


East Lancashire Hospice, Blackburn, BB2 3NY

Enter and View Report

Monday 21st September 2026

10.30am

# healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen

DISCLAIMER

This report relates 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:

Nicola Hanna CEO

Staff met during our visit:

Nicola Hanna Chief Executive Officer
Graham Parr Chairman of Trustees

Date and time of our visit:

Monday 21st September 2026 10.30am

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen Representatives

Michele Chapman (Lead Representative)
Sarah Johns (Chief Officer Healthwatch)
Liam Kershaw- Calvert (Healthwatch representative)
Lucy Collier (Healthwatch Representative)





## 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

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.

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

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to thank Nicola Hanna together with staff, and service users for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

## General Information

Esat Lancashire Hospice is a charitable facility which is mostly publicly funded. East Lancashire Hospice provides a range of specialist palliative care and support for individuals living with life-limiting illnesses and their families. The person in charge is Nicola Hanna

The CQC rating is

**Outstanding**

## Methodology

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on Monday 21st September 2026 at 10. 30am.

The hospice delivers its bereavement support group on Mondays and our responses from those service users have been gathered separately as part of the full "End of Life" report.

Therefore, the responses in this Enter and View report are focused on six staff members, with responses from two hospice in-patients, and one relative.

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

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 facility to be good.

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

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

## Summary:

This Enter and View was arranged as part of a larger Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen "End of Life" project undertaken to gather the experiences of local people and identify areas for improvement, concern and examples of good practice and excellence.

East Lancashire Hospice is undoubtedly the latter thoroughly deserving of its current CQC rating of "Outstanding."

The management and trustees were clearly responsible for a high-performance high care culture resulting in professionality with homeliness, and this was palpable on entering the building.

The team identified areas of excellence in all areas. The physical environment was clean, contemporary well maintained and the outdoor grounds were exceptional. The staff ethos was one of empathy and respect, with both staff and volunteers clearly feeling valued by management.

When we spoke to inpatients the responses were universally positive. Superlatives were shared such as "brilliant "and "excellent." One relative reported her loved one as "*happy*" and *"The rooms are absolutely excellent. You couldn't ask for anything better. My relative can't do any activities, but we know that they are available. The care is fantastic. They can't do enough for him and for us as a family. The food is excellent. Everything is here."*

Staff told us that their training and professional development was encouraged and facilitated. They told us that they were able to prioritise person centred care, and they were offered support, flexibility and appropriate supervision in their job roles. *"It is a fantastic organisation to work for. They are supportive but more so, you aren't just a number, you are a person and valued. I feel respected but also part of the team".*

The Hospice currently receives approximately 30% of its funding form the statutory sector with the remainder coming from business interests such as retail outlets, fundraising, investments and the contribution and legacy from members of the public. The management team appeared forward thinking and ambitious with real plans to maximise its non-statutory funding whilst leveraging its financial autonomy to achieve operational independence.

The team left the Hospice with a strong sense that this is an organisation which genuinely cares about the people it supports, its staff and its wider community. The combination of excellent facilities, compassionate care, committed staff and forward-thinking management provides a very positive environment for those living with life-limiting illness and their families

The Enter and View Representatives gave the home an overall score of:

**Green**

## Enter and View observations

### Pre-visit and location




In terms of location the hospice is situated directly off Park Lee Road, the area is pleasant leafy and residential. A regular bus service runs from nearby Roman Road, and a pharmacy and post office are in walking distance. The M65 is approximately a 10-minute drive away.

The signposting to the hospice is easily recognisable from Park Lee Road and the car park is clearly marked. However, the car park is shared with the NHS Blackburn birthing centre which meant parking was limited. Despite this all representatives managed to get a spot and parking appeared to be free of charge. There was clearly marked short stay parking and disabled parking with ambulance only parking directly outside the reception area of the building.

Prior to our visit we looked at the Hospice website and media information.

The Hospice has a strong and engaging online presence as you would expect from a charity. The Facebook feed is updated daily with news of upcoming fundraising events and general information from the facility. There is a similar Instagram account also regularly updated.

There is a presence on YouTube with You tube relaying the personal experiences of service users in a story format.

The website is clear and easy to use with a comprehensive 8 drop-down tabs and a referral box featured prominently. We were particularly interested to see that virtual drop in sessions were available.

Hospice UK describes the facility as “over the last 40 years East Lancashire Hospice has cared for those with life limiting illnesses in Blackburn, Darwen, Hyndburn and the Ribble Valley.”

