



Enter and View

Atwell House

January 2026

healthwatch

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Introduction

Name of home	Atwell House
Service provider	Apex Homes
Date and time	20th Jan 2026 - Time 9.30am-11:30am
Authorised representative (s)	Patricia Lattimer, Phillip Turner, Sandra Gouldbourne Maureen Matthews

2.1 Details of visit

Atwell House Care Home

Atwell House is located in the Leagrave area of Luton and is operated by Apex Care Homes. The home opened in November 2008 following refurbishment and provides residential care for up to seven adults with learning disabilities, including people who may also have dementia.

The home includes seven bedrooms, all with en-suite facilities, as well as communal areas such as a lounge, dining area, kitchen and conservatory. The building has a lift to the upper floor, adapted bathrooms, and equipment to support people with physical needs where required.

Atwell House residents have access to transport and may attend activities at the day centre located at Alicia Nursing Home nearby. The service provides 24-hour care and support, with access to healthcare professionals such as GPs and other specialists when required.

2.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Luton would like to thank the service provider, staff, service users and their families for contributing to this Enter and View visit, notably for their helpfulness, hospitality, and courtesy.

2.3 How we gathered the data

This report is based on our observations and the experiences of the residents, relatives and staff we spoke to on the day of the visit.

What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme 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 identify safeguarding issues specifically. 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, ending the visit.

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

3.1 Purpose of visit

The aim of the project is to understand and report on the experiences of residents in selected Luton living in supported living, residential and nursing homes and day centres, their relatives, supporters and staff.

3.2 Strategic drivers

This visit was part of Healthwatch Luton's wider work to hear from underrepresented groups using community-based care and support services.

Atwell House is a care home facility for adults with learning disabilities and additional needs, and the visit was designed to gather insight directly from service users, staff and management about their experience of care and support.

Healthwatch Luton is gathering feedback from people in inpatient and residential settings and in addition to expanding this work into daytime provision for people with learning disabilities. Given the ongoing need for more inclusive, personalised and accessible services, this visit offered valuable insight into how well current provision meets people's needs.

This visit also supports our commitment to ensuring that people whose voices are less often heard, including those with learning disabilities, are given the opportunity to share their views and help shape services.

Overall summary

Healthwatch Luton carried out an Enter and View visit to **Atwell House** on **20 January 2026**. The visit was **partially announced** and was undertaken as part of Healthwatch Luton's statutory role to listen to the experiences of people using health and social care services.

Atwell House provides residential care and support. During the visit, Healthwatch Luton spoke with residents and members of staff and observed the general environment and interactions within the home.

Observations recorded during the visit described the external condition of the building as **very good**. Internally, the home was described as **clean, well decorated and welcoming**. The environment was noted to feel comfortable and the overall atmosphere within the home appeared calm.

Residents who spoke with the Enter and View team described their experiences positively. One resident stated that they had lived at the home for **five years** and described it as **"very nice"**, while another resident who had lived at the home for a longer period commented that **"it is lovely here."** Residents also reported that

staff communicate well with them and that they feel able to speak with staff and healthcare professionals when needed.

Residents referred to a range of activities available both within the home and in the community. Activities mentioned included **music, puzzles, watching videos, shopping trips and visits to museums**. Residents also described being able to see family members regularly.

Feedback relating to meals was also positive. Residents described the food as **good**, with examples of meals including **tomato soup with bread and jacket potatoes with butter and cheese**.

Staff feedback reflected a supportive working environment. Staff described the home as **friendly, bright and clean**, and reported that they feel able to raise concerns with management when necessary. Staff also referred to training opportunities and explained that they support residents by getting to know their preferences, reviewing care plans and communicating with family members where appropriate.

In summary, the overall impression from this visit was of a **clean and welcoming environment**, with residents describing positive relationships with staff and reporting opportunities to take part in activities and maintain contact with family members.

Methodology

Healthwatch Luton carried out an Enter and View visit to **Atwell House** on **20 January 2026** as part of its statutory role to gather feedback from people using health and social care services.

