healthwatch Cheshire East

Enter and View Report

Belong

Crewe

26th January 2026

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Report Details

Address	Belong 20 Brookhouse Drive Crewe CW2 6NA
Service Provider	Belong Villages
Date of Visit	26th January 2026
Type of Visit	With prior notice
Representatives	Amanda Sproson Lex Stockton Roz Spalding (Volunteer)
Date of previous visits by Healthwatch Cheshire East	10th October 2018

This report relates to findings gathered during a visit to the premises on specific dates as set out above. The report is not suggested to be a fully representative portrayal of the experiences of all the residents, friends and family members or staff, but does provide an account of what was observed by Healthwatch Cheshire Authorised Representatives (ARs) at the time of the visits.

What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch Cheshire is the local independent consumer champion for health and care services, forming part of the national network of local Healthwatch across England.

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, local Healthwatch have the power to carry out Enter and View visits as part of their scrutiny function. This legislation places a duty on health and social care providers to allow Authorised Representatives of Healthwatch to carry out an Enter and View visit on premises where health and social care is publicly funded and delivered. This includes:

- Health or care services which are contracted by local authorities or the NHS, such as adult social care homes and day-care centres.
- NHS Trusts
- NHS Foundation Trusts
- Local authorities
- Primary medical services, such as GPs
- Primary dental services, such as dentists
- Primary Ophthalmic services, such as opticians
- Pharmaceutical services, such as community pharmacists.

The list of service providers who have a duty to allow entry is set out in section 225 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and supplemented by Regulation 14 of the 2013 Local Authorities regulations.

At Healthwatch Cheshire, the Enter and View programme is conducted by a small team of staff and volunteers, who are trained as Authorised Representatives to carry out visits to health and care premises.

Following an Enter and View visit, a formal report is published where findings of good practice and recommendations to improve the service are made. These reports are circulated to the service provider, commissioner, the CQC and relevant partner organisations. They are also made publicly available on the Healthwatch Cheshire websites:

- www.healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-view
- www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-view.

Purpose of the Visit

- To engage with residents, friends and relatives of the named services and understand their experiences
- To capture these experiences and any ideas they may have for change
- To observe residents, friends and relatives interacting with the staff and their surroundings
- To make recommendations based on Healthwatch Authorised Representatives' observations and feedback from residents, friends and relatives

Methodology

This Enter & View visit was carried out with 'Prior Notice'.

A visit with 'Prior Notice' is when the setting is aware that we will be conducting an Enter & View visit. On this occasion an exact time and date were not given.

Prior to the Enter and View visit the service was asked to display both the letter announcing our visit and a Healthwatch Cheshire poster in a public area. The service was also asked to share surveys amongst residents, friends and relatives. Members of the Healthwatch team visited the service prior to the Enter and View visit to deliver paper copies of the surveys.

To enable us to check that there are no health outbreaks at the premises that would prevent the visit taking place for infection control reasons, this care home was made aware that we would be coming on the morning of the visit.

Preparation

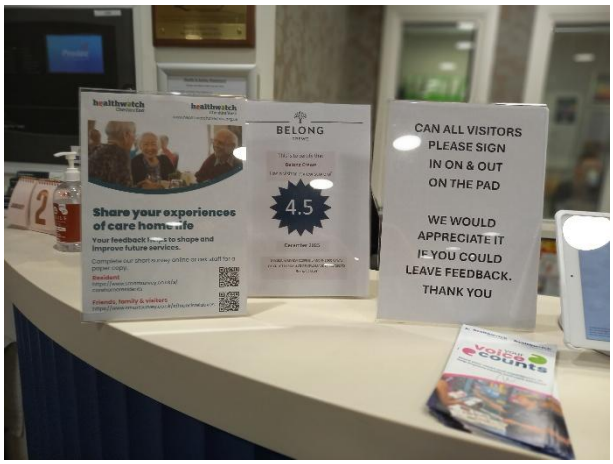
In preparation for an Enter and View visit the Authorised Representatives who will be carrying out the visit conduct research that involves reviewing:

- The latest CQC report from a routine inspection of the service

- Any previous Healthwatch Cheshire Enter and View reports
- The care home's information held on the Carehome.co.uk website
- Entries on social media platforms
- Comments held on Healthwatch Cheshire's feedback centre
- Information received by Healthwatch Cheshire as a result of undertaking surveys.

On the day of the visit the Authorised Representatives hold a briefing to discuss findings from their individual preparation and decide as a team how they will carry out the visit, and any specific areas of focus based on their prior knowledge.

Belong Crewe



Healthwatch would like to note that prior to the visit, the home received both resident and friends and family surveys to promote prior to the visit. On arrival Healthwatch observed that they were on display in the reception area. Healthwatch received five resident surveys and seven friends and family surveys. The findings from these are referenced throughout this report.

Findings

Belong Crewe is a purpose-built care village located on a large housing estate, close to Crewe railway station and key local landmarks such as Bentley Motors. It forms part of the Belong Villages not-for-profit network, known for its community focused approach.

The village is designed around six small households, each supporting 10-12 residents in a homely, family style setting. It offers a wide range of care and support, including:-

- Residential care
- Dementia care (all stages)
- Nursing care
- Respite care
- Day care/Day experiences
- Palliative and end-of-life care

Feedback received by Belong Crewe indicates that their residents and visitors feel welcomed into a warm and friendly environment where staff are supportive. The manager said “Belong is a vibrant community with great links to the wider locality. Our households are very homely. “

Arriving at the care home

Environment

The building and surrounding car park appeared well maintained and in good condition. Although the car park itself seemed small for the size of the home, there is ample road parking available in the local area. The home is situated within a large housing estate and is easily identifiable due to clear external signage.

