



**healthwatch**

Blackburn with Darwen

**The Franciscan Convent**

**Enter and View report.**

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

**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 residents who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

Contact Details:

26 East Park Rd  
Blackburn  
BB1 8BB

Staff met during our visit:

Cheryl Weall (Manager)

Date and time of our visit:

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 10.30am

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen  
Representatives

Michele Chapman (lead)  
Michelle Livesey (volunteer)



## Introduction

This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services and obtain the view of those people using the services. The representatives observe and speak to residents in communal areas only.

This visit was arranged as part of Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen's Enter and View programme. The aim is to observe services, consider how services may be improved and disseminate good practice. The team of trained Enter and View authorised representatives record their observations along with feedback from residents, staff and, where possible, residents' families or friends.

A report is sent to the manager of the facility for validation of the facts. Any response from the manager is included with the final version of the report which is published on the Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen website at [www.healthwatchblackburnwithdarwen.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchblackburnwithdarwen.co.uk)

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to thank Cheryl Weall together with staff, residents, and visitors, for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

## General Information

The Franciscan Convent is privately maintained by the Franciscan Missionaries with places for 13 residents requiring residential care. The care home is female only. There were 6 vacancies at the time of our visit. The person in charge is Cheryl Weall.

Information obtained from carehome.co.uk states that the home provides care for women from the ages of 60 who are affected by old age.

## Methodology

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 at 10.30am.

We spoke to 2 residents, 4 staff and 1 relative, where possible within the constraints of the home routine, people's willingness, and ability to engage and access to people in public areas. Discussion was structured around four themes (Environment, Care, Nutrition and Activities) designed to gather information concerning residents overall experience of living at the home.

The team also recorded their own observations of the environment and facilities.

Our role at Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen is to gather the views of service users, especially those that are hard to reach and seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service regardless of their perceived ability to be able to do so. It is not our role to censor feedback from respondents.

We use templates to assess the environment of a facility and gather information from respondents, to ensure that reports are compiled in a fair and comparative manner.

Observations were rated on Red, Amber, Green scale as follows:

**Green** = Based on our observations and the responses gathered we would consider the experience of this home to be good.

**Amber** = Based on our observations and the responses gathered we consider the experience of this home to be need of some improvements.

**Red** = Based on our observations and the responses gathered we would consider the experience of this home to be in need of significant improvement.

## Summary:

The Franciscan Convent represents a true community environment with members of the order and the wider community living together in a very caring environment.

The grounds and the building are spacious, well maintained and homely with opportunities for faith-based activity if chosen. Both staff and residents (who were not sisters) told us that they felt comfortable in the environment *“I am not religious at all, but this does not matter, there is no pressure to be involved.”*

The staff to resident ratio is very favourable and staff were generally long serving, facilitating a high level of person-centred provision. This was perhaps captured best by a relative who told us. *“The best thing is staff spend time with her even if no actual care needs at the time, I don’t think she would get that anywhere else no matter how much you pay.”*

Staff told us that they felt well supported and trained and that the Manager was both *“hands on”* and flexible in her approach.

Representatives felt that the staff at the convent prioritized maintaining the independence of residents, encouraging visitors and making them feel welcome. A relative told us that he can see his Mum *“whenever I want to.”*

Residents told us that they were consulted about their living environment for example about menus. Similarly, there were opportunities for trips out and other activities should they be desired. One resident told us *“I would not want to have to move from here.”*

Indeed, representatives recorded overwhelmingly positive comments from all the respondents at the Franciscan convent.

Based on the criteria, the Enter and View Representatives gave the home an overall score of:

**Green**

## Enter and View observations

### Pre-visit and location

Prior to our visit to the Franciscan Convent, we looked for public information available online.

We were able to access the core details of the provision from carehome.co.uk. However, as the provision is primarily for retired sisters of the Franciscan order it was anticipated that this may not be prominent on public platforms or a website.

The facility is located on East Park Road directly across from a gateway to Corporation Park.

East Park Road is accessed from the main A677 Preston New Road meaning facilities shops and public transport are within a reasonable distance. However, the terrain would be difficult for some pedestrians to navigate due to the steep incline from the main road.

The convent was clearly signposted on the back gate at Shear Bank Road and the front gate on East Park Road. However, one representative felt the convent was difficult to find from the front gate, as the sign was quite small in relation to the size of the curtilage.

### Green Amber

#### The external environment

The building is set in extensive and well-maintained grounds on a corner plot. The mature landscaping is a woodland style popular at the turn of the century and is typified by a large tree canopy, woodland glades and classical style statues.

