involvement
8. Look at relative feedback and how this can be effectively gathered and listened to

Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
Accessibility:			
Add further handrails in corridors in order to help residents move around freely, and consider making handrails a contrasting colour to the walls for quick identification	TO BE CONSIDERED		
Food/Mealtimes:			
Carry out investigation around food and mealtimes to identify where there can be improvements to the resident experience. This should be done with resident and relative involvement	RESIDENTS ARE ABLE TO MEET WITH THE KITCHEN MANAGER IF THEY HAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE MENU. RESIDENTS WERE ALSO INVOLVED IN THE CHANGE OF MAIN MEAL TO TEATIME RATHER THAN LUNCHTIME AS MANY FOUND THIS TOO MUCH		
Environment:			
Look at how the communal bathrooms/toilets can be improved in order to improve resident experience of personal care. Residents, relatives and staff should be consulted to ascertain the most appropriate action	AS EXPLAINED ON THE DAY, THERE IS A ROLLING PROGRAMME OF WORKS ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE HOME AND THE BATHROOMS HAVE ALREADY BEEN HIGHLIGHTED AS AN AREA TO BE UPDATED BUT THIS NEEDS TO BE CAREFULLY PLANNED AS WHEN BEST TO MINIMISE IMPACT ON RESIDENTS. STAFF AND RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY ASKED WHEN CHOOSING COLOUR SCHEMES ON EACH FLOOR.	BY END OF 2026	
Consider having some seating in the lounge areas facing outwards so residents can enjoy the views out to Morecambe Bay	NOTED BUT MANY OF THE RESIDENTS CHOOSE TO REMAIN IN THE DINING AREAS TO ENJOY THE VIEW AS NOTED IN THE PARAGRAPH THAT FOLLOWED.		
Look at communal spaces and how these can be	STAFF AND RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY ASKED WHEN		

utilised more to create a stimulating environment which aids with memory recall and cognitive stimulation. Residents, relatives and staff should be consulted around this	CHOOSING COLOUR SCHEMES ON EACH FLOOR DURING TIME OF REDECORATION.		
Resident experience:			
Look at effective sharing of good practice between floors, such as Resident of the Day on Derwent	RESIDENT OF THE DAY IS COMPLETED ON EVERY FLOOR, NOT JUST DERWENT. HOWEVER, SOME OF OUR RESIDENTS DO NOT WANT THEIR PHOTOS DISPLAYED WITHIN THE UNIT, EXCEPT FOR OUTSIDE THEIR DOORS AND HAVE NOT CONSENTED TO THIS. DERWENT WILL ONLY DISPLAY THOSE WHO HAVE CONSENTED.		
Identify why residents aren't wishing to be involved in decision making, and as to whether there are barriers to residents participating in discussions about the home and their care which could be addressed in order to ensure that the resident voice is heard	RESIDENT MEETINGS WERE PREVIOUSLY CHAIRED BY ACTIVITY CO-ORDINATOR (LEFT POST) BUT THIS POST HAS ONLY BEEN FILLED RECENTLY. WOULD BE THE SAME HANDFUL OF RESIDENTS WHO ENGAGED WITH THIS EACH TIME DESPITE MEETINGS BEING ADVERTISED AND ALL INVITED.		
Relatives:			
Look at relative feedback and how this can be effectively gathered and listened to	SURVEYS CONTINUE TO BE SENT OUT AND E-RECEPTION OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK WHEN 'CLOCKING OUT'. FAMILIES AND RESIDENTS ARE AWARE OF MY OPEN-DOOR POLICY – I AM HAPPY TO MEET WITH RESIDENTS ON THE UNITS OR IN MY OFFICE AND AM HAPPY TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK VIA CALL OR EMAIL. THE UNITS RECEIVE FEEDBACK FACE TO FACE ALSO AND ANY ISSUES RAISED ARE DEALT WITH IN A TIMELY AND APPROPRIATE MANNER.		



healthwatch

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