



Castle Brook

Dear residents and relatives

At WCS, providing a positive experience for our residents and their loved ones is a priority from day one and throughout their time with us. This work is more than just a job - it's about making a meaningful difference every day.

To do this effectively, it's essential that we listen to your feedback. Our satisfaction surveys are an important way for us to understand what's working, what isn't, and what matters most to you. This year, we asked three straightforward questions:

- *What should we start doing?*
- *What should we stop doing?*
- *What should we keep doing?*

We also included key questions that reflect the new CQC approach to assessments, focusing on what really matters to people living in our homes – like feeling safe, being treated with dignity and respect, staying informed, and being involved in decisions about their care and support.

Thank you to everyone who completed the survey. Your responses have given us really rich information, and we have learned so much from your comments.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ed Russell'.



**Residents and relatives
gave Castle Brook a review score out of ten of**

9.5

Rating out of ten calculated from the percentage of people who responded 'Very likely', 'Likely' or 'Neither likely nor unlikely' to the question, 'how likely are you to recommend your care home as a good place to live?'

Response rate at Castle Brook, from a total of 88 places

We are grateful for the 38 responses received

Themes from responses

● Everyday life and activities

Start: considering offering more activities for those who are cared for in bed. Organise even more healthy exercise and activities where residents can meet together, such as afternoon tea. Buy the same TV brand across the home so staff know how they work and can help residents.

Stop: it's important to always consider the age of residents when choosing what music is played and how loud.

Keep: the fun activities and consider organising something like residents doing laps to raise money for charity. Residents love the birthday celebrations, going out into the gardens, trips out to places like tea rooms and market gardens, trying something new and activities in the home.

● Communication and leadership

Start: consider providing a welcome newsletter with details about the team, how the floor runs, and who manages the home would really help new residents settle in. Improving communication between night and day shifts would be great, and putting noticeboard information also online would mean more people see it. Branding the staff handsets would help differentiate them from personal phones.

Stop: the Relatives' Gateway can be confusing and isn't always accurate.

Keep: families value regular chats and getting feedback on relatives. Kate's doing a brilliant job, and the WCS ethos of valuing residents, relatives, and carers is something to be proud of.

● Care and safety

Start: consider more frequent night-time checks to ensure residents are where they should be - perhaps a friendly check-in after dinner and before bedtime and then a walk around all areas every 90 minutes if this doesn't happen already. Ensure that changes in daily notes are always clearly highlighted and if something works well note it and repeat.

Stop: using plug in the wall alarms and replace with wearable pendants as this would improve safety and reduce distress, as buzzers and phones can be out of reach.

Keep: the exceptional standards of care, consistent staffing, listening to what residents want and ensuring a personalised approach that helps residents feel secure and well supported.

● Staff and training

Stop: certain staff shout in the hallways, this is not needed. Mum has sometimes waited a long time for help, which can make her reluctant to ask for support as she thinks staff are too busy. In my opinion, carers should only focus on resident needs, they shouldn't have to cook.

Keep: the staff are absolutely marvellous - warm, kind, and clearly chosen with care. Not using agency staff is a real plus. Keep doing what you do.

● Mealtimes

Start: consider offering even more choice of food, especially for those with special dietary requirements and also add some home-cooked options to the menu. Ensure everyone is offered a drink on a regular basis. It would be nice to be able to do more family dinners.

Stop: my preference would be to offer alternatives to appetito for those people who don't like those meals and offer fresh food choices instead. Sweetened drinks are not great, nor are single use bottles of water.

Keep: the meals are good and there's lots of choice.

● Building, gardens and sustainability

Start: consider having a few more covered areas outside so residents can sit outside more. I'd suggest something like a glass canopy over the rear door with chairs and table would allow residents who can't get round the garden to sit outside.

Stop: using single use plastic bottles. The fingerprint access sometimes doesn't work well.

Keep: the surroundings and outdoor areas which are lovely and encourage residents to go out for a walk and meet others.

● Cleanliness and laundry

Start: it's important to vacuum the main room every day. In my opinion there needs to be some improvements to the laundry system as items go missing.