It was noted that the home does not have a fully secure entry system, as several areas were open to the public at the time of the visit. Upon arrival, Healthwatch representatives were warmly welcomed by staff and asked to sign in, however, Healthwatch would like to note that personal identification was not checked.

The reception area contained a wide range of information on display for visitors. Healthwatch also noted a tribute display dedicated to three residents who had sadly recently passed away. This included a photograph and a short eulogy for each person, accompanied by flowers and a candle. This was a very personal and thoughtful touch.

Treatment and care

Quality of care

Belong Crewe is linked to Rope Lane Medical Centre, and staff reported that the partnership works extremely well. The home receives two ANP (Advanced Nurse Practitioner) calls per week, one on a Tuesday and one on a Friday. Visits to the home are arranged as required, either from an ANP or a GP, depending on the needs of the resident.

Residents are welcome to remain registered with their own GP if they wish. This occasionally occurs when a resident has ongoing or complex health needs, and the individual or their family feel more comfortable remaining with a GP who knows them well. However, most residents transfer across to Rope Lane Medical Centre.

Residents appeared well cared for, were clean and comfortable, and were dressed appropriately for the time of day and weather conditions. During conversations, residents shared positive feedback about their experience of living at Belong Crewe. Several residents noted that **"***They keep me safe*", while another commented that staff are "*Entertaining and looking after my health."* Others highlighted the benefits of the facilities and activities available, with one resident saying they appreciated "*Access to fitness studio and social activities.*" Another resident added that "*Staff look after us very well."*

Residents also shared some things they would like to see improved. One resident commented "*Less agency staff overnight*." Another felt that "*Food*

is not varied." A resident who uses a wheelchair suggested "*More space in bedroom because I am wheelchair bound, or to provide secure parking for my power chair*." A visitor shared *"As she suffers from PTSD, very noisy or crowded environments are traumatic for her. The carers ensure that she has peace and quiet when she needs it."*

Visitors were also asked how happy the person they were visiting was with various aspects of the environment. The results are summarised below:

Visitor Ratings of the Resident Environment

Aspect	Very happy	Happy	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know	Total Responses
Temperature	28.57% (2)	57.14% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	14.29% (1)	7
Noise levels	28.57% (2)	28.57% (2)	14.29% (1)	14.29% (1)	0% (0)	14.29% (1)	7
Cleanliness	28.57% (2)	42.86% (3)	14.29% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	14.29% (1)	7
Tidiness	14.29% (1)	57.14% (4)	14.29% (1)	0%(0)	0%(0(	14.29% (1)	7

Access to Health and Wellbeing Services

Residents were asked whether they had access to a range of services when they needed them. The results are summarised below:

Service	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't know	Total Responses
Hairdresser	100% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
Chiropodist	100% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3
Doctor/Nurse	100% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
Dentist	100% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3
Optician	100% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3

Other health services	100% (1)				

Belong Crewe work proactively to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions. Staff described strong partnership working with the GP and effective use of Advance Care Plans. They emphasised that hospital was often not the most suitable environment for residents, particularly those living with dementia. The home provides Falls Prevention training for staff and employs an on-site exercise specialist who delivers rehabilitation and strength-building exercises to all residents. For those who are less enthusiastic about structured exercises, staff encourage participation through group activities and friendly competitions, enabling residents to engage in movement without feeling pressured.

The layout of the households meant that call bells were not heard during the visit.

Residents are typically admitted to Leighton Hospital when required. Staff described a recent example where a resident experiencing a prolonged seizure needed hospital care. The resident spent two days in the Emergency Department before being transferred to Ward 1. During this period, hospital staff contacted the home, and care home staff, who knew the resident well, arranged a FaceTime call to provide reassurance, familiarity and comfort. Hospital staff later fed back to the home that the call had a noticeably calming effect on the resident. Belong Crewe does not operate a cut-off time for accepting hospital discharges and stated that staff are prepared to welcome residents home at any time of the day or night.

While Belong Crewe works hard to avoid unnecessary admissions, staff shared concerns about delays in A&E, particularly lengthy waits in corridors. This was identified as especially challenging for residents with dementia, who may become distressed in unfamiliar and overstimulating environments.

Belong Crewe also raised ongoing concerns about access to dental care, which they reported is a widespread challenge across many care homes. Residents shared mixed experiences in this area. One resident told us, “My daughter would sort my dentist visit and optician.”

Residents are encouraged to remain registered with their own dental practice, however, for some, attending appointments can be very difficult or distressing, particularly for those living with dementia. The manager reported that they had never known a dentist willing to visit the home, which would be especially helpful for residents with complex needs. Staff have, on occasion, driven residents as far as Stoke to attend emergency dental appointments. The manager noted a recent update from Cheshire East Local Authority stating that the number of emergency dental appointments is being increased.

Belong Crewe has its own on-site salon and stylist, providing hairdressing services as well as beauty treatments such as manicures, pedicures and waxing. Residents are also welcome to invite their own hairdresser to visit if they prefer. Healthwatch would like to note that on the day of the visit the salon was being refurbished. This was scheduled to take two days; residents who had appointments scheduled on these days, were being visited in their bedrooms as an alternative.

A chiropodist attends the home every quarter, with earlier visits arranged when needed. One resident commented that they "*Should get Chiropodist on NHS, but this is not regular, so my Dad does nail trimming. My Dad sorts my hairdressing needs and always accompanies me to appointments.*" Another resident noted, "*I don't see the Chiropodist.*"

The home is partnered with Vision Care for optician services.

Belong Crewe is organisationally contracted with Boots Pharmacy in Winsford for medication supply. Previously, prescriptions were handled by the Boots branch in Crewe town centre, which has since closed. Staff reported that the Winsford branch is overstretched and supplies several care homes, leading to occasional delays in medication delivery. Medications can sometimes arrive on a Friday afternoon, requiring staff to stay late to check them in. Some medicines are also affected by supply shortages, which can create additional challenges.

The home works in partnership with several health services, including dietitians, Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), incontinence advisory services and the district nursing team in addition to the ANPs from Rope Lane. Staff reported that if a resident is discharged from hospital with a referral to physiotherapy, there is often a wait of six to eight weeks, and families sometimes choose to pay privately for earlier access.

In addition to care provision, the home offers a range of facilities for residents, including a bistro, hair salon, beauty spa, gymnasium and a Namaste room.

Privacy, dignity and respect

Healthwatch observed staff interacting with residents in a gentle, calm, caring and kind manner. Staff were seen assisting residents appropriately and engaging them in conversation, demonstrating respectful and person-centred communication. These observations were consistent with residents' own feedback gathered during the visit.

All respondents to the survey (5) reported that they felt cared for, safe, respected and had privacy. However, four reported that their dignity was maintained, one reported sometimes.

A visitor commented *"My relative is now too frail to use their own mobile phone, but friends call the household and the phone is brought through to enable a conversation."*

Friends and Family Experience Survey Results

Do you feel the person you're visiting is...	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't know	Total Responses
cared for	100% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7
safe	100% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7

respected	100% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7
their dignity is maintained	100% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7
they have privacy	100% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6

Friends and family feedback mirrors the views of residents regarding respect, dignity and safety provided at Belong Crewe.

On the door of each resident's bedroom there is a door plaque displaying the resident's first name only, along with pictures reflecting their personal interests, such as food and wine, famous boxers or favourite hobbies. Some residents also choose to display photographs of family members and friends. Inside each room there is also an individualised memory box, unique to each resident.

Staff reported that all team members receive full training to support the promotion of residents' privacy, dignity and independence. Each resident has their own 'home' within the household model. Residents with capacity may be given a key to their bedroom door, and every external household door is fitted with a doorbell. Staff ring the doorbell before entering, mirroring the respect expected when entering someone's private home. Residents living with dementia often choose to keep their doors open to support a more open and accessible environment. If contractors are due to carry out work in any of the households, staff ensure all residents are forewarned. Before providing any personal care, staff explain the task and seek consent. A comment received from a friend and family survey stated, *"Sometimes staff need reminding to replace towels and toilet paper."*

The care home is equipped with a hearing loop, and large print or braille materials are provided when required. Picture communication aids are used, developed in partnership with the Stroke Association, to support residents who benefit from visual prompts. For residents living with dementia, 'Voice Boxes' are also used. These devices allow the recorded voice of a family member or familiar person to be played back to the resident, helping to provide reassurance and reduce distress.

Understanding residents' care plans

The manager informed Healthwatch that residents' care plans are digital and the home uses Person Centred Software (PCS). This system is designed to be efficient and person-centred, enabling care staff to evidence all aspects of care in a manner aligned with Care Quality Commission standards. Care plans are reviewed monthly, or sooner if there is a change in a resident's needs. A comment from the friends and family survey was "*The NHS podiatry services are erratic and bearing in mind my son is diabetic, this is a problem*." A resident commented *"Not aware of care plans."*

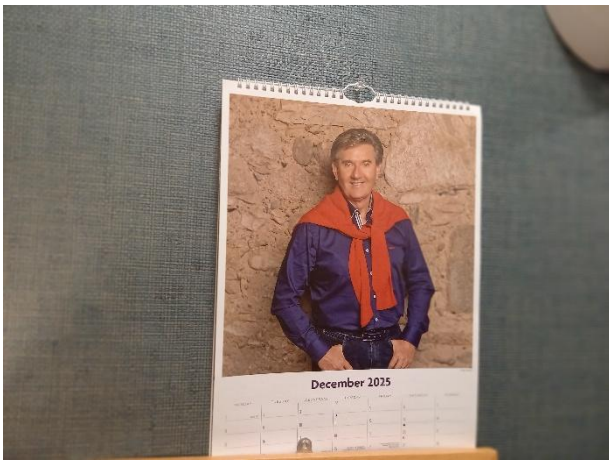
Healthwatch asked whether residents have input into their care plans. The manager reported that residents are fully involved in the development and ongoing review of their care plans. All staff have laptops and access the PCS system throughout their shift. The system uses an icon-driven interface, which staff described as easy to use and helpful in reducing time spent writing care notes, at the point of care. Residents can view their care plan at any time, and relatives are able to view the platform online, with the option to add their own updates, such as notes or photographs. Staff explained that they had sufficient time to update care plans due to a staffing ratio of six staff to twenty-two residents.