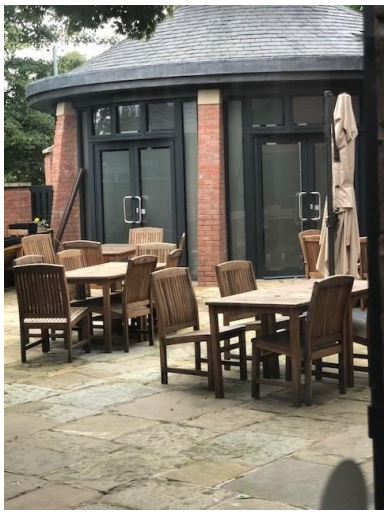
Main services are listed as Bereavement support, Day services, Homecare and Inpatient Unit.

The hospice produces a number of brochures and publications to promote their services. The team picked up a copy of the Summer 2026 newsletter which was well produced with professional images. It was particularly nice to see how staff and volunteers were celebrated and how happy they were to share their stories.

All the communication we had with the Hospice prior to our visit was welcoming helpful and informative.

## Green

### The external environment



Built in 1983 with more recent additions the hospice was incepted by Dr Merton Seigleman and in June 1984 opened its doors as reportedly as the first hospice in Lancashire.

The grounds to the building are quite exceptional and private with an ornamental stream and fountains close to all the external bedroom doors. There are flower tubs and beds, and the grounds are extensive and well maintained by a full-time volunteer (who Nicola later introduced us to). He is to be congratulated for his work.

Outside seating was plentiful particularly adjacent the Café retreat, situated on courtyard style paving with hardwood tables and chairs and canvas sun umbrellas.

The building itself is on downward incline with the management function being on the entry floor level and the operational function on the lower level.

The building and design are notably contemporary, and this is no doubt due to the investment and updates which successive management teams have been successful in implementing.

The approach to reception is clearly signposted including out of hours information, whilst steps with a handrail service the automatic doors and a covered ramp is in situ for alternative traffic.

Outside the main doors are tubs of flowers adding colour and interest.

## Green

### The internal environment/reception -first impressions

Reception is immediately inside the doors. Staff checked our ID badges, and we signed into an electronic system. The Healthwatch poster was prominently situated as requested.

The environment was bright, airy and welcoming there was an immediate feeling of quiet professionality, and colours were a based around a restful mossy green which continued throughout the building.

There was a wealth of information alongside the retail of items such as games notebooks chocolates etc. (Indeed, the Hospice capitalises on retail opportunities with eight retail shops in the community with plans for a further seven.)

Staff were similarly welcoming and Nicola came out to meet us directly; she was very helpful and generous with her time later showing the team round the facility and hosting us in the café to answer questions.

Staff were immediately identifiable by uniform.

## Green

### The observation of corridors toilets and bathrooms

The team walked down a short flight of stairs to the operational level where the corridor opened out into a seating area with comfortable sofas, artwork and specimen plants. There was natural lighting from the roof level which meant the outdoors could be experienced indoors. Elsewhere we noted lighting schemes echoing a high-end spa or hotel with downlights highlighting textural surfaces such as brickwork. Likewise, there was an expanse of glass and natural light wood enhancing the environment.

There was a remarkable amount of "conversation space" throughout the building comfortable seating for resting and privacy. Some of the seating was built into the architecture of the building with bench seating particularly outside the Café retreat.



Corridors were populated with information and artwork "Meet the Team," contributions from a nearby primary school and a full activity schedule were displayed. Whilst the CAST team (Creative and Support Therapies) highlighted a daily in-house schedule including crafting with clay, singing, needlecraft, seated exercise, baking, artwork and coffee and chat.

Progress through the lower floor is guided by curved surfaces and walls rather than linear which leaves a distinctly informal feel. However, this is successfully integrated alongside the clinical function with a high standard of cleanliness, wipe clean floors, wide corridors and appropriate signposting. Doors to rooms were uniformly light wood and clearly indicated.

The hospice has 10 patient rooms and one family/overnight room all serviced by ensuite bathrooms. Specialist bathing and wet room facilities were situated off the corridors. Nicola telling us that the hospice has continued to invest capital funding into the purchase of new patient beds and bathrooms to optimise care.

She showed us spacious bathing rooms, where not only could patients receive the very best of physical support but wellbeing support with dimmed lights and LED atmospheric lighting in the ceiling.

We were shown the large family overnight room with similarities to a smart hotel there was double bed with private en-suite seating and dressing area all overlooking and with access to the beautiful grounds.

We asked Nicola about the occupancy of the patient beds, and she told us there was variable but average 85% occupancy.

### The lounges and Café Retreat

The building has two lounges, a smaller one and a larger one overlooking the grounds at the rear. The smaller lounge was in use when we arrived, but we could see a variety of sofa seating and an experienced an air of privacy. Likewise, throughout it was noted that specialist adjustable seating with handheld controls was available for patient use.



