



**ENTER & VIEW**  
**SHERRATTS WOOD DAY SERVICES**  
Leigh, Burton On Trent, Lichfield

Part of the Healthwatch Staffordshire remit is to carry out Enter and View Visits. Healthwatch Staffordshire Authorised Representatives will carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand. Healthwatch Staffordshire Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Staffordshire safeguarding policy, the service manager will be informed and the visit will end. The Local Authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

## ***Provider Details***

*Name:* Louise and Brendan Fletcher Chard

*Address:* Sherratts Wood Farm, Hill Lane, Middleton Green, Leigh, ST10 4PQ

Burton Day Centre Byrkley Street, Burton on Trent, DE14 2EG

Minster Hall, Dam Street, Lichfield, WS13 6AE

*Service Type:* Day services for people with Learning Difficulties, Mental Health Issues and Dementia

*Date of Visit:* Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017

## ***Authorised Representatives***

*Name:* Jackie Owen

*Role:* Author

*Name:* Olivia Farrer

*Role:* Observer

## ***Purpose of Visit***

Healthwatch Staffordshire received an anonymous letter making a number of allegations about the standard of service offered by Sherratts Wood. Specific allegations are; untrained staff, lack of support and not enough activities for people who attend the service. The purpose of this visit therefore was to check out the reality of these allegations by visiting all three services run by Sherratts Wood, to observe the service in action and to talk to service users and staff about their experiences. Day services are unregulated services so are not subject to formal inspection from CQC. However, as public monies are used to fund places through direct payments Healthwatch can use their statutory powers of Enter and View to visit the service.

The methodology used was;

- To carry out an announced visit in order to visit all 3 services on the same day ensure that we would be able to see customers and staff on site.
- Visit the 3 day services to observe how they work and gain an overall picture of the different services on offer.
- Talk to customers about their experience of the service and whether this is delivered in a way that promotes their dignity and independence including the ability to make choices about their daily lives
- Speak to staff about training, turnover, support, and staffing levels
- Observe interaction at all levels between residents, staff, manager, visitors and their environment.

## ***Results of Visit***

### **Sherratts Wood Farm, Leigh**

#### **Environment**

Sherratts Wood Farm is a not for profit Community Interest Company set up in 2006 to offer an alternative day provision for People with Learning Disabilities, People with Mental Health Issues and Older People with Dementia. It is set in a 20 acre rural countryside location in North Staffordshire and offers a service, to around 20 customers a day. In all there are around 100 customers who use the service in all 3 locations. The service operates mostly over 5 days but is open at weekends for special occasions such as shows and events that the service is involved in. At the time of this visit preparations were in full swing for the Lichfield Bower where the customers were involved in a hive of activities, eg, preparing the horses/ ponies for participating in the parade, to helping with the hog roast selling pork rolls and burgers in the park.

Customers arrive at the service either via the transport provided by Sherratts Wood, or by relatives and come from quite a wide area of Staffordshire including some from Stoke on Trent. We were told that some customers may attend the other two services in Burton and Lichfield for activities according to their individual needs.

#### **Facilities**

There is a large outside 'farm' area which offers a range of outdoor activities including;

Animal husbandry: learning how to look after the animals including; pigs, horses and chickens.

Polytunnel: growing plants, vegetables and fruit which are then used in the kitchen to provide healthy nutritious meals for the customers.

Gardening: which includes growing vegetables in raised beds, planting hedges and maintenance of garden machinery.

Sport: there are a range of outdoor sporting activities available.

There is also a large indoor area with facilities to offer a range of activities including: cooking, (customers participate in the preparation and cooking of lunch for their peers which is an integral part of the days activities). some customers have undertaken and achieved their food hygiene certificate. Also provided is;

- IT, numeracy and literacy skills training
- Music and performing arts
- Art and craft
- Indoor sport

There are facilities for personal care if required and our observation of the area indicated that personal care can be carried out with dignity for the customers.

## **Sherratts Wood Centre Burton on Trent**

This service is located in the heart of Burton surrounded by shops and businesses but within easy walking distance of the town centre. The building was once owned by Staffordshire County Council and was used as a day service for older people. The building is quite tired looking from the outside as it was built in the 70/80s. It does therefore present a more institutional look in terms of the layout of the building, but positively, also provides a spacious and varied environment that did not feel institutional in terms of what the service offers and how it is delivered. We were told that there are plans afoot and work on going within the building currently to bring it up to a more modern standard and one lounge has already been renovated and refurbished to provide a day opportunity for older people and people with dementia, physical or mental health issues.

The lounge has been decorated and furnished to a high standard and offers opportunities for a range of activities to take place in a comfortable and calm looking environment. The facility is not yet up and running but should be ready to take customers in the next few weeks.

There are number of rooms internally used for different activities, including a music room where one customer demonstrated his drumming skills. We observed and spoke to customers in the IT/ craft room who were uploading photographs of cakes they had made the day previously and writing in the ingredients and method they had used to make the cakes. One customer proudly showed us and gave us a sample of cakes she had made for the Bower.

There is a large outdoor space which has a polytunnel and raised borders for gardening, and space to carry out a range of outdoor activities. There was evidence of woodworking activity and we were told that a carpenter works with customers to build the raised borders and other items, some of which are sold to the public.

## **Sherratts Wood, Lichfield**

This service is set in a large purpose-built building in the centre of Lichfield which was for many years used as the local youth and community centre. It has many areas including a sports hall, a music room, a dance studio, an art room, a café bar area amongst its many facilities. It also has a large garden with many opportunities for outdoor activities including gardening, woodwork and horticulture among the activities available. The building is currently leased from the county council and offers facilities to local groups in the evenings and weekends. This service also operates on a Saturday and provides drop in sessions and is open for members of the public to drop in for coffee.

The overall impression of all 3 buildings was of vibrant communities, full of life offering something for everyone. The range of facilities available on each of the sites meant that all customers attending the service are enabled to participate in training, education, social and leisure activities that are based upon their individual needs and preferences and provide a meaningful day.

## ***Customer Experiences and Observations***

We spoke to and observed customers at all 3 sites involved in a range of activities. At Sherratts Wood we arrived to carry out the visit at the same time as the customers had started to arrive on the transport provided. Upon arrival they spent some time chatting to staff and to each other whilst enjoying a drink. We asked several customers how they liked attending Sherratts Wood and all, without exception, spoke with enthusiasm about what they did there and how much they enjoyed being there and the activities offered to them.

The day started with a meeting with the manager to run through the activities for the day. We observed a 'real buzz' about the place as she did this in a light, easy way with customers seeming at ease and engaged in the discussions. Customers were given the opportunity to choose what they wanted to do. Each activity is linked to an outcome, for example life skills, employability skills, physical activity, independence skills and these are identified and discussed with the customers when choosing what they wanted to do. Each customer has an individual plan which outlines their individual needs, their interests and learning objectives, support needed and risk assessment. We were shown a copy of the plan that each customer has which were thorough and detailed. We were told that these are reviewed on a regular basis.

We spoke to several customers at the 3 sites and all enthusiastically told us about what they were doing and showed us some of the results of their activities. On the farm people mainly worked outside, preparing the horses and ponies and practicing for the Lichfield Bower. We saw other customers tending the flower and vegetable patch, or washing the farm vehicle that the customers are able to learn to drive around the farm. Indoors, we saw customers making lunch in the kitchen using ingredients from the garden.

In Burton, customers were engaged in a range of activities including uploading photographs and ingredients of cakes they had made the previous day onto the computer with staff offering support. We were given a demonstration from one customer of his drum playing abilities and given a cake to sample by another customer who had baked them for sale at the Bower. We observed staff and customers interacting easily and positively with each other and saw no incidents of challenging behavior during our visit. Each customer was engaged in a purposeful activity and there was a feeling of calm in all 3 services.

We arrived in Lichfield just as lunch was finishing, some customers were outside preparing the gardens for the Bower and for the expected public who may drop in for coffee and cake. Others were indoors tidying up after lunch and planning for the hog roast and burgers to be sold. There was an evident degree of structure to the activities so that customers knew where they should be and were guided back to their activity if they had strayed away. This was all done very calmly and quietly and we did not witness any tensions of challenging incidents during our visit.

## ***Staff Experiences and Observations***

Staffing levels are determined by the needs of the customers. There is a staff establishment but sometimes customers need one to one staffing and this will determine how many staff are on duty at any given time. Some customers bring their own Personal Assistants with them but the service also provides them if required. We were told that staff turnover is not too high though inevitably there is some due to the nature of the work which staff can find is not for them once they start. Training for staff is offered on site and staff will be sponsored through college courses as required. We were told that staff are recruited for 'attitude' first and foremost, the required training can then be provided if the staff member has the right attitude that fits with the ethos of the business which is about 'helping extraordinary people live ordinary lives'. Staff that we spoke to presented themselves as friendly and open to us and there was lots of evidence of good interaction with the customers. Staff that we spoke to were enthusiastic about their work and about working for Sherratts Wood. All staff spoken to said that they enjoyed their job and one member of staff told us that she "absolutely loved her job" and felt valued and supported by the company. Our observations were that staff seemed at ease in the presence of the owner and engaged in light hearted banter in a way that did not appear forced in any way.

## ***Summary, Comments and Further Observations***

At the time of our visit the evidence was that this service is operating to a very high standard of care and that customers were valued and treated with dignity and respect at all 3 sites .

There was no evidence that staff were untrained or unsupported, in fact the contrary, staff seemed to know what they were doing and seemed to support each other as well as receive support from their manager, the owners and each other. This was evident in the calm, controlled atmosphere of the services in which customers and staff were fully engaged with each other and in the activities they were undertaking. We were told about the training available to staff and this was not disputed by those whom we spoke to.

The customers of the service appeared to be fully engaged both with the service, the activities and the staff and we saw lots of evidence of customers interacting with staff easily. All the customers we spoke to told us that they loved attending the service and this was evident in their demeanor throughout our visit at each site.

Contrary to their not being enough activities we saw evidence of many activities and opportunities available to customers on all 3 sites. Customers can attend all 3 sites for different activities that meet their needs, interests and aspirations. Every customer has a personal plan which identifies individual learning, educational, personal needs, interests, behavioral triggers, aspirations etc. and all their activities are geared to helping them to achieve their goals and aspirations and achieve their full potential.

We met with both the owners and the managers of the service and were impressed by the ethos of the service and the passion and commitment to their customers that comes over in how the service functions. The fact that the term customer is used to describe the users of the service recognizes that they are valued individuals who pay for a service and therefore deserve the best value for the money they pay.

This visit took place over several hours, excluding travel time. We were given freedom to wander around and look at anything we wanted to and talk freely to anyone we chose to. At no time did we feel that we were being told what we wanted to hear or that any conversation we had was forced in any way. Our conclusion was that this is a high quality, person centered service which we felt was a good example of a modern day service for people with disabilities.

## ***Recommendations and Follow-Up Action***

We did not feel that we needed to make any recommendations or take any follow up action.

## ***Provider Feedback***

*No feedback has been received*

### **DISCLAIMER**

*Please note that this report only relates to findings we observe on the specific date of our visit. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all residents and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.*