When asked whether relatives had input into residents' care plans, the manager confirmed that relatives were invited to the six-monthly review meeting and could also view and contribute to care plans digitally through the platform.

Relationships

Interaction with staff

During the visit, Healthwatch observed positive and respectful interactions between staff and residents. Staff approached residents in a calm, gentle and compassionate manner, helping where needed and engaging in meaningful conversations. These interactions appeared warm, supportive and person-centred, contributing to a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere within the home. Friends and family echoed this view, commenting that *"They are very warm and friendly"* and describing the environment as *"Like family".*



Staff shared a particularly touching example that highlighted their commitment to personalising residents' experiences. In one household, residents loved listening to Daniel O'Donnell's music continuously. Wanting to support and enhance their enjoyment, staff contacted the singer's music company. In response, the residents were sent a selection of items including a signed picture, a calendar, a book and several DVDs. These gifts were proudly displayed within the household and brought a great deal of joy to the residents.

Residents appeared at ease with staff, and it was evident that staff had developed trusting relationships with those they were supporting. Staff demonstrated patience, attentiveness and an understanding of residents' individual needs. Residents commented *"All the staff are very good."* and *"I get anxious about the night shift (agency)."*
Friends and relatives also shared highly positive feedback, including *"They are always willing to listen and take appropriate action."* and *"All the staff go over and above their duties on a daily basis."*

When asked about the relationship between residents and staff, the manager described it as "lovely", adding that "you just need to see it." They explained that staff and residents relate to each other "like family". Due to the smaller community model within the households - typically three staff members supporting up to twelve residents - there is strong continuity of care, enabling staff to know residents very well, and vice versa. One relative expressed how the household model impacts their loved one, explaining *"The organisation into households means that my relative, who has no family members living close by, regards the carers as family. She feels that she belongs."*

The manager also commented on relationships between staff and residents' families and friends, describing these as extremely positive. They stated that the biggest support to the care home staff comes from relatives and that staff work very hard to establish and maintain good relationships with families.

Healthwatch asked whether staff wear name badges. The manager confirmed that while staff had not always worn them, badges were introduced in response to feedback from a residents' and relatives' meeting, where newer relatives felt unsure who was staff and who was not. The name badges are also helpful for residents living with dementia. Staff do not wear uniforms, as the ethos of the home is to avoid segregation between staff and residents and to promote a homely, inclusive environment.

The care home uses agency staff and is linked to an agency called Search, with whom they have a good working relationship. The home requests certain agency staff to return regularly to support continuity of care. Where the home has vacancies, these shifts are covered by agency staff to maintain safe staffing levels. Agency staff are often required for night shifts, which have proven more difficult to recruit for, although the home has increased advertising and has begun to receive some applications.

Healthwatch enquired how the home ensures that agency staff training meets the home's standards. The manager explained that the agency oversaw its staff training, which is usually delivered online. In addition, agency staff receive induction training at the home, including fire safety, regular in-house training, and training on the PCS communications system.

Connection with friends and family

Healthwatch explored how the home supported residents in maintaining relationships with friends and family. The manager described these relationships as extremely important and emphasised that staff work hard to build and sustain strong links with relatives. They stated that the biggest support to the care home staff comes from the family and friends of residents, highlighting the mutual respect and collaboration that exists between them.

Each household has a mobile phone that residents and relatives can use to keep in touch. Residents can also have their own phoneline installed in their room if they prefer. For those whose loved ones live further away, the home enables communication through Skype or FaceTime, and laptops are available for residents to use. Some residents also enjoy maintaining contact by writing letters.

The home operates open visiting hours with no set times and no requirement to book. Friends and family are welcome to visit anywhere within the home, provided they sign in at the household they are visiting. This approach supports a welcoming and flexible environment for maintaining meaningful relationships.

Healthwatch asked about how complaints, concerns or feedback were received. The manager explained that visitors could provide feedback via the digital sign-out screen. There is also a feedback form available on the home's website. Relatives and friends are encouraged to speak directly with the manager or the deputy/front of house manager if they have any concerns. The home also signposts visitors to leave reviews on carehome.co.uk, as well as to share feedback with the CQC. The manager emphasised that "*we promote an honest approach so things can be dealt with straight away.*" The home actively pursues feedback from residents and relatives through internal processes, recognising that "*this is their home*" and they should have a voice in how it functions.

The manager informed Healthwatch that the home began holding quarterly meetings last year, this is a resident/relatives committee meeting that was formed a year ago for residents and relatives. These meetings provide an opportunity to meet the managers, make suggestions and give feedback on all aspects of Belong Crewe.

Wider Local Community

Belong Crewe is actively involved in the wider local community and offers a range of opportunities for community engagement. Many of the activities

organised by the home are open to members of the public, including day trips and the use of the on-site gym, salon and Bistro.

In 2023, Belong Crewe launched a dementia café known as B's Café - the first Belong Village to establish one. The café runs monthly within the home and is open to residents, their loved ones and members of the community living with dementia. B's Café also has links with The Thursday Club, a dementia support group based in Nantwich.

The home facilitates a regular Knit and Natter group, during which knitted items are made, including hats for babies born at Leighton Hospital. This activity was taking place on the day of the visit and was extremely well attended. Belong Crewe also has strong links with three local primary schools. Pupils visit the home to take part in shared activities such as reading and crafts, and they also perform shows for residents. The home is currently in the process of starting a community choir to further strengthen local engagement.

Belong Crewe recently won the Silver Pride LGBTQ+ Award in recognition of the support they provide to members of the LGBTQ+ community. The home also offers work experience placements to students from Cheshire College South and West who are interested in pursuing a career in the care sector. In addition, placements are provided for individuals with learning disabilities.

The home actively recruits volunteers to support a range of its activities. Following a recent marketing effort to encourage more volunteer involvement, the management team reported being pleasantly surprised by the significant positive response received.

Everyday Life at the Care Home

Activities

Healthwatch were told during the visit that staff take time to learn about each resident's previous profession, interests and hobbies to provide meaningful and personalised activities. Examples shared during the visit included: a resident who had been an electrician, for whom a brightly coloured station was created featuring switches, wires and lights; another resident who enjoyed cleaning was supported to assist the cleaning team with a duster; a resident who loved caring for babies happily looked after her "baby" using a Silver Cross pram and a high chair purchased by the home; and a former receptionist who enjoyed office work was warmly and patiently included in tasks by the front of house team. Healthwatch observed a particularly heart-warming interaction where the receptionist kindly explained her tasks to the resident, inviting her to help or simply sit together, and responding to her many questions with patience and kindness. Residents commented that they were aware of activities: "*Activity team supply the information, and on display in my room.*" And "*Mostly, in the What's on leaflet.*"

Resident Activity Participation Survey Results

Activity	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't know	Total Responses
Read or watch TV in my room	100% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
Read or watch TV in the lounge	40% (2)	40% (2)	20% (1)	0% (0)	5
Take part in exercise classes	75% (3)	25% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4
Take part in group activities	80% (4)	0% (0)	20% (1)	0% (0)	5
Take part in one-to-one activities with staff	50% (2)	50% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4
Socialise with other residents	60% (3)	40% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
Spend time outside	25% (1)	25% (1)	50% (2)	0% (0)	4
Go out on a day trip locally	75% (3)	0% (0)	25% (1)	0% (0)	4
Go out on a day trip further afield	50% (2)	50% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4
Celebrate special events	100% (4)				

Belong Crewe employs an Experience Coordinator who works 39 hours per week, Monday to Friday. They plan and oversee all activities delivered within each household, as well as events across the wider village and the

Experience Day Service. Local residents can book paid Experience Days, which run from 10am to 4pm, offering opportunities for social engagement and short-term respite care.

Friends and relatives shared a range of views about activity participation, noting that individual mobility and health can influence involvement. One family member said, *"I guess incontinence and mobility problems make most activities outside the care home difficult."* Another added, *"My wife's mobility is not so good now. She still walks around the building, but not often outside."* A further relative explained, *"My relative is now so frail that she is no longer able to make day trips. However, those are available."* Another shared, *"My father's health restricts him with mobility and communication, but prior to his deterioration was included in all of the above, but I witness other residents involved."*

Despite these challenges, relatives praised the staff who support activities, with one comment stating, *"Activity girls are fantastic."*

Residents receive a copy of the home's bi-monthly What's On newsletter and are also kept informed weekly about the activities taking place within their household. A wide range of planned activities is offered, including day trips, bingo, music and singing sessions, exercise classes (including personalised gym sessions), and the popular Knit and Natter group.

Residents are free to assist with food and drink preparation, helping to create a homely and inclusive environment.

Residents are encouraged to contribute their ideas for future activities and outings during the quarterly residents' meetings. For those who are unable to leave their rooms or engage in larger group activities, the home offers Namaste sessions twice daily, from 9am to 10am and 3pm to 4pm. The home recently fundraised to purchase new, more portable Namaste equipment, allowing sessions to be delivered easily in residents' rooms, the lounges or the sensory room.

Belong Crewe celebrates many special events throughout the year, including Easter, Christmas and VE Day. A recent example was the presentation of a special beret to a resident who is a Royal Navy veteran, marking 50 years of service. This celebration was organised in collaboration with local veteran groups and featured in local newspapers and on social media. The home also celebrated its 15th anniversary last year with a party for residents, relatives, friends and the wider community.

Activity (What the person you're visiting does during the week)	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't know	Total Responses
Read or watch TV in their room	66.67% (4)	0% (0)	33.33% (2)	0% (0)	6
Read or watch TV in the lounge	85.71% (6)	0% (0)	14.29% (1)	0% (0)	7
Take part in exercise classes	57.14% (4)	14.29% (1)	28.57% (2)	0% (0)	7
Take part in group activities	71.43% (5)	0% (0)	28.57% (2)	0% (0)	7

Day trips are a regular and popular activity, with residents consulted about where they would like to visit. A recent trip to the Blue Planet Aquarium was enjoyed by both residents and members of the local community, and a second visit is being arranged due to high demand. Following suggestions at a residents' and relatives' meeting, the home is planning more wheelchair-friendly outings, including a "Wheelie Boat Trip". Residents also

choose to go shopping, visit local cafés or pubs, and take part in other leisure outings of their choosing.

The care home has its own Belong minibus on site, providing flexibility and ease when planning trips. They also have access to three additional minibuses shared across other nearby Belong Villages via a booking system. Having an on-site minibus has significantly improved access to community outings, particularly as local taxi firms with wheelchair-accessible vehicles are limited.

Person Centred Experience

Everyday life within Belong Crewe is person centred using the staff's knowledge of each resident within their household, and the resident's care plan. Residents are encouraged and supported to engage in activities that reflect their interests, histories and personal preferences. They are free to choose how they spend their time and can be involved in many different aspects of daily life within the home.

Healthwatch were told about several examples of meaningful, individualised engagement. One resident, who previously worked as a hair stylist, visits the on-site salon every Wednesday to offer tea and coffee to customers. Another resident, a gentleman who has since sadly passed away, had been a vicar and would regularly hold church services within the home for fellow residents. These examples demonstrate the home's commitment to honouring residents' past roles, identities and skills in ways that bring purpose and enjoyment.

Friends and relatives shared similarly positive feedback about the personalised approach at Belong Crewe. Comments included "*Reassurance that my son is in good hands*"; "*The day-to-day care is excellent, and my wife seems to feel safe and well looked after.";* and "*Consistent and good levels of personal care and emotional support*".

Staff mainly work in the same household each day, which promotes continuity and allows them to build strong, trusting relationships with residents. This consistency supports a deeper understanding of each

resident's personality, preferences and communication style. Friends and family also highlighted the benefits of this model, describing "*The use of individual households which creates a home-from-home environment.*" Several relatives commented on the positive atmosphere within the home, saying "*The staff are wonderful and caring." and "The warm and lovely atmosphere, staff are so happy."*

Resident Experience of the Home Environment

How happy are you with the…	Very happy	Happy	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total responses
Temperature	40% (2)	60% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
Noise levels	40% (2)	20% (1)	20% (1)	20% (1)	0% (0)	5
Cleanliness	60% (3)	40% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
Tidiness	40% (2)	60%(3)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	5

The home places a strong emphasis on staff getting to know residents' histories, including their working life, hobbies and interests, which helps shape the type of activities and engagement offered. This information is captured before the resident moves into the home, from the resident and friends and family members This approach ensures that daily life at Belong Crewe is tailored to the individual and contributes to a homely, community-focused environment. One resident commented *"Sometimes, some residents cannot control their noise levels which I find irritating."*

Healthwatch enquired whether the home operated a "resident of the day" system. The manager explained that they were unfamiliar with the term, so Healthwatch representatives provided an explanation. The manager responded by saying that the ethos at Belong Crewe is that every resident is the resident of the day, every day. Due to the high staff ratio, continuity of

care and strong emphasis on resident voice, residents' needs, preferences and choices are observed and reviewed daily. For this reason, a designated resident of the day is not considered necessary as the practice is embedded in day-to-day care.

Residents can voice concerns, feedback or complaints directly to staff, and they can also use the PCS digital platform to share their views. For example, the home received feedback one Sunday that the meat served with the roast dinner was tough and this was passed on to the catering team. Residents may also express that they did not enjoy a particular activity, and staff respond accordingly.

Residents' spiritual needs are also supported. Some residents attend St Andrew's Church on Bedford Street, Crewe, and the church additionally provides a service within the home every two weeks.

When asked whether pets are allowed to live at or visit the home, the manager confirmed that pets are welcome in both capacities.

Communal Areas

Each household at Belong Crewe has a communal bathroom equipped with appropriate accessibility features to meet residents' individual needs.

Belong Crewe comprises six households, each accommodating between 10 and 12 residents. All residents have their own bedroom with an ensuite bathroom, providing privacy and independence.

Friends and relatives shared some reflections on room size and accessibility, noting that **"***Space for wheelchair-bound people can never be enough.*"

Every household has a communal kitchen, dining room, lounge and bathroom, creating a homely and self-contained environment. Residents are free to move between households if they wish, and they can also access the on-site bistro. The bistro operates as a restaurant open to both residents and members of the public, providing an additional communal space and further opportunities for social interaction.

The home is carpeted throughout. On the ground floor, Healthwatch noted an unpleasant odour present between some of the households.

Along the corridors, there are comfortable chairs available for residents to rest, and all corridors are fitted with handrails and are wide enough to accommodate walking aids where needed. The corridors were evenly floored and well lit, with a range of pictures depicting local historical interest displayed along the walls. Bookcases containing books and jigsaws were also available for residents to enjoy.

The home is set over three floors. During the visit, the top floor was noted to be particularly warm between the households.

Friends and relatives shared additional views regarding things they would change about the home. One commented, *"Not on a day-to-day basis, and certainly not as far as the care is concerned. I have been disappointed over the refurbishment delays."* Another relative expressed complete satisfaction, saying *"No, very happy."* A further comment noted that *"Laundry has been an issue but has improved recently."*

Residents' bedrooms

On the day of the visit, Healthwatch was unable to view a vacant bedroom as any empty rooms were in the process of being refurbished. Belong Crewe has a total of 67 bedrooms, each with an ensuite bathroom. At the time of the visit, there were four vacancies. A visitor commented "*Some of the bedding looks a little tired as does the décor. The building has been built for 15 years, and the bedroom still await refurbishment."*

Residents are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and may bring any personal belongings or furniture they wish. This allows individuals to create a familiar and comfortable environment reflective of their own tastes and preferences. Couples are also able to share the same bedroom if they choose.

