



Enter and View

The Beeches

May 2026

healthwatch

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Introduction

2.1 Details of visit

Name of home	The Beeches
Service provider	G Plane and Miss D Newman
Date and time	14th May 15.00–16.30
Authorised representative (s)	Patricia Lattimer, Angela Andrews Maureen Matthews Philip Turner

The Beeches is a residential care home for younger adults with mental health needs, providing specialist support for people living with schizophrenia. The home opened in 1987, and some residents have lived there since it first opened.

The home is registered to accommodate a maximum of 12 residents. All residents have access to single-room accommodation, with four bedrooms benefiting from en-suite facilities.

The Beeches is located within walking distance of local bus and rail services in Luton. The town centre, shopping facilities and other local amenities are also easily accessible.

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 programme of work to hear from underrepresented groups using community-based care and support services. The Beeches is a residential care home for younger adults with mental health needs, providing specialist support for people living with schizophrenia. The visit was designed to gather insight directly from residents, staff and management regarding their experiences of care and support.

Healthwatch Luton is gathering feedback from people using inpatient, residential and day services to better understand the experiences of underrepresented

groups. Given the ongoing need for inclusive, personalised and accessible care and support services, this visit provided valuable insight into how effectively current provision meets people's needs and preferences.

This visit also supports Healthwatch Luton's commitment to ensuring that people whose voices are less often heard, including those living in residential care settings, have the opportunity to share their experiences and contribute to the development and improvement of local services.

Overall summary

Healthwatch Luton carried out an Enter and View visit to The Beeches on 14 May 2026. The visit was partially announced and undertaken as part of Healthwatch Luton's statutory role to gather the views and experiences of people using health and social care services.

The Beeches is a residential care home for younger adults with mental health needs, providing specialist support for people living with schizophrenia. The home opened in 1987, and some residents have lived there since it first opened. The home is registered to accommodate a maximum of 12 residents. All residents have access to single-room accommodation, with four bedrooms benefiting from en-suite facilities. The Beeches is located within walking distance of Luton town centre, local bus and rail services, and a range of community amenities.

During the visit, Healthwatch Luton spoke with two residents and four members of staff, including the person in charge, and observed the environment and interactions within the home.

Overall, the home presented as clean, welcoming and well maintained. Recent refurbishment work had contributed to a bright, fresh and comfortable environment. Healthwatch representatives were warmly welcomed by staff, and the atmosphere throughout the home was calm and relaxed. Residents appeared comfortable and were observed spending time in communal areas and in their own rooms. There were clear signs of personalisation throughout the home, with residents' rooms reflecting individual preferences, belongings and personal interests.

Feedback from residents was largely positive. The Beeches had a relaxed and homely atmosphere, and residents described staff as kind, respectful and approachable. Residents reported that staff communicated well with them and that they felt safe living at the home.

Residents identified a wide range of activities and opportunities available to them, including music, television, games, arts and crafts, bingo, meals out, cinema trips, shopping and support to attend appointments. Residents also described having choice and control over their daily lives, including where they spent their time and where they ate their meals.

Feedback regarding meals was positive. One resident described the food as **“good”**, while another stated: **“I am vegetarian. I have my own drawer in the freezer, there are a wide range of vegetarian and vegan meals available. I have a wide choice of dinners and my own cereals.”**

Staff feedback reflected a supportive team culture focused on meeting residents’ individual needs, supporting access to healthcare services and maintaining training and development. One staff member commented: **“It is lovely working here. The home is well run, happy staff, happy residents and the teamwork is good.”**

No relatives were present during the visit.

In summary, the overall impression from this visit was of a friendly, inclusive and well-managed service, with a homely environment and positive relationships between residents and staff. The evidence gathered suggests that residents are supported to feel safe, maintain choice and independence in their daily lives, and access activities and support that meet their needs and preferences.

Methodology

The visit to The Beeches was **partially announced**: the service provider was informed that an Enter and View visit would occur during the month, but no specific date or time was given in advance. This approach was used to balance transparency with the opportunity to observe normal day-to-day operations.

The visit took place on **14th May 2026, from 15.00–16.30 PM**. Four Authorised Representatives (ARs) attended the visit: **Patricia Lattimer, Philip Turner, Maureen Matthews and Angela Andrews**.

Upon arrival, the team introduced themselves to the manager. The purpose and scope of the visit were briefly reiterated, and staff were asked whether any residents should not be approached or were unable to give informed consent. The manager provided a short tour of the premises and introduced the team to staff and residents in the lounge area.

The team was given access to all communal parts of the home and were able to observe the environment, interactions, and general atmosphere. The ARs used a **semi-structured conversation approach**, primarily engaging with residents in the lounge. Conversations were guided by Healthwatch Luton's standard themes for care home visits, and additional insight was gathered through informal observation.

Notes were taken throughout the visit by hand. Feedback was later collated and analysed alongside observational findings to produce this report.

Demographics and Participation:

- **Two residents** were spoken to in detail during the visit, **one male, and one female, aged around 40 years old**.
- **Four members of staff** also took providing insight into their roles, the care provided, and their views on the service.
- **No family members** were present or available during the visit.

Residents were informed that participation was voluntary, and it was made clear that they could withdraw from the conversation at any time. Staff and residents appeared relaxed and open during interactions.

Summary of findings

6.1 Overview

The Beeches is a residential care home for younger adults with mental health needs, providing specialist support for people living with schizophrenia. The home opened in 1987, and some residents have lived there since it first opened. The home is registered to accommodate a maximum of 12 residents. All residents have access to single-room accommodation, with four bedrooms benefiting from en-suite facilities.

The home is situated on Crescent Rise, close to Luton town centre and within easy reach of local shops, public transport links and other community amenities. Residents have lockable bedroom doors, supporting privacy, independence and security. During the visit, staff were observed knocking on residents' doors and waiting for a response before entering, demonstrating respect for residents' privacy and personal space.

On the day of the visit, the service was operating as usual. Residents moved freely around the communal areas, and the atmosphere throughout the home was calm, welcoming and relaxed. The home appeared clean and well maintained. The accommodation is provided within a converted residential property arranged over three floors. The home does not have a lift and includes a communal lounge and dining area on the ground floor.

Residents were encouraged to speak openly with the Healthwatch representatives. Based on observations made during the visit and the feedback gathered from residents and staff, The Beeches appeared to be an inclusive service that promotes residents' independence, wellbeing and day-to-day needs. Staff interactions were observed to be respectful and supportive, with a clear emphasis on maintaining residents' dignity, privacy and choice.

6.2 Premises

The Beeches is a residential care home for younger adults with mental health needs, providing specialist support for people living with schizophrenia. The home opened in 1987 and is registered to accommodate a maximum of 12 residents. All residents have access to single-room accommodation, with four bedrooms benefiting from en-suite facilities.

Externally, The Beeches is a well-maintained terraced property situated close to Luton town centre. There is no dedicated parking available at the front of the home; however, on-street pay-and-display parking was available at the time of the visit.

Internally, the home was observed to be in very good condition. On arrival, Healthwatch representatives noted that the environment was clean, well presented and well organised, with no unpleasant odours, visible hazards or maintenance concerns identified during the visit.

Accommodation is provided across three floors. Communal areas included a spacious lounge with a television and a dining room, both of which were well maintained and appeared comfortable for residents. Information relating to activities, services and the complaints procedure was clearly displayed on noticeboards within communal areas.

Residents were observed moving freely around the home and using communal and private spaces according to their preferences. At the time of the visit, one resident was observed watching television in the lounge, while other residents chose to spend time in their bedrooms listening to music or engaging in personal activities. This demonstrated flexibility and choice in how residents used the environment.

Accessibility appeared appropriate to residents' needs. Hand sanitising facilities were readily available, general health and safety measures appeared to be in place, and fire exits were clearly marked.

Personalisation was evident throughout the home. Residents' bedrooms reflected individual preferences and interests, with personal belongings, photographs, ornaments and decorations contributing to a homely atmosphere. Bedroom doors were fitted with locks, supporting residents' privacy, independence and sense of ownership over their personal space.

Overall, the premises presented as a clean, safe and homely environment that supports both communal living and individual privacy.

6.3 Staff interaction and quality of care

During the visit, interactions between staff and residents were observed to be calm, respectful and supportive. Staff were described as friendly and approachable, and residents appeared comfortable engaging with them. Residents who provided feedback spoke positively about the support they

receive. One resident commented: **"The staff are very nice here,"** while another stated: **"Yes, the staff communicate well, they are very respectful."**

Residents indicated that they felt safe living at the home, and no safeguarding concerns were raised during the visit. Staff reported that residents are supported to access healthcare services when required, including GP, hospital and community mental health appointments.

Residents confirmed that they receive support to attend appointments where needed. One resident stated: **"I visit the GP regularly and I go to Charter House regularly for appointments with the community mental health team and for injections."** Another resident commented: **"I am well, but I see the GP when I need to and see the community mental health team at Charter House."** A member of staff added: **"Yes, there are external and internal visits regularly, monthly at least."** This feedback suggests that residents are supported to access appropriate healthcare services and maintain their wellbeing.

Both residents stated that they were able to manage many aspects of their daily living independently. One resident explained: **"I am unable to manage on my own at home, unable to manage bills and living independently, and have lived in other care homes. I do what I can myself and I get lots of support from the staff to live independently here."** This demonstrates the home's focus on promoting independence while providing support tailored to individual needs.

Staff reported that training is maintained and regularly updated. One member of staff stated: **"All our training is up to date. We can attend face-to-face training and online training, and we have regular one-to-ones with our line manager."** Another member of staff commented: **"We have regular training. All staff training is up to date and you receive a reminder when training needs updating."** Staff also highlighted the availability of additional training opportunities and the ability to request further development where required.

Staff consistently described a positive and supportive working environment. All staff spoken to stated that they enjoyed working at The Beeches. One staff member commented: **"It is lovely working here. The home is well run, happy staff, happy residents and the teamwork is good."**

Staff reported that communication within the team was positive and inclusive. They stated that they felt comfortable raising concerns and discussing issues with managers and colleagues and that a senior member of staff was always available for support. Staff also referred to regular staff meetings, monthly residents' meetings and monthly supervision sessions, which provided opportunities to discuss performance, training and professional development.

Staff advised that staffing levels were sufficient to meet residents' needs. At the time of the visit, the home accommodated ten residents and had capacity for twelve. Staff described a stable staffing structure comprising support workers, a team leader, a manager and domestic staff. One member of staff stated: **"Yes, we are well covered."** Another explained that additional staff could be deployed when required for events or activities.

Staff reported that they were able to take breaks during their shifts and described break arrangements as flexible. One member of staff stated: **"We have lunch with the residents,"** reflecting the home's communal and supportive approach.

Safeguarding procedures were understood by staff, who confirmed that they had received safeguarding training and were confident in reporting concerns in line with the home's policies and procedures, including escalation to senior management and Luton Borough Council where appropriate.

Overall, the evidence gathered during the visit suggests that residents feel safe, respected and well supported. Staff demonstrated a commitment to providing person-centred care, promoting independence and supporