

Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre Enter & View Report



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Introduction

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire is the independent champion for people using health and social care services across North Northamptonshire. One of our statutory powers is to undertake Enter and View visits, which enable authorised representatives to visit health and care settings, observe how services are delivered and gather feedback from people using services, their families and staff.

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire undertook an Enter and View visit to Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of residents receiving rehabilitation and intermediate care services. The visit sought to explore how effectively the service supports people during recovery, promotes independence and prepares residents for a safe return home or transition to the next stage of their care journey.

The purpose of this report is to highlight examples of good practice, identify areas for further development and provide an independent account of the experiences shared by residents and staff. Findings are based upon conversations with residents and staff, observations made during the visit and information provided by the service.

Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre provides rehabilitation and recovery-focused care for individuals who no longer require acute hospital treatment but are not yet ready to return home independently. The service plays an important role within the wider health and care system by supporting recovery, reducing hospital stays and helping individuals regain confidence and independence following illness, injury or periods of declining health.

Throughout the Enter and View visit, Healthwatch representatives observed a service that places significant emphasis on rehabilitation, dignity, person-centred care and supporting people to achieve the best possible outcomes. Residents and staff consistently described a shared focus on recovery, independence and preparing individuals for life beyond their stay at the centre.

Notes on Methodology

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire has a statutory responsibility to understand the experiences of people using health and social care services and to ensure that the views of local people help shape service improvement. One of the ways in which Healthwatch achieves this is through the Enter and View programme, which provides authorised representatives with the opportunity to visit health and social care settings, observe services in operation and gather feedback directly from people using those services, their relatives and staff.

This Enter and View visit was conducted under the powers granted to Healthwatch by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013.

Prior to the visit, discussions were held with representatives from Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre to agree arrangements for the visit, understand the nature of the service and identify key areas for exploration. This collaborative approach ensured that the visit could be undertaken effectively whilst minimising disruption to residents, visitors and staff.

The Enter and View was undertaken over two days by a team of six authorised Healthwatch representatives, led by Claire Neilson, Healthwatch North Northamptonshire Service Manager, alongside five trained volunteers. The team represented a range of ages and ethnic backgrounds, including White British, British Asian and Black British volunteers, helping to ensure that observations and engagement with residents and staff reflected a broad range of perspectives and experiences.

The purpose of the visit was to gain an understanding of the experiences of residents receiving rehabilitation and intermediate care services, explore staff perspectives regarding service delivery and identify examples of good practice as well as opportunities for further development. Particular attention was given to resident experience, rehabilitation and recovery, accessibility, communication, wellbeing, discharge planning and the overall quality of care provided.

The Enter and View visit included several methods of information gathering to provide a broad understanding of how the service operates and how it is experienced by those accessing and delivering care. These included:

- Observation of the service environment and facilities.

- Informal discussions with residents.
- Structured interviews with six residents.
- Structured interviews with nine members of staff.
- Discussions with service leaders and managers.
- Observation of interactions between residents and staff.
- Review of information provided by the service.
- Observation notes recorded by authorised Healthwatch representatives throughout the visit.

During the visit, Healthwatch representatives spent time within communal areas and observed day-to-day activity across the service. Observations focused on the physical environment, accessibility, resident engagement, staff interactions and the overall atmosphere within the centre. These observations formed an important part of the evidence gathered and helped provide context to the feedback received through interviews.

Where possible, residents were approached individually and invited to share their experiences voluntarily. Participation was entirely optional and residents were informed that any comments provided would be anonymised and used only for the purposes of the report. Healthwatch representatives sought to ensure that conversations took place in a manner that respected privacy, dignity and individual choice.

Staff interviews were undertaken with individuals representing a range of professional roles and responsibilities within the service. This enabled Healthwatch to explore experiences and perspectives from different parts of the organisation and gain a more comprehensive understanding of service delivery. Staff were encouraged to discuss both strengths and challenges openly and were assured that comments would not be attributed to individuals.

Following the visit, all information gathered was reviewed and analysed using a thematic approach. Feedback from residents, staff interviews and observational evidence was examined to identify recurring themes, common experiences and areas where findings were consistent across multiple sources. This approach helps ensure that conclusions are informed by a range of evidence rather than isolated comments or individual experiences.

The findings contained within this report represent a snapshot of the service at the time of the Enter and View visit. As the visit was undertaken over two days and included structured interviews with six residents, the evidence reflects a relatively small sample and should therefore be considered alongside the observational evidence and discussions with staff and service leaders. In addition, Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre provides a highly specialised rehabilitation and intermediate care service for which there are no directly comparable services locally. Consequently, it was not possible to benchmark performance against a like-for-like provider or established service standard, and the findings are based on the evidence gathered during the visit rather than comparative performance data. Whilst it is not possible to assume that the experiences of all residents or staff will be identical, the evidence gathered provides valuable insight into the strengths of the service and opportunities for future development.



Service Overview

Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre is an intermediate care and rehabilitation facility operated by North Northamptonshire Council. The service provides short-term rehabilitation and recovery support for individuals who no longer require acute hospital treatment, but who are not yet able to return home independently or safely without additional support.

The centre forms an important part of the wider health and social care system across Northamptonshire by helping people transition from hospital back into the community. Through rehabilitation, reablement and multidisciplinary support, the service aims to maximise independence, improve confidence and reduce the likelihood of avoidable hospital readmission.

Residents accessing the service often present with a range of needs following illness, injury, surgery or periods of deteriorating health. Many individuals require additional support to regain strength, mobility, confidence and the practical skills needed to resume daily activities. The service is designed to provide this support within a safe and structured environment where rehabilitation is embedded into everyday care.

A key aim of the service is to promote independence wherever possible. Rather than providing long-term care, the focus is on supporting residents to recover skills, rebuild confidence and achieve rehabilitation goals that will enable them to return home or move to the most appropriate setting for their ongoing needs. This approach reflects national priorities relating to reablement, prevention and person-centred care.

Care is delivered through a multidisciplinary model involving therapists, rehabilitation professionals and support staff who work collaboratively to develop personalised plans for each resident. Rehabilitation programmes are tailored to individual needs and may focus on areas such as mobility, personal care, confidence-building, daily living skills and preparation for independent living.

Throughout the visit, Healthwatch representatives observed a service that appeared committed to supporting residents in a holistic and person-centred manner. Staff consistently spoke about the importance of treating people as individuals and recognising that successful rehabilitation involves more than physical recovery alone. Emotional wellbeing, confidence, social interaction and personal goals were all described as important aspects of the rehabilitation process.

The physical environment appeared designed to support recovery and independence. Residents had access to personal accommodation as well as communal areas where they could interact with others and participate in daily activities. Healthwatch representatives observed a calm and welcoming atmosphere throughout the visit, with residents appearing comfortable within their surroundings and confident in their interactions with staff.

Volunteer observations identified several positive features within the environment, including clean and well-maintained accommodation, accessible communal spaces and facilities that support independent living skills. Staff were frequently observed engaging positively with residents, offering encouragement and assistance whilst promoting independence wherever appropriate.

The service also plays an important role in supporting wider system objectives. By enabling individuals to leave hospital when acute treatment is complete and continue their recovery within a rehabilitation-focused environment, Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre contributes to improved patient flow across the healthcare system and helps ensure hospital beds remain available for those requiring acute care.

Successful rehabilitation often requires close partnership working between healthcare providers, community services, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations. Staff described the importance of these relationships in supporting discharge planning and ensuring residents are able to access ongoing support once they return home. This collaborative approach reflects the service's broader aim of helping people maintain independence and quality of life beyond their stay at the centre.

Overall, Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre provides an important rehabilitation and intermediate care service that supports individuals during a significant stage of recovery. The service is focused on promoting independence, improving outcomes and enabling people to return home with the confidence, skills and support necessary to live as independently as possible. The findings from this Enter and View visit suggest that these principles are reflected throughout both the culture of the service and the experiences of residents receiving care. It was reported that Thackley Green is the only Specialist Care Centre in North Northamptonshire.

Executive Summary

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire undertook an Enter and View visit to Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre on **28 and 29 May 2026** as part of its statutory role to understand the experiences of people using local health and social care services. The visit aimed to explore the experiences of residents receiving rehabilitation and intermediate care, gain insight into staff perspectives and identify both examples of good practice and opportunities for service development.

The Enter and View programme included observations of the care environment, structured interviews with six residents, structured interviews with nine members of staff and discussions with members of the leadership team. Observations made by authorised Healthwatch representatives throughout the two-day visit have also informed the findings contained within this report.

Overall, the findings present a highly positive picture of Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre. Residents consistently described receiving compassionate, respectful and person-centred care from a dedicated and supportive workforce. Staff were frequently praised for their professionalism, kindness and commitment to helping residents achieve their rehabilitation goals. Observations undertaken during the visit supported this feedback, with Healthwatch representatives witnessing positive interactions between staff and residents and a welcoming, calm and well-maintained environment.

A key theme emerging throughout the visit was the service's strong commitment to rehabilitation and promoting independence. Residents spoke positively about the encouragement they received to regain confidence, mobility and everyday living skills, whilst staff consistently described supporting individuals to achieve the highest possible level of independence as the central purpose of the service. This rehabilitation-focused approach was evident throughout both resident and staff feedback and was reflected in the culture observed during the visit.

The physical environment was also viewed positively. Residents described the accommodation as clean, comfortable and conducive to recovery, whilst Healthwatch representatives observed well-maintained facilities that support both rehabilitation and independent living. Social interaction and emotional wellbeing were recognised as important aspects of the rehabilitation journey, with residents valuing opportunities to engage with others and staff recognising the positive contribution this makes to confidence and recovery.

Staff interviews highlighted a committed multidisciplinary workforce that values collaborative working, person-centred care and continuous improvement. Participants demonstrated a strong understanding of residents' individual needs and emphasised the importance of tailoring rehabilitation to support successful discharge and long-term independence. Staff also recognised the important role of community and voluntary sector organisations in supporting residents beyond their stay at the centre.

Whilst the findings were overwhelmingly positive, several opportunities for further development were identified. These include a review of wider system discharge pathways, continuing to strengthen awareness of community support available following discharge, maintaining a focus on accessibility and inclusion and further promoting culturally competent approaches to care. The recommendations contained within this report are intended to build upon the many examples of good practice identified during the visit and support the continued development of the service.

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire would like to thank the residents, staff and leadership team at Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre for their warm welcome, openness and willingness to participate in this Enter and View programme. Their contribution has provided valuable insight into a service that plays an important role in supporting people through rehabilitation, promoting independence and enabling successful transitions back into the community.

Service User Findings

Service User Demographics

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire spoke with six residents during the Enter and View visit.

The residents interviewed were almost entirely over the age of 65, White British, and there was an equal representation of male and female.

Although the sample size was relatively small, the consistency of feedback across interviews provided a strong indication of resident experience and highlighted several recurring themes.

Admission and First Impressions

Residents generally described positive experiences upon arrival at Thackley Green. Participants reported feeling welcomed by staff and supported in settling into the service.

Several residents stated that staff took time to explain the purpose of their stay and what they could expect during their rehabilitation. This helped residents understand their recovery goals and reduced anxiety associated with moving into a new environment.

The positive first impressions described by residents were reflected in observations made during the visit. Staff were observed greeting residents warmly and responding promptly to requests for support.

Rehabilitation and Regaining Independence

The strongest theme identified throughout resident interviews was the positive impact that rehabilitation support was having on recovery and independence.

Residents frequently described improvements in confidence, mobility and their ability to undertake daily activities. Many spoke positively about the encouragement provided by staff and the focus placed on helping them regain independence rather than creating dependency.

Several residents explained that they felt more confident about returning home as a result of the support they had received. Others described how therapy and rehabilitation activities had helped them achieve goals that they initially felt would be difficult following illness or hospital admission.

Volunteer observations reinforced these findings. Healthwatch representatives observed facilities and resources specifically designed to support rehabilitation and independent living, reflecting the service's clear focus on recovery and reablement.

The findings suggest that residents understand the purpose of the service and recognise the progress they are making during their stay.

Feeling Safe, Supported and Respected

Residents consistently reported feeling safe within the service and spoke positively about the care they received.

Staff were frequently described as kind, patient and approachable. Several residents commented on the willingness of staff to provide reassurance and emotional support alongside physical care.

Healthwatch representatives observed numerous positive interactions throughout the visit. Staff appeared familiar with residents' needs and preferences and communicated respectfully and professionally.

Many residents described feeling treated as individuals and felt their dignity was respected at all times. This person-centred approach was evident both in resident feedback and through direct observation.

Environment and Accommodation

Feedback regarding the physical environment was overwhelmingly positive.

Residents described their accommodation as clean, comfortable and conducive to recovery. Several participants expressed appreciation for having personal space whilst also having opportunities to engage with others when desired.

During the visit, Healthwatch representatives observed a well-maintained environment that appeared designed to support both independence and wellbeing. Residents' rooms were observed to be personalised and appropriately equipped, whilst communal areas appeared welcoming and accessible.

The overall environment contributed positively to residents' experiences and supported the service's rehabilitation-focused approach.

Social Interaction and Wellbeing

Residents spoke positively about opportunities to socialise and interact with others during their stay.

For some individuals, social interaction formed an important part of their recovery journey. Residents described enjoying conversations with fellow residents and valued opportunities to spend time in communal areas.

Staff also recognised the importance of social wellbeing and described efforts to ensure residents remain connected and engaged throughout their rehabilitation.

The findings suggest that social interaction is an important component of recovery and contributes positively to overall resident wellbeing.

Overall Resident Feedback

Overall feedback from residents was extremely positive.

Residents consistently described high levels of satisfaction with the care and support provided. Many expressed gratitude for the assistance they had received and felt the service had played a significant role in supporting their recovery.

The evidence gathered indicates that residents value the service and recognise the positive impact it has on helping them regain confidence, independence and quality of life.



Staff Findings

Staff Demographics

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire interviewed nine members of staff representing a range of clinical and support roles. The interview group was predominantly female, with six women and three men participating. Staff reflected a range of backgrounds, with the majority identifying as White British (five participants). Two participants identified as White European, one as White Other, and ethnicity was not recorded for one member of staff.

The workforce interviewed was largely made up of staff aged between 26 and 40 years, representing five participants. One participant was aged between 41 and 64 years, while age information was not recorded for three staff members.

Participants brought a variety of professional experiences and perspectives, providing insight into both day-to-day service delivery and the wider role of the centre within the health and care system. The diversity of roles represented enabled Healthwatch to explore rehabilitation, discharge planning, resident wellbeing and operational challenges from multiple viewpoints.

Supporting Recovery and Independence

Staff consistently identified rehabilitation and promoting independence as the central purpose of the service.

Participants described a strong commitment to helping residents achieve realistic goals and maximise their independence. Staff recognised that successful rehabilitation extends beyond physical recovery and often involves rebuilding confidence, resilience and self-belief.

Many interviewees spoke passionately about the positive outcomes achieved by residents and the satisfaction associated with supporting people to return home safely.

Multidisciplinary Working

A recurring theme throughout staff interviews was the value of multidisciplinary working.

Staff described effective collaboration between therapists and wider healthcare professionals including regular visits by district nurses and a local GP. Participants felt this approach enabled more holistic care planning and supported better outcomes for residents.

The importance of communication between professionals was highlighted repeatedly, particularly in relation to rehabilitation planning and discharge preparation.

Staff felt that strong teamwork contributed significantly to the quality of care delivered within the service.

Resident-Centred Care

Staff consistently demonstrated a commitment to person-centred care.

Participants emphasised the importance of understanding residents as individuals and adapting care to meet their specific needs, preferences and goals.

Interviewees recognised that every resident's rehabilitation journey is different and highlighted the importance of maintaining flexibility in care planning and delivery.

This approach was evident throughout the visit and aligned closely with the experiences described by residents.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Staff demonstrated awareness of the importance of providing inclusive and accessible care.

Participants discussed supporting residents with differing communication needs, cultural backgrounds and health conditions. Staff recognised the value of continuing to develop their understanding of diversity and inclusion to ensure all residents receive equitable care.

Several participants highlighted the importance of recognising individual preferences and ensuring care is delivered in a way that respects residents' identities, beliefs and experiences.

Hospital discharge processes and impact on rehabilitation

It was consistently noted during the staff interviews that some patients were discharged from hospital, particularly from Kettering General Hospital, before they were medically fit to fully benefit from rehabilitation at Thackley Green. Staff described residents arriving with ongoing clinical needs, unresolved medication issues or levels of frailty and complexity that exceeded the intended remit of the service, making rehabilitation more challenging and, in some cases, resulting in deterioration or readmission.

Staff also raised concerns that referral information did not always accurately reflect residents' needs, making rehabilitation planning more difficult.

A recurring theme was the interaction between early hospital discharge and the fixed six-week Discharge to Assess funding model. Staff explained that when residents arrive before they are medically ready to engage in rehabilitation, part of the funded rehabilitation period can be spent recovering from their acute illness rather than progressing rehabilitation goals. This may reduce the time available to achieve meaningful rehabilitation outcomes, particularly for people with complex needs.

Staff also highlighted that delays outside the resident's control, such as housing adaptations, social care arrangements or funding decisions, can extend stays

beyond the six-week funded period, potentially resulting in residents becoming liable for care charges.

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire considers this an important issue of equity. Where rehabilitation time is reduced because people are discharged before they are medically ready, or where onward discharge is delayed by wider system processes, residents may face financial consequences for circumstances beyond their control. Whilst recognising the pressures across the discharge pathway, commissioners and system partners may wish to review whether current arrangements consistently deliver fair and equitable outcomes for residents.

Community Support and Discharge from Service Planning

Staff recognised that successful rehabilitation extends beyond discharge from the service.

Participants highlighted the importance of ensuring residents are aware of available support within their communities and spoke positively about partnership working with external organisations and services.

There was a clear understanding that ongoing community support can play a vital role in maintaining independence and preventing future health crises.

Staff felt that strengthening awareness of community resources could further support residents as they transition back to independent living.

Workforce Culture

Staff described a positive workplace culture characterised by teamwork, mutual support and a shared commitment to resident wellbeing.

Participants generally spoke positively about working within the service and highlighted the supportive relationships that exist between colleagues.

The findings suggest that staff feel invested in the service and remain motivated by the positive outcomes achieved by residents.

Implications & Recommendations

Implications

The findings from this Enter and View programme present a highly positive picture of Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre and demonstrate the important role the service plays in supporting people through recovery and rehabilitation. Feedback from residents and staff consistently highlighted a service that is caring, supportive and focused on helping individuals regain confidence and independence following illness, injury or hospital admission.

A key implication arising from the findings is the value of rehabilitation-focused care that places residents at the centre of their recovery journey. Residents frequently described improvements in their mobility, confidence and ability to undertake everyday activities, whilst staff consistently emphasised the importance of supporting people to achieve their personal goals and maximise independence. The evidence suggests that the service has established a strong culture of reablement, enabling residents to take an active role in their recovery and preparation for returning home.

The findings also highlight the importance of person-centred care in supporting positive experiences and outcomes. Residents spoke positively about the relationships they had developed with staff and consistently described feeling respected, listened to and treated with dignity. Healthwatch representatives observed numerous examples of compassionate interactions throughout the visit, reinforcing the positive feedback provided during interviews. These findings suggest that the quality of relationships between staff and residents plays a significant role in both resident wellbeing and successful rehabilitation.

Social wellbeing emerged as another important theme. Residents valued opportunities to interact with others and staff recognised the positive impact that social engagement can have on recovery. For many individuals, periods of illness or hospitalisation can lead to reduced social contact and increased risk of isolation. The findings suggest that maintaining opportunities for social interaction during rehabilitation contributes positively to both emotional wellbeing and confidence.

Accessibility and inclusion also remain important considerations. Staff demonstrated awareness of the diverse needs of residents and recognised the importance of delivering care that is responsive to individual circumstances, communication needs and cultural backgrounds. As the population accessing rehabilitation services becomes increasingly diverse, continued attention to accessibility, communication and culturally competent care will help ensure all residents can access support equitably.

The findings additionally highlight the importance of effective discharge planning and community support. Staff recognised that successful rehabilitation does not end when a resident leaves the service. Ongoing support from healthcare, voluntary and community organisations can play a crucial role in helping individuals maintain independence and avoid future deterioration. Strengthening awareness of available community resources may therefore contribute positively to long-term outcomes following discharge.

Overall, the evidence gathered suggests that Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre is delivering a service that is highly valued by residents and delivered by a committed workforce. The opportunities identified within this report are intended to build upon existing strengths and support continued development of the service.

Recommendations

The recommendations below have been developed from the themes identified through resident interviews, staff interviews and observations undertaken during the Enter and View visit.

Rehabilitation and Independence

Hospital Discharge, Rehabilitation Pathways and Equity of Access

- Healthwatch North Northamptonshire recommends that commissioners and system partners undertake a whole-system review of the discharge and rehabilitation pathway to ensure residents are transferred to intermediate care only when they are clinically ready to benefit from rehabilitation. This should include reviewing discharge criteria, the quality and completeness of referral information, and the interaction between hospital discharge processes and the six-week Discharge to Assess funding model. Consideration should also be given to how delays outside residents' control, such as housing, social care or funding decisions, affect rehabilitation outcomes and subsequent care charges, with the aim of ensuring that current arrangements deliver fair, equitable and person-centred outcomes.

Continue to promote and strengthen the service's rehabilitation and independence-focused approach.

- Residents consistently spoke positively about the support they received to regain confidence, mobility and daily living skills. Maintaining a strong focus on reablement will continue to support positive outcomes and successful discharge.

Continue to involve residents in setting and reviewing their rehabilitation goals.

- Encouraging residents to actively participate in their recovery planning can help strengthen motivation, confidence and ownership of rehabilitation outcomes.

Community Support and Discharge Planning

Strengthen awareness of community, voluntary and social sector services available following discharge.

- Staff recognised the value of community support in helping residents maintain independence after leaving the service. Ensuring residents are aware of available resources may help reduce isolation and support longer-term wellbeing.

Explore opportunities to provide residents with clear and accessible information regarding local support networks prior to discharge.

- Providing information about community groups, wellbeing services and practical support may assist residents in maintaining progress achieved during rehabilitation.

Social Wellbeing

Continue to promote opportunities for social interaction and engagement throughout residents' stays.

- Residents highlighted the importance of social contact and positive relationships during recovery. Supporting opportunities for engagement may contribute positively to wellbeing and confidence.

Explore opportunities to strengthen links with befriending, community participation and wellbeing services.