Residents shared some feedback regarding the layout and storage within the bedrooms. One resident commented that "*There needs to be more shelving, or a shelf in the bathroom for toiletries."* Another resident noted that "*The working/available table space is restrictive. There is no space for anything else, in fact my reading and writing area is virtually NIL*." A friend or relative also offered positive feedback about the personalisation and décor within the Coronation household, stating that "*The staff in Coronation household have excelled in decorating individual needs to suit personalities, enhance cosiness and calmness and the rooms are a delight to sit or lie in."*

Outdoor areas

Belong Crewe has a dementia-friendly garden, developed after the home won a Tesco garden makeover. The garden is designed to be accessible and enjoyable for all residents, including those living with dementia.

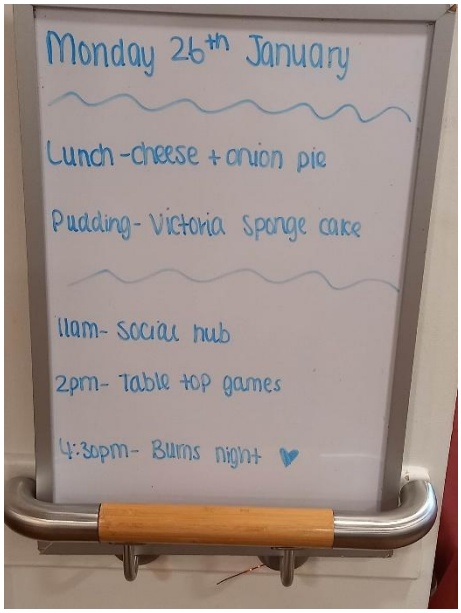
Some residents take an active role in maintaining the outdoor space. Healthwatch were told about a resident, now sadly passed away, who had been a keen gardener throughout his life and became the lead gardener at the home, contributing significantly to the upkeep and beauty of the space.

The garden can be accessed directly from the households on the ground floor. Residents living on the upper floors can access the outdoor area via the ground-floor households. The garden includes tables and chairs, enabling residents to enjoy the space in warmer weather. During the visit, the garden was observed to be seasonally appropriate and well cared for.

An entertainment stage is currently being built in the garden for residents to enjoy future performances and events. Raised planters are available, making gardening activities more accessible for residents who may have mobility needs or difficulty bending.

Healthwatch also observed a wonderful display of small pottery items created by residents. The home had arranged for these pieces to be fired by a local pottery company, supporting creativity and engagement while showcasing the residents' work within the garden area.

Food and drink



The home has its own catering team. Residents can choose their meals on the day and can change their mind at the last minute if they wish. Two hot main meal options are offered at lunchtime, with a lighter meal available at teatime, and supper served at the end of the day. Some residents expressed that they would like to see more choice, with comments such as "*Not a varied menu.*" and " *Need more types of vegetables and fish.*" Another resident added "*More fresh fruit to be available.*"

Resident Feedback on Food Quality and Availability

How happy are you with the...	Very happy	Happy	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know	Total responses
quality of food	20% (1)	40% (2)	20% (1)	20% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
taste of food	25% (1)	50% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (1)	0% (0)	4
choice of food	20% (1)	60% (3)	0% (0)	20% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
quantity of food	20% (1)	40% (2)	40% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
availability of snacks	40% (2)	60% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5
availability of drinks	40% (2)	60% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5

These survey findings show that while most respondents are happy or very happy with the quantity of food, snack availability, and drinks, satisfaction with menu variety, quality, and taste is more mixed. This aligns with verbal feedback raised during the visit.

Friends & Family Feedback on Food Quality and Availability

Is the person you're visiting happy with the...	Very happy	Happy	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know	Total responses
quality of food	66.67% (4)	33.33% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6
taste of food	66.67% (4)	33.33% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6
choice of food	33.33% (2)	66.67% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6

quantity of food	50% (3)	50% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6
availability of snacks	50% (3)	50% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6
availability of drinks	50% (3)	50% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6

This feedback shows that relatives are more consistently positive than residents themselves about the quality, taste, and choice of food, while also confirming satisfaction with the availability of snacks and drinks.

Residents with specific dietary requirements reported mixed experiences. One resident explained, "*Because of my dietary needs, I have to accept the restrictions set by my GP which limits things.*" Another noted difficulty at breakfast, stating *"Occasionally there seems to be no porridge at breakfast and my dietician says I must not have Ready Brek (as sweetened)."*

Residents are also able to choose any meal that can be prepared in the household kitchen, and they can participate in the preparation and cooking if they wish.

Belong Crewe caters for a wide range of dietary requirements, including modified diets, vegetarian meals and diabetic-friendly options. Residents can choose to eat wherever they prefer - whether in their own room, in the household kitchen/dining area, or in the Bistro. One resident told Healthwatch, *"I now have my midday meal in the Bistro, because I enjoy their conversation which I cannot find in the household other than with carers who are busy sorting less able residents*."

The Bistro is open to the general public every day; residents choosing to eat there are always accompanied by care staff.

Snacks are available throughout the day in each household kitchen or in the Bistro (at no extra charge). Staff cook within the households so that the smell of fresh food helps to stimulate residents' appetites. Baskets of snacks are placed around the households with signage encouraging residents to help themselves. One resident commented positively about this, saying "Staff bring in lots of goodies." Jugs of squash and water were also readily available during the visit.
Relatives are welcome to join their loved ones for mealtimes and can do so in any part of the home.

Biggest challenges...

The manager shared the biggest challenges as:

Getting dental support for residents is a constant challenge. The home actively encourages residents to stay registered with their dentists. Dentists will not do visits to the home to see patients which is particularly difficult for residents living with dementia. The home has taken some residents to emergency dental appointments, some as far as Stoke.

