

## Enter and View Report: Aspirations Active

Service address:	Aspirations Active, Unit 1-3, The Hove Enterprise Centre, Basin Road North, Portslade, BN41 1UY
Service Provider:	Brighton & Hove City Council
Date and Time:	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2015
Authorised Representatives:	Sue Seymour and Nick Goslett
Contact details:	Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 3XG

### Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors and staff for their contribution to the Enter and View programme.

### Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

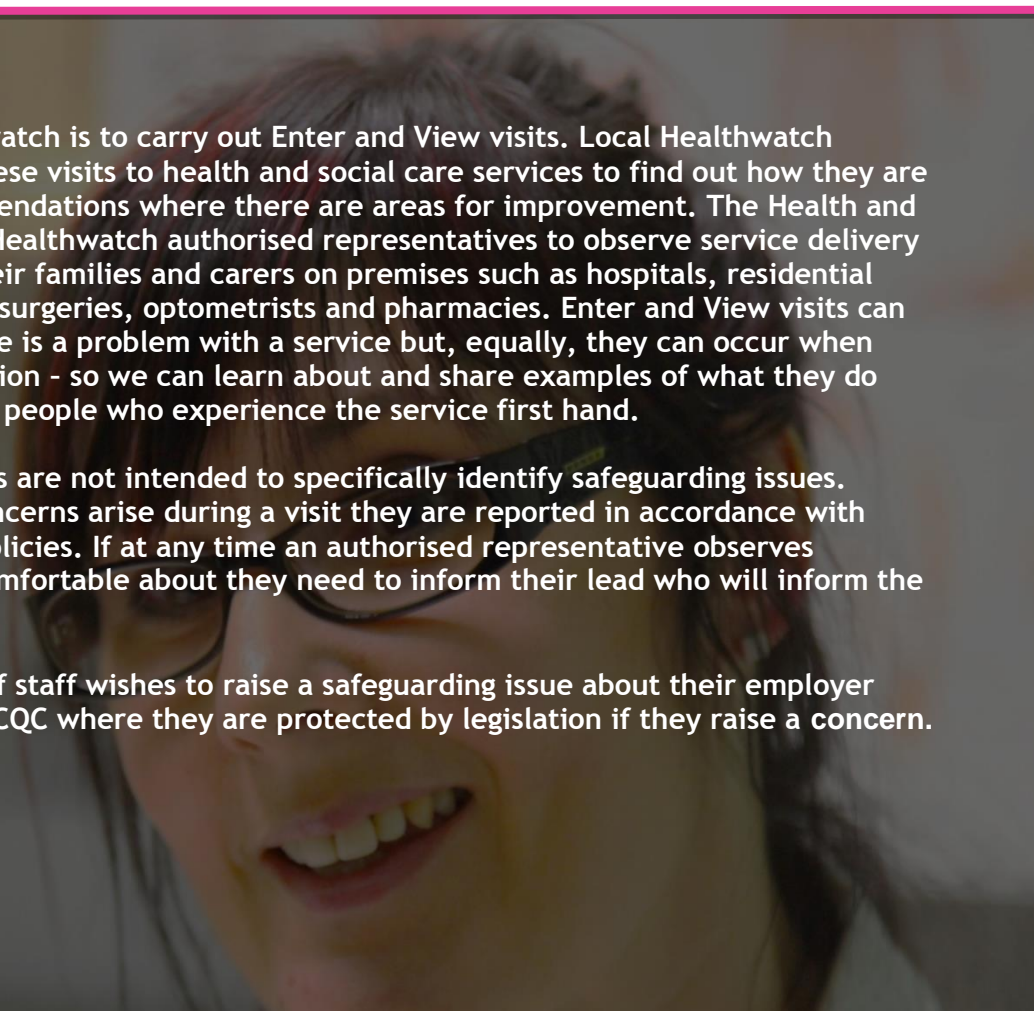


### What is Enter and View?

A part of the role of Healthwatch is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch 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 Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about they need to inform their lead who will inform the service manager.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.