The larger lounge was beautifully furnished in a contemporary style with muted colours high ceilings, curved seating and long expanses of window overlooking the landscaping. Long gauzy curtains and a curved coffee table made it seem organic in shape and worthy of an interior design magazine. Representatives observed a well provisioned children's corner to accommodate younger visitors. This was furnished with a play table, a small "kitchen", books, toys and colouring materials. A door from this lounge led directly onto a paved area bordered by the water feature and fountains, wooden patio furniture completed the picture.

The team were lucky enough to enjoy both coffee on arrival and later a lunch at Café retreat. This was a facility that could also be enjoyed by the public and boasted "fresh homemade food" with the website offering take out family pies "the Life of Pie." The management team had clearly capitalised on its quality and popularity by offering external catering and room hire too.

The environment did not disappoint and replicated the rest of the building in terms spaciousness, ambience and cleanliness. The curved serving area displayed fresh flowers, menus and a cold cabinet for sandwiches etc a drinks station was close by. Light wood square tables seated 4 but could be pushed together, and a largely glass area had doors leading out onto pleasant, paved courtyard area populated by wooden tables and canvas umbrellas.

Inpatient meals are also provided by Café Retreat

## Green

### Additional Information

Representatives were given the opportunity to visit other parts of the building however both the Therapy Room and Counselling Room were in use, and we did not consider it appropriate to intrude.

However, information and images from the website www.eastlancshospice.org.uk detail sessions available to inpatient and members of the public delivered by CAST. Treatments offered include aromatherapy. Reflexology, Reiki. guided relaxation, meditation, mindfulness and breathing techniques.

**Craft Room**

We saw a large craft room with a long table sufficient for approximately 12 people to work simultaneously. Boxes of craft items were distributed throughout the room, and we could see examples of pottery on the table.

**Kitchen**

Food preparation was an important part of the therapies with baking being delivered as part of the CAST programme.

The kitchen was spacious with units around the perimeter allowing a number of people to work together. The dark lower cabinet kitchen was adapted with the sink and induction hob being accessible to wheelchair users. Worksurfaces appeared to be high-quality granite with small appliances such as kettles and toasters nearby.

## Conversation with Nicola Hanna CEO

Nicola was kind enough to sit down with the team for coffee, and we were able to ask her some operational questions to add depth to the main" End of Life Project".

Nicola told us how she felt that the perception of Hospices was still negative amongst the public due to stigma and how that message might be changed if people could see the facilities and compare them to the hospital environment. Likewise, the Hospice at Home scheme and the Preferred Place of Death concepts were not widely known.

Referral screenings or and assessments were more often undertaken by the clinical team including medical, nursing and allied health professionals. This includes referrals for the community team, inpatient unit and support services as well as CHC the nursing team or the fast-track team.

In terms of funding, the hospice has a turnover of £5 million per annum and served 1,500 patients per year.

It was clear that the hospice had to have a business acumen to maintain levels of reserves with 30% statutory funding and the remainder fundraising legacies, managed investments, and the expanding network of retail shops.

Interestingly, although the Hospice movement is currently pressing the government for extra funding Nicola did point out that there were some benefits in controlling their own budget which meant holistic therapies could be provided, and investments could be used to purchase the equipment of choice.

When we asked Nicola about recruitment and retention of clinical staff, she reported little problem with this despite the pay being lower than the NHS. When we spoke to staff later, (many of whom had left the NHS) none of them regretted it. Many staff reported that the working environment and hospice culture were the attraction to the workplace rather than salary.

In terms of the HCA grade, Nicola reported the recruitment here was a little more complex but that the job role was far more flexible than the NHS encompassing amongst other things night visits and offering family support.

Nicola told us that every priority was given to staff welfare and training with three in house educational practitioners to deliver training to both internal and external audiences.

We also had a brief conversation with Graham Parry the Chair of Trustees who echoed Nicola's sentiments about the recruitment, retention and development of staff as essential to the Outstanding assessment of the hospice.