- Some residents may be at increased risk of social isolation following discharge. Early awareness of available support may help improve longer-term outcomes.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Continue to develop culturally competent and inclusive approaches to care.

- Staff demonstrated awareness of the importance of delivering care that reflects individual needs, backgrounds and preferences. Ongoing learning and development will help ensure care remains equitable and person-centred.

Review the availability and visibility of interpretation services and accessible information resources.

- Ensuring information is available in formats that meet diverse communication needs will support equitable access and understanding for all residents.

Maintain focus on accessibility for residents with sensory impairments, communication difficulties or additional support needs.

- Continued attention to accessibility will help ensure all residents can engage fully with rehabilitation activities and care planning.

Resident Experience

Continue to gather and review resident feedback to inform service development.

- The positive experiences reported during this Enter and View programme provide valuable insight into what residents value most about the service. Ongoing engagement will help ensure improvements continue to reflect resident priorities.

Continue to monitor feedback relating to personal care and support services to ensure consistently positive experiences.

- Whilst feedback was overwhelmingly positive, regular review will help maintain high standards of care and identify opportunities for further improvement.

Workforce and Service Development

Continue supporting multidisciplinary working and collaborative approaches to care delivery.

- Staff consistently highlighted the value of teamwork in supporting rehabilitation and positive outcomes. Maintaining strong multidisciplinary relationships will remain important as service demands evolve.

Continue to support staff learning and development in areas relating to accessibility, communication and person-centred care.

- Investment in workforce development will help ensure staff remain equipped to meet the changing needs of residents and continue delivering high-quality rehabilitation services.

Wider System Review of the Hospital Discharge Pathway

- The findings from this Enter and View suggest that several of the issues identified extend beyond Thackley Green and are likely to reflect wider challenges across the hospital discharge and intermediate care pathway. Healthwatch therefore recommends a broader programme of Enter and View activity to better understand residents' experiences at each stage of the discharge process.

As a next step, Healthwatch North Northamptonshire will work with commissioners and system partners to undertake Enter and View visits within Kettering General Hospital, focusing on frailty and discharge wards, to explore

discharge planning, clinical readiness for transfer, communication with patients and families, and the quality of information shared with receiving services.

- In addition, an Enter and View should be undertaken at Spinney Hill to understand how discharge and rehabilitation pathways operate across different intermediate care settings and to identify examples of good practice and opportunities for improvement.

Taken together, these visits would provide a whole-system view of the discharge pathway, enabling commissioners, acute providers, Adult Social Care and community services to identify where improvements can be made to ensure residents are transferred at the right time, receive seamless rehabilitation, and experience safe, equitable and person-centred care throughout their journey. This would allow us to compare the effectiveness of rehabilitation resources in reducing demand on health and social care and the cost and effectiveness of this provision.

Summary

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire undertook an Enter and View visit to Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of residents receiving rehabilitation and intermediate care services, as well as the perspectives of staff responsible for delivering care. Through resident interviews, staff interviews and observations made throughout the visit, the programme sought to explore how effectively the service supports people during recovery, promotes independence and prepares residents for a successful return home or onward stage of their care journey.

Overall, the findings from this Enter and View programme present a highly positive picture of a service that is valued by residents and delivered by a committed and compassionate workforce. Residents consistently described positive experiences of care and spoke warmly about the support they received during their stay. Staff were frequently praised for their kindness, professionalism and willingness to provide both practical and emotional support throughout the rehabilitation process.

A key theme identified throughout the visit was the service's strong focus on rehabilitation and promoting independence. Residents described how the support they received had helped them regain confidence, improve mobility and rebuild the skills needed to return home safely. Many spoke positively about the encouragement provided by staff and the emphasis placed on helping individuals achieve their own personal goals. These findings were reinforced by staff interviews, which consistently highlighted rehabilitation, reablement and independence as central to the purpose of the service.

Healthwatch representatives observed a welcoming and supportive environment throughout the visit. Residents appeared comfortable within their surroundings and positive interactions between residents and staff were observed on numerous occasions. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of residents' needs and were seen providing care in a manner that promoted dignity, respect and person-centred support. The atmosphere within the service was calm and friendly, reflecting the positive experiences shared during interviews.

The physical environment was also viewed positively. Residents spoke favourably about their accommodation and the overall standard of the facilities available to them. Observations undertaken during the visit identified clean and well-maintained surroundings, communal spaces that encouraged social interaction and facilities designed to support recovery and independent living. The environment appeared to contribute positively to both resident wellbeing and rehabilitation outcomes.

Another important theme emerging from the findings was the value of social interaction and emotional wellbeing. Residents highlighted the benefits of spending time with others during their stay and staff recognised the role that social engagement can play in supporting recovery and confidence-building. For many individuals, periods of illness or hospitalisation can result in reduced

social contact and increased feelings of isolation. The opportunities available within the service to engage with staff and fellow residents were therefore viewed as an important aspect of the overall care experience.

Staff interviews revealed a workforce that is committed to providing high-quality care and supporting residents to achieve positive outcomes. Participants described a collaborative and supportive working environment, with multidisciplinary teamwork viewed as a key strength of the service. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of the challenges residents may face during recovery and consistently emphasised the importance of tailoring support to individual needs and circumstances.

The findings also highlighted the importance of effective discharge planning and ongoing community support. Staff recognised that rehabilitation does not end when a resident leaves the service and spoke positively about the role of community organisations, healthcare providers and support networks in helping individuals maintain independence following discharge. Ensuring residents are aware of available support and services within their local communities may further strengthen long-term outcomes and help reduce the risk of future health crises or hospital admissions.

Whilst the Enter and View programme identified many examples of good practice; opportunities remain to build upon existing strengths. Areas for ongoing consideration include wider system review of the hospital discharge pathway, continuing to promote awareness of community support services, maintaining a focus on accessibility and inclusion and ensuring that care remains responsive to the diverse needs of residents. The recommendations outlined within this report are intended to support continuous improvement whilst recognising the many positive aspects of the service already identified through the visit.

Overall, Healthwatch North Northamptonshire found Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre to be a caring, welcoming and rehabilitation-focused service that plays a valuable role within the wider health and care system. The service demonstrates a clear commitment to helping people regain confidence, maximise independence and achieve the best possible outcomes following illness or hospital admission. Residents spoke positively about their experiences; staff demonstrated a strong commitment to person-centred care and observations undertaken during the visit supported the positive feedback received.

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire would like to thank the residents, staff and leadership team at Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre for their openness, cooperation and willingness to contribute to this Enter and View programme. Their participation has provided valuable insight into the strengths of the service and will help support ongoing learning, development and the continued delivery of high-quality rehabilitation and intermediate care services for local people.

Service Response

Following receipt of the draft report, Thackley Green Specialist Care Centre was invited to review the report for factual accuracy and provide a response. The response below has been provided by the service and is reproduced in full.

Having reviewed the report, I would like to express our appreciation for the balanced and thoughtful reflection of the service. We are particularly pleased that the report recognises the dedication of our staff team, the positive experiences shared by residents, and the strong rehabilitation-focused culture that underpins the work undertaken at Thackley Green.

The report accurately captures our commitment to supporting people to regain confidence, maximise independence and achieve the best possible outcomes following illness or hospital admission. It is encouraging to see the positive feedback regarding the quality of care, the person-centred approach of our staff, and the welcoming environment within the centre.

We also welcome the recommendations and observations regarding wider system discharge pathways and community support, which reflect challenges that extend beyond our service and are important considerations for the wider health and social care system.

On behalf of the entire Thackley Green team, thank you for your positive engagement, constructive feedback and recognition of the hard work and commitment demonstrated by colleagues across the service. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with Healthwatch North Northamptonshire to support ongoing service improvement and positive outcomes for residents.



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