Stop: it's important not to mix up laundry items as residents then receive items that don't belong to them.

Updates on the past year...

● **Everyday life and activities**

The Memory Maker minibuses now offers regular trips across all our homes taking residents and their families to local favourites like garden centres, bingo halls, museums and zoos. Our five Community Musicians deliver group and one-to-one sessions across all homes, along with popular music-themed tours in summer and winter. Research shows that listening to music benefits us individually and collectively, improving physical, mental and emotional health.

● **Communication and leadership**

The provider of our care planning software has ended support and development of the relatives' gateway. Whilst we have retained access for current users, it is becoming increasingly unreliable and we're now exploring alternative options. This year, we achieved Investors in People Platinum, putting WCS Care in the top 5% of accredited organisations, a testimony to our hardworking staff. And our Chief Executive, Ed Russell, was recognised in the King's Birthday Honours for Services to Care Home Residents, marking an over 30-year career in care.

● **Care and safety**

We're proud to have achieved a 9.8 out of 10 rating on carehome.co.uk, based on customer reviews. In February 2025, WCS Care was named a Top 20 Mid-size Care Home Group — our third time in four years. Across our homes, both residents and relatives have also rated us 9.8 on average. We've recently introduced our new Peace of Mind service, offering carers direct access to a dementia consultant who can provide advice to support with changing behaviour linked to dementia.

● **Staff and training**

Strong word-of-mouth recruitment and salaries above the National Living Wage help us continue to buck national trends. Staff turnover remains low at 14.7% (compared to a national average of over 25%), and agency use below 1% for the last three years as our team of Mobile Carers cover 15% of shifts. Our Management College is developing future leaders and at the end of 2024 we celebrated 109 colleagues with a combined 1,030 years of dedicated service.

● **Mealtimes**

We're focusing on giving residents more choice at mealtimes. With our apetito partnership, we'll offer greater variety, catering safely for dietary needs, allergies and cultural preferences. We're also expanding our popular breakfast clubs, helping residents to start the day well with good food and time together.

● **Building, gardens and sustainability**

We've completed a three-year refurbishment programme and added new entrances and cafes at The Limes and Dewar Close. We've also installed circadian lighting at Sycamores, helping to reduce the symptoms of dementia and improve sleep. And Fairfield's new care cottage development will add an additional 10 ensuite wetroom bedrooms to the home. Our WCS in Bloom competitions continue to brighten gardens, and following success at Woodside Care Village, we plan to install solar panels at a further two homes each year.

● **Cleanliness and laundry**

We know from feedback that lost clothing is an issue in some of our homes. We are continuing to look for solutions that are practical, easy to use and are comfortable for residents.

Kate's feedback

Dear residents and relatives

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. Your feedback is really valuable and helps us understand what's working well and where we can do better. You'll have seen a summary of the overall results and the actions we're taking across WCS Care on the previous pages.

I'm incredibly proud that we're continuing to build on everything we've created at Castle Brook, and am particularly pleased with the refurbishment of our households which was completed this last year.

This year, we also asked residents and their relatives if they felt safe in the home and whether we manage risks appropriately, as well as questions about dignity, respect, communication, and involvement in care.

I'm pleased that 9 out of 10 residents said they feel safe and 8 out of 10 feel that risks are managed effectively. It was also good to note that all other ratings sit at 8 or 9 out of 10, however I can see that there is room for improvement in communication with responses showing that not everyone feels they have the information they would like, when they'd like it, and that they're not sure how to ask questions when they have them.

We have a welcome booklet that is given to all new residents which will help to answer a lot of initial questions. We'll be making time to go through this with all new residents and their families on arrival, answering any questions that people have and ensuring they know how to ask questions that might come up later.

It's encouraging to see so many positive comments about our staff and their care, as well as activities and trips out. We know the minibus is a popular facility and we're always happy to get suggestions for new places we can visit.

We'll keep building on our progress by supporting each other, sharing ideas, and looking for ways to keep improving life for the people who live at Castle Brook. And I will continue to recognise the wonderful work the team do every day, whilst constantly challenging us to be even better.

Kate



Kate Bradshaw
General Manager