## Inpatient Views

### Environment

*"It's nice having a room on my own. I don't cope very well being on a ward surrounded by lots of people and noise. The room is great. I just could do with a bag to carry my syringe injector pump in because it's heavy to carry."*

*"I love the gardens; I'm an outdoors type but you need staff to go out with you. I got told off for going out on my own yesterday! I'm not really into activities but there's lots if you want them."*

*"The room is lovely and the view onto the garden is better than mine at home! I had family over at the weekend and we all sat outside to eat which was lovely. I've not done any activities yet because I had family over but I'm going to check them out over the next couple of days."*

### Food

*"The food is pretty fair though I don't have any sense of taste or smell. The creamy porridge is good for breakfast. I've had cheese and onion pie and apple pie for lunch which were both good."*

### Care

*"I love this place it's excellent. I had a choice of here or hospital and it was my decision to come here. A member of the palliative care team in the community suggested that here would be good for me and it was the right decision. They help sort me out."*

*"The staff are second to none. Janet in particular has been brilliant with me. They always go above and beyond for you. I can't fault any of them. Anything you need is sorted quickly."*

*"I've been here since the weekend; I was referred by the hospital because I had sepsis and I'm still going through cancer treatment. My daughter always knows if I'm happy by the look of my face and when we got here, she said, "she's happy!". I'm here on a 2-week placement and I'll try to manage back at home after that, but I know that here's an option if I'm not coping.*

*The staff are absolutely brilliant. I can't fault them at all. They let you have what you want. If I wanted a glass of wine, I could! I don't think that would be wise right now but maybe at some point I'll want to just have one. If there's anything you want, they're there for you. They just don't have the same time for you in hospital."*

## Feedback from a family member

*"The rooms are absolutely excellent. You couldn't ask for anything better. My relative can't do any activities, but we know that they are available. The care is absolutely fantastic. They can't do enough for him and for us as a family. The food is excellent. Everything is here."*

## Staff views

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

*"Absolutely and this has been a priority."*

*"Sometimes on IPU we can be task focused, but I really enjoy my job."*

*"I am quite new and so far, I have not felt any lack of staff."*

*"We never need to use agency staff and person-centred care is prioritised."*

*"We have staff on IPU for 10 patients (at full capacity) at any time as a minimum. We can be reactive to meet patient demands if additional staffing is required for 1 on 1".*

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

*"The mangers are very accommodating, and I know there is lots of training. I had face to face training on my first day".*

*"All the training I have asked for has been factored in, we have face to face training online training and training form external providers. The support and flexibility around my employment have been amazing. We have access to counselling CBT and the benefits of Benenden. I was particularly well supported during a recent family event."*

*"There is lots of support for staff. There is good supervision and counselling and one to ones. There is flexibility in the role, and our clinical lead is amazing."*

*"I refer to the head chef and the recorded preferences."*

*"This is so much better than the NHS and completely different. The training is more diverse and of a higher quality. We have protected time and we are fully supported and encouraged".*

*"There is a degree of flexibility."*

*"We're offered support if needed."*

*"We support care homes too, delivering training on symptom management recognition of end of life and admission avoidance."*

*"It is a fantastic organisation to work for. They are supportive but more so, you aren't just a number, you are a person and valued. I feel respected but also part of the team".*

*"There are training opportunities and resilience-based supervision."*

## How do you deliver care to diverse groups from different backgrounds and cultures?

*"The therapies we deliver are based on the individual and we use resources to support that i.e. beds taking account of postural differences, support with languages."*

*"We take a holistic approach we speak to the patients their family and friends. We buy in in personal items that have been requested,"*

*"We have Equality and Diversity training, and we can refer to Languagelike and use the Bluestream platform to support our interaction with patients."*

*"There are improvements ongoing but does need a focus, especially in catering/ the café. However, we can support all ethnicities and groups and meet their individual person-centered needs."*

*"We provide individualized patient care; we explore religious and spiritual needs on admission to the hospice. We use translation services when required. If a patient has a preference on male or female carers, we will accommodate that when we are able however, we have significantly fewer male staff."*

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

*I refer to EMIS, the team notes and conversation with the patient.*

*"We listen to residents and find out about their life stories. Pet therapy is often requested and dogs often come in. On one occasion we brought a horse to someone's room.?*

*"We speak to the patient individually"*

*"Yes, it's on the system and in the advanced care plan. All I need to know from an admin side though is their preferred place of care and death and whether they'd prefer burial or cremation".*

*"All patients have a personalized admission template completed, covering their clinical and holistic needs. We also undertake advanced care planning with patients. For the team it is about person centered care and building rapport."*

*"This will be explored on admission initially and discussed daily on assessments and documented on patient records."*

*"Yes, the physical, emotional and psychological support is fantastic."*

Would you recommend this service to a close friend or family.

*"Without a doubt"*

*"Oh yes my mum was here many years ago".*

*"From a work perspective it's a lovely place, staff are friendly helpful and understanding".*

*"Definitely"*






## Response from provider (email 4/11/2026)

Hi Michele,

Thank you for this incredible report, we are so pleased to get such a glowing review, it was great to meet you all on the day!

Thank you so much,

Nicola

Nicola Hanna

CEO






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