During the visit, Healthwatch Luton representatives observed the general environment within the home and interactions between residents and staff. Observations included the condition of the premises, accessibility, signage, information available to residents and visitors, and the overall atmosphere within the home.

Healthwatch Luton representatives also spoke with residents and members of staff during the visit.

Five residents and three members of staff completed questionnaires, sharing their views about their experiences of living and working at the home. Questions covered areas such as communication with staff, access to healthcare services, activities, meals, and the general environment.

All information gathered during the visit was recorded by the authorised representatives and has been used to inform this report. Feedback has been presented anonymously and reflects the views shared with Healthwatch Luton on the day of the visit.

Summary of findings

6.1 Overview

Atwell House is a residential care home operated by Apex Care Homes, providing accommodation and support for adults with learning disabilities. The home is located in Luton within a residential area.

The property comprises seven bedrooms with en-suite facilities and communal living areas including a lounge, dining space, kitchen and conservatory. The home also has an enclosed garden and patio area with raised beds, providing residents with access to outdoor space.

On the day of the visit, the service was operating as usual. Residents were observed moving around communal areas and the overall atmosphere within the home appeared calm.

The environment was described in the observation notes as clean, well decorated and welcoming. The building was reported to feel light and comfortable, and information leaflets were visible within communal areas. Communication aids including pictures and Makaton were also noted to be available.

Based on observations and feedback gathered during the visit, Atwell House appeared to provide a clean and welcoming residential environment for the people living there.

6.2 Premises

The external condition of Atwell House was recorded as **very good** during the visit. The building appeared well maintained and clearly identifiable within its residential setting. Parking was available at the time of the visit.

Internally, the home was also described as being in **very good condition** on arrival. The environment was noted to be **clean, well decorated and welcoming**, and the space was described as **light and airy**. The temperature within the building was recorded as comfortable during the visit.

Accessibility appeared appropriate for residents' needs. The observation notes recorded **level access for wheelchair users**, supporting accessibility throughout the premises. Toilet facilities were available and were described as **clean and located near reception**.

Signage within the home was visible, including **clearly marked fire exits**. Information and literature were also available, with **leaflets displayed within the dining area**. Communication aids including **pictures and Makaton** were noted to be available to support residents where required.

Hand sanitiser was available within the building, and refreshments were accessible. Based on the observations recorded during the visit, the premises appeared **clean, accessible and well maintained**.

Overall, the premises appeared to provide a clean, comfortable and accessible environment for residents and visitors.

6.3 Staff interaction and quality of care

During the visit, staff interactions with residents appeared positive. Observation notes recorded that staff were **friendly and approachable**, and that the visiting team were **made very welcome** on arrival. Staff working within the home

appeared familiar with residents, and it was noted that regular staff members **know residents well**.

Residents who spoke with the Enter and View team indicated that they felt comfortable communicating with staff. One resident described staff as **good communicators** and stated that staff were **easy to talk to**. Another resident reported that staff and the manager **take good care of them**.

Residents also referred to being able to access healthcare support when required. One resident stated that they **visit the GP**, and another reported that **dentists attend the home**. Residents also indicated that they are able to speak with **doctors and carers** when they need support.

Staff responses reflected a positive working environment. One staff member described the home as **friendly, bright and clean**, and staff indicated that morale within the team was good.

When asked how individuals with additional needs would be supported, staff explained that they would **get to know the individual and their preferences**, review the person's **care plan**, and **speak with family members** where appropriate. Staff also described encouraging residents to **write things down** where possible if they found it difficult to communicate verbally.

Training was also referred to in staff responses. One staff member stated that they had completed **NVQ Level 2 training in caring and cleaning**, and refresher training was described as taking place **once a year**.

Staff also indicated that management were approachable and supportive. One staff member stated that the **manager's door is always open**, and staff reported feeling comfortable raising concerns or reporting safeguarding issues to management when necessary.