Getting Deprivation of Liberty approved for residents is often very slow which can delay processes.

The home has seen an increase in the number of residents with Parkinson's, some also having dementia along with this, which requires more training for staff including timed medications. The home has links with the local community Parkinson's nurse.

Recruitment into the care sector has been a challenge since the Covid-19 pandemic. Belong Crewe work with the local FE college offering work placements which provides a soft introduction and hopefully works to attract more people into the career.

The manager commented "Mental health is now more recognised, and people feel more confident to acknowledge when they are struggling. We support staff by training colleagues in Mental First Aid and offer free counselling where necessary. Staff struggling with their mental health, within their personal lives, can affect staffing at times, this is a national issue across all sectors. GPs seem to give sick notes very swiftly, sometimes over the phone, however, with very little offer of any support. "

Biggest success to date...

The manager shared the biggest success as:

Belong Crewe turning 15 years old and to celebrate, the home organised a huge party with many members of the local community invited along with all residents, family and friends.

The home began hosting B's Café (a dementia café) two years ago and was the first Belong Village to do this. The manager is very proud of this community support group as it is so very much needed.

The home delivers Namaste care and recently fundraised for new equipment to allow the care to be mobile within the home. Due to the new portable resources Namaste is now even easier to provide to residents wherever necessary.

The manager is very proud of their dementia friendly garden which was designed and continues to be managed by the residents.

Belong Crewe has won End-of-Life awards of which they are extremely proud. At the home those living with dementia are not segregated from other residents which allows residents to support each other. The home's approach to End-of-Life allows the individual's friends from the home to be

involved in the whole journey, they can visit their friend, hold their hand, through to the end.

The home is proud to have won awards for their contribution to Silver Pride that supports the older LGBTQ+ community. Belong Crewe celebrate Silver Pride annually at the home.

Care Home Best Practice Initiatives

During Enter and View visits, Healthwatch observe which NHS care initiatives have been adopted at the care home. The three we focus on are:

MUST (Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool)	A tool used to identify adults who are malnourished, at risk of malnutrition(undernutrition), or obesity. It also includes management guidelines which can be used to develop a care plan.
Restore2 (Recognise Early Soft-signs, Take Observations, Respond, Escalate)	A tool designed to help staff recognise when a resident may be deteriorating or at risk of physical deterioration and act appropriately according to their care plan to protect and manage the resident.
RITA (Reminiscence /Rehabilitation & Interactive Therapy Activities)	A digital reminiscence therapy with user-friendly interactive screens and tablets to blend entertainment with therapy. It assists patients (particularly with memory impairments) in recalling and sharing events from their past through listening to music, watching news reports of significant historical events, listening to war-time speeches, playing games and karaoke and watching films.

Does the care home use any of these initiatives?

Belong Crewe uses MUST and it is part of the digital Personal Care System.

'News', which is featured on the digital Personal Care System, is used for care plans.

The home uses projectors and provide a cinema experience every Tuesday and Thursday evening where they use the popcorn machine to make popcorn for everyone. E-Fit is used when residents use the cycling machine, this can be programmed to visually show any street anywhere across the world. There are targets involved in this activity too and they find residents are really motivated with the activity because of the digital interaction.

Belong Crewe offers digital reminiscence therapy; they encompass the use of user-friendly interactive screens and tablets to blend entertainment with therapy and to assist residents (particularly with memory impairments) in recalling and sharing events from their past through listening to music, watching news reports of significant historical events, listening to war-time speeches, playing games and karaoke and watching films.

The home engages with the End-of Life Partnership, they work alongside them and deliver training to staff.

Recommendations

- To address comments from residents regarding night shift (agency)
- To look at household menus, and comments made regarding food.
- Refurbishment of bedroom plans to be discussed with residents.

What's working well?

- The staff's holistic knowledge of residents that contributes to person centred care.

- Community links.
- Community activities.
- B's café (Dementia café)
- Peer to peer support.

Service Provider Response

Recommendation To address the comments from residents regarding night shift staff (agency)
Service provider's response We are actively working with our central recruitment team to improve adverts improve marketing reaching out to further areas, holding recruitment events, we have successfully in the last few weeks offered 4 positions within our night team. We hope to see the demand of agency use reduce once we have supported these staff through the recruitment process.
Action Ongoing reviewing of our recruitment strategy including marketing and advertising. We hold and join local pop up events. Retention plan is key to supporting new starters.
Recommendation 2 To look at household menus, and comments made regarding food.
Service provider's response

At 10@10 daily it is communicated what is available on the household main menu and in the bistro to all staff on the households, Bistro cook and prepare main meals and send up to the household, the household staff offer choices. We have menus set out daily for all residents to see and each resident has their own Bistro menu in their bedrooms to order off if they choose. Staff are reminded to offer the Bistro area to dine in. The kitchens are also equipped with full working kitchens and food stocks to support residents choice and preference.
Action Communications to staff about offering choice to all residents.
Recommendation 3 Refurbishment of bedroom plans to be discussed with residents.
Service provider's response The bedroom refurbishment I am happy share has begun this week will see the finishing of the painting and by the end of March we would have new furniture and furnishings in place.
Action On-going refurbishment in process.

Any other feedback from the Service Provider

Thankyou for your visit it was lovely to be able to show you our lovely village .