The grounds provide privacy and attractive views from inside the building, and we saw bench seating to the front aspect. Later, the Manager showed us a large flat lawned area to the side of the building. She told us that this was used for fetes, social occasions and for outside seating and dining during the summer months.

The drive to the building leads to a sizeable parking area covering the front, side, and rear of the building. To the rear is a door serviced by a disabled access ramp. There is no dedicated disabled parking space, but this is mitigated by the increased opportunities for parking and the position of the ramp at the rear of the building.

The front door is represented by a secured centrally placed entrance. The Manager answered the door promptly.

### Green

## The internal environment/reception -first impressions

Prior to the main hallway we observed that a tiled porch contained hand gel and PPE, (which we donned). The Manager was very welcoming, she introduced herself and asked for proof of a negative lateral flow test taken that day.

The main hallway was of grand proportions with high ceilings and mouldings as to be expected of a building of the age and size of the convent. The Manager told us that the building had originally been built by a local industrialist and had had several uses including as a children's home before being becoming a retirement home for the Franciscan sisters.

The environment presented as very clean with no discernible odour, it seemed to be quiet yet relaxed, and we did not hear a TV or radio playing (although we did hear care staff chatting to each other.)

Statutory notices were displayed as required and we signed into the visitor book later in our visit.

We noted that the Manager had taken the time to copy and display our poster throughout the home. Similarly, she made herself available to guide us through the facility, and kindly brought us a tea tray later in the visit.

The Manager also told us that she had rung several of the relatives to encourage them to come and give feed back to the team.

## Green

### The observation of corridors public toilets and bathrooms

All the corridors we observed were clutter free and well lit. We did not see colour coded handrails and we felt that the carpeting was "busy" and not particularly dementia friendly (However representatives acknowledge that the Franciscan Convent is not a dementia specific home.)

Bedroom doors along corridors were numbered and some had been personalised with pictures. Likewise, public rooms were indicated by dementia friendly signage being colour coded, pictorial and written.

The corridors were decorated in muted tones and made interesting with Christian artwork and posters. We observed that the staff noticeboard on the first-floor displayed photographs of the staff, their name and their position. Similarly, all the staff we met were clearly identifiable by uniform.

Activity options were displayed on one poster offering knitting, a gardening club, art and crafts and outings and visits. A coffee morning was scheduled for each morning after Mass and residents, sisters and visitors were invited to attend.

On the afternoon of our visit the hairdresser was due to attend, however one resident preferred to travel to Blackburn to have her hair done and this was facilitated by the staff.

With many of the bedrooms having en-suite facilities representatives considered that the number of public bathrooms were more than adequate. All the bathrooms we observed were clean and well stocked with soap, toilet paper and towels. We saw that adapted bathing was provided alongside raised toilet seats and grab rails however, these were not colour coded.

We noted the provision of a lift on the ground floor of the building

## Green

### The lounges, dining area and other public areas

The Franciscan convent is a large building with a variety of provision in terms of public rooms.

Of particular importance to many residents is the chapel (at the side of the building) which is used daily. The Manager told us that during Covid daily mass had been broadcast via YouTube with a priest in personal attendance more recently. (Similarly, the mass was available on speakers to the resident bedrooms.) The chapel is light and spacious with light wood detailing and lots of greenery. We saw that music was large part of the celebration with a piano and guitars in evidence.

The lounge areas were situated to the front of the building. Both lounges were large with high ceilings, cornicing and moulding and beautiful stained glass with windows overlooking the front aspect. One lounge was more formal than the other and hosted another piano. The Manager told us that this lounge was often used for informal meetings/gatherings.

The second lounge had a more homely environment, we saw a TV, books and daily newspapers on offer. There was a variety of comfortable seating available, sofas and armchairs being complemented by soft furnishings. The second lounge was very quiet when we visited with a resident sat by the window reading the newspapers. She was happy to chat to us and told us that the majority of sisters returned to their rooms after morning mass.

The convent continues to act as a retreat facility for sisters of the order and a separate quiet dining room is provided for that purpose. This was simply furnished with dark wood chairs and tables and overlooked the side of the property.

The main dining room was larger and bright and welcoming. A central table displayed a “bulletin” of the day which included daily mass, the hairdresser visit, a welcome to the Healthwatch team and a notification of the festival of Eid.

Tables seated 4 and were spaciouly set apart. Tablecloths, placemats and napkins supplemented the cutlery setting alongside a drinking glass and decorative flowers to the centre of the table.

The food at the facility is made “in house” and the daily menu was posted on a notice board in the dining room. Lunch was 3 courses with homemade soup for starter followed by sausages in gravy or braised steak with vegetables and mashed

or boiled potatoes. The desserts offered were baked egg custard, fruit cocktail or yoghurt.

The Manager told us later that the kitchen was very flexible and would also prepare a choice of food on request.

## Green

### Observations of resident and staff interactions

The Manager explained that the convent housed sisters who lived independently alongside those that needed care and support and that care was also open to older females in the wider community. At the time of our visit there were 6 care vacancies, the Manager explained that this was to ensure capacity to support respite care and admissions from sisters from all over the UK.

Representatives observed high levels of respect between staff and residents with staff referring to retired sisters by that title. On the day of our visit the staff ratio was high with approximately 2 staff per resident. The environment was relaxed and friendly with residents and long serving staff forming a true community. Residents who were part of the community but not of the religious order told us they felt comfortable in the home and not obliged to attend to religious functions with the sisters. One resident told us that she only attended Mass on a Sunday.

There was a stable staff team, many of whom were long serving, one staff member reported working at the convent for 30 years. It was clear that this level of familiarity and the high staff ratio supported person centred provision. Residents and a relative told us that the high staff ratio ensured accompanied outside visits were always available. The residents and told us that staff took the trouble to buy their favourite biscuits and magazines.

A relative told us *"It's as homely as it can be. The best thing is staff spend time with her even if there are no actual care needs at the time" "I don't think she would get that anywhere else no matter how much you pay"*

The residents and staff were very welcoming inviting us to join them for lunch. They told us that they were part of the meal planning and consulted about changes to the home.

One call bell was heard during our visit, and this was responded to quickly.

## Green

### The Lunchtime Experience

On this occasion, representatives chose to focus on the experience of residents during the lunchtime. We evaluated the lunchtime as a social experience, the

quantity and quality of the food, the interaction between staff and residents, and the dignity afforded residents during this period.

8 of the residents chose to eat in the dining room there was a mixture of sisters and secular residents all chatting away making a very sociable atmosphere. (Some residents chose to remain in their bedroom to eat.)

The staff contributed to this pleasant atmosphere, both they and the residents welcoming us to join them for lunch. Most residents appeared to be ambulatory and not in need of support or assistance during the mealtime leaving the staff free to focus on table duties.

We observed 2 staff members serving the meal, whilst the chef was on hand in the kitchen. Residents were able to select from the menu displayed. The selection of food was presented to the residents who could then choose the quantity they would like. The food when served looked appetising and of appropriate temperature. Hydration was always on hand.

Residents were keen to draw our representative into the experience. There was a pleasant hum of conversation throughout the meal with much enthusiasm being shown for the upcoming Jubilee celebrations.

The desserts were offered at the conclusion of the main course, and we observed that a yoghurt was brought out for a resident without asking (which indicated a knowledge of residents preferences.)

The lunchtime experience was leisurely and pleasant with the staff being an important part of that atmosphere.

### Additional information

- A representative was able to speak to a district nurse as she left the home, and she was very complimentary about the quality of care offered. The nurse told us that the staff were vigilant and thorough in terms of health issues and how she felt confident that care was delivered well. The nurse told us that she was always made welcome at the home and felt comfortable in the environment.
- The Manager told us that an annex used for independent living can also accommodate visitors and relatives who need to stay for residents receiving end of life care.
- Representatives noted that a computer workstation was available to residents.

## Feedback from residents

A resident explained that although she missed her independence the staff respect her wishes and individual choices. They accept that she prefers to spend her day in her room and have her meals there. She also requests her visits with her family and friends in the smaller sitting room and this is accommodated. This resident

told us that she wasn't particularly religious and that secular residents were not put under any pressure or expectation to attend religious occasions.

## Environment

*"I have my own room and am very comfortable. The care is excellent".*

*"I have lived here 26 years and recently had to move here from the annex because I keep falling. I prefer to be independent and miss being in the annex."*

*"I can have a cup of tea at any time. I always have water or juice available in my room"*

## Activities

*"I watch the news on television."*

*"I play Rumikub in the afternoons with another resident".*

*"I like to sit in here (sitting room) to read the paper. We get a paper daily and the Evening Telegraph."*

*"I do have family and have been able to visit them in the past but since Covid we cannot travel abroad. I keep in touch with my niece via telephone regularly".*

*"Staff take me into town, and I get my hair done"*

*"Staff painted my nails this morning"*

*"I know of activities available, and I can choose if I participate. I have been to a bingo session recently and been on an outing to Oswaldtwistle Mills. (both of which she enjoyed).*

*"I like knitting, but I have lost patience with it. I would love to be able to spend time knitting again."*

## Care

*"I recently wanted to go into town and have previously gone on my own. The staff were concerned about this so it was arranged I could go, and a carer came with me. I really appreciate being able to do this and do my own shopping."*

*"I can choose where I spend my time, in my room or in sitting rooms. There is a bell to call for help as needed."*

*"I can have a cup of tea at any time. I always have water or juice available in my room"*

*"If I need help, I can ring for staff at any time. I never have to wait long."*

*"I would not want to have to move from here."*

## Food

*“I was a cook for 26 years. I can no longer help in the kitchen which is frustrating. We have a good cook, and the meals are good. We can choose what we have to eat. We all can contribute to menu planning as we are asked for list of ideas of foods for our menu”.*

*“The food is excellent. I especially like the corned beef hash. I don’t have soup or the pudding as 3 courses is too much”.*

## **Relatives and friends’ views**

A representative spent some time speaking to a relative who wanted us to know how happy his Mum was at the care home. He told the representative that he had arranged his visit especially to speak to the Enter and View team and record his appreciation for the care offered his Mum.

He explained that his Mum has needed care and support after a fall and that she had previously been at another care home, where he had had serious concerns.

The relative described how welcoming and friendly the environment at the convent was and how he was always offered tea. He said all the staff knew his Mum well and his Mum knew all their names.

Likewise, he can arrive at the home and take his Mum out *“whenever I want to”* and how they enjoy spending time together in the garden. The relative also told us that during a recent bereavement 2 carers had facilitated taking his Mum to a funeral (out of town). No charge was made for this, and the carers were pleased to help.

He concluded by telling the representative that he felt he *“could not find anywhere better.”*

### **How do you feel generally about the service?**

*“It is always spotlessly clean, and the staff are so friendly”*

*“The staff are excellent and like friends to mum and family”*

### **Do you think that you are kept informed about your relative e.g. Health and future care plans?**

*“Staff keep me informed of anything that’s happening, for example when mum was moved to another room” (this was due to Mum’s tv disturbing another resident)*

*“If I try to contact mum and there is no reply, I don’t worry I know she will be asleep as staff would contact me if anything was wrong.”*

### **Would you recommend this service to others?**

*“It’s as homely as it can be. The best thing is staff spend time with her even if no actual care needs at the time” “I don’t think she would get that anywhere else no matter how much you pay”*

## Staff views

Staff told us that they felt well supported in terms of management, flexibility and training. Carers were generally long serving and clearly enjoyed their jobs. They told us that the Manager was hands on and *“not just office based”*

Staff also told us that they enjoyed the tranquil environment of the convent and the opportunities to offer person centered care that the high staff ratio enabled. The staff who responded to us told us that they were not particularly religious, and the environment did not demand that they be. *“I am not religious at all, but this does not matter there is no pressure to be involved”*

**Do you have enough staff when on duty to allow you to deliver person centred care?**

*“We have plenty of time to spend with residents. Prior to Covid we could get out and about with the residents planting in the garden and such. We are picking this up again post Covid.”*

*“We are well staffed we have 2 staff on, the Manager and the cleaner plus the cook. We have a maintenance man too.”*

*“We are staffed to a degree that we can spend one to one time with the residents”.*

**How does the organisation support you in your work?**

*“The Manager is very flexible and accommodating around my Uni training to be a nurse. She is also flexible around my family commitments.”*

*“Progression is available to those that want it, and we have lots of mandatory training. The training is face to face and online”.*

*“There is flexibility around family commitments.”*

**How do you deliver care to diverse groups such as LGBTQ +**

*“We have Equality and Diversity training and I have experience with LGBTQ+ residents from another home.”*

*Yes, we had a South Asian resident for many years, and we were able to cater for her in terms of cultural needs food etc”.*

Are you aware of residents' individual preferences? Where do you find this information?

*"From the care plans however the majority of residents can articulate their wants and needs. It's inevitable that a long serving staff know the residents' backgrounds well."*

Would you recommend this care home to a close friend or family."

*"Definitely"*

*"Yes"*

## Response from provider (by email 17/06/2022)

Dear Michele

Thank you for the report following your recent visit.

The Resident's and Staff enjoyed speaking with you on the day and spoke very highly of you both; they especially enjoyed the meal time experience chatting with your colleague Michelle.

The Congregational leaders and all the Resident's, Sisters and Staff are very happy with the excellent report you gave the home and the lovely comments you made.

Many thanks again to both of you.....

Kind regards

Cheryl Weall

Registered Manager

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