Overall, the observations and feedback gathered during the visit suggested **positive relationships between residents and staff**, with residents reporting that they feel able to communicate with staff and receive support when needed.

6.4 Social engagement and activities

Residents who spoke with the Enter and View team referred to a range of activities taking place both within the home and in the local community.

Activities mentioned by residents included **music, puzzles, playing with blocks and watching videos** within the home. Residents also referred to opportunities to go out into the community, including **shopping trips and visits to museums**.

Observation notes also recorded that outings take place from the home, including **trips to the theatre, museum visits and drives for coffee or hot chocolate**. Posters advertising events and activities were visible within the home.

Additional services were also noted during the visit. Observers recorded that **hairdressers visit the home**, and residents also reported visiting **local barbers** when required.

Residents also referred to maintaining contact with family members. One resident stated that they **see their sister monthly**, while another resident reported that their **sister visits and stayed at the home over Christmas**.

Overall, feedback gathered during the visit indicated that residents have opportunities to take part in a range of activities both within the home and in the community.

6.5 Dining Experience

Feedback gathered during the visit indicated that residents were satisfied with the meals provided within the home. One resident described the food as **good** and stated that **healthy snacks are available between meals**.

Residents also provided examples of meals they had eaten, including **tomato soup with bread** and **jacket potatoes with butter and cheese**.

Observation notes recorded that refreshments are available within the home and that snacks are offered between main meals.

Overall, the information gathered during the visit indicated that residents were satisfied with the meals provided and with the availability of refreshments during the day.

6.6 Choice

Information gathered during the visit suggested that residents are able to make choices about aspects of their daily lives.

Residents referred to taking part in activities that suited their interests, including **music, puzzles, watching videos, shopping trips and visits to museums**. Residents also indicated that they are able to spend time with family members. One resident stated that they **see their sister monthly**, while another resident reported that their **sister visits and stayed at the home over Christmas**.

Residents also indicated that they felt comfortable speaking with staff and healthcare professionals when needed. One resident reported that staff are **easy to talk to**, and another stated that they are able to **talk to doctors and carers**.

Staff responses also reflected an approach that considers individual needs. Staff explained that they support residents by **getting to know the individual and their preferences**, reviewing **care plans**, and **communicating with family members** where appropriate.

Overall, the feedback gathered during the visit indicated that residents are able to communicate with staff and take part in activities and social contact that reflect their interests and preferences.

Recommendations

Based on the observations and feedback gathered during the visit, Healthwatch Luton makes the following recommendations.

1. Continue to promote information about activities and events within communal areas.

During the visit, residents referred to a range of activities and outings, and posters advertising activities were visible within the home. Continuing to

promote this information within communal areas may help ensure that residents and visitors remain aware of the activities available.

2. Continue to support accessible communication approaches for residents.

Observation notes recorded that communication aids such as pictures and Makaton are available within the home. Continuing to ensure that communication tools remain available may further support residents who may benefit from additional communication support.

7.1 Examples of Best Practice

Several examples of positive practice were identified during the Enter and View visit.

Welcoming and supportive staff approach

Observation notes recorded that staff were friendly and approachable, and that the visiting team were made very welcome on arrival. Residents also indicated that staff were easy to talk to and that staff and management take good care of them.

Clean and well maintained environment

The home was described in the observation notes as clean, well decorated and welcoming. The premises were recorded as being in very good condition, contributing to a comfortable environment for residents.

Communication support for residents

Communication aids such as pictures and Makaton were noted to be available within the home. These tools can support residents who may benefit from additional communication support.

Opportunities for activities and community engagement

Residents referred to a range of activities taking place both within the home and in the community. These included music, puzzles, outings to museums, shopping trips, and visits to the theatre. Residents also reported maintaining contact with family members through visits.

Service provider response

Thank you for taking the time to Visit Atwell House and for sending the report for us to consider.

As a provider we found the content of the report to be representative and favourable and have noted your recommendations to continue with the good practice observed.