## Purpose of the visit

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove decided to conduct six Enter and View Visits between October 2014 and March 2015 to social care services including day centres and care homes.

As a result of evidence gathered by Healthwatch's predecessor Brighton and Hove LINK, the theme chosen was occupation and social activity.

The establishments were chosen based on a range of criteria. The type of service that is provided was taken into account to ensure we were talking to a range of service users and residents. We also wanted to make sure we visited people from all over the city, so the location of the service was also taken into account. Finally, we talked to colleagues in Brighton & Hove City Council and Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group about potential services to visit.

The outcomes of all six visits will be combined into one over-arching report focused on activities for services users. This will then be shared with Brighton & Hove City Council and Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group.

This report focusses on the visit to Aspirations Active.





## Methodology

Two trained and DBS checked Enter and View Volunteer Representatives visited Aspirations Active Care Home on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January, between 1pm - 3pm. The service caters for people who have complex learning disabilities, and many have low literacy levels. Due to the nature of the service, Enter and View representatives focused on observations of the service and discussions with staff, rather than completing surveys with service users.

The representatives also conducted a short observation about activities and social occupation in the service. This involved the authorised representatives walking around the public/communal areas and observing the surroundings to gain an understanding of how the service actually works and how the residents and service users engaged with staff members and the facilities. There was an observation checklist prepared for this purpose.

---

## Results of Visit

### The nature of the centre

Aspirations Active is a centre which caters for people with very complex learning disabilities and/or autism, often where other settings have failed to deliver the care they require. Their ethos is to ensure the happiness of their clients; they aim to achieve this through positive calming interaction, meaningful activity and stimulation. The centre currently has 22 clients who are over the age of 18, 9 of whom are from the Brighton and Hove area. Some live in residential settings, but most live with their parents at home.

Staff work in a non-hierarchical way, and staff turnover is low, in part because people are in control of their work. Staff come from a range of backgrounds, not all related to care.



## Things to do

The centre is spread over a number of units, with different spaces for different atmospheres and activities. Sometimes activities will be client led, and sometimes staff will suggest them. A sensory room provides calming lights and patterns, and is a place where service users receive messages from staff. A small gym had recently been installed, which some members were fond of using. Music making equipment was also available in the unit and through renting a local music studio. A large air bed and large coloured balls were available for staff and clients to relax on, and whilst some pictures were available, staff chose not to include more to avoid sensory overload.

Outside of the centre, a seven seated minibus was available to take clients to a range of local outings. These included swimming, trampoline use, pet therapy, rebound therapy, and music therapy.

## Spending time with other people

All staff interactions with clients were calming and often used tactile stimulus like stroking and touching. As a general rule, staff interact with clients nine times before they ask them specifically to do something. Where people start to become excitable or aggressive, staff intervene quickly to prevent escalation. Staff were observed to be calm, friendly, and always smiling. There was lots of encouragement to complete tasks, and praise for completing things.

Due to verbal support needs, interaction between clients was limited. However, staff encouraged clients to interact with each other, for example by encouraging a client to tell another about an activity or action. All clients looked engaged and interested at all times during the visit.

## Overall

Aspirations Active is a very specialist service, with a particular ethos regarding how it works with its clients. Our Enter and View Representatives were impressed with the attentive staff and thoughtful environment of the centre.





## Recommendations

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove recognises that because of the unique nature of the service, recommendations may not apply. For this reason we are including just one general recommendation to take forward.

1. Await Healthwatch Brighton and Hove's piece on best practice in social occupation and activity later in the year, and see if the recommendations are applicable to the centre and think about how they might be applied to the client group.

---

## Service Provider Response

Many thanks for providing us with the opportunity to see the draft and offering any comments. We are happy with the accuracy of the report and accept the recommendation to support us moving forwards.

I do hope you enjoyed the visit; we certainly felt that the visit was constructive and welcomed the opportunity for a fresh pair of eyes looking at what we are trying to achieve for our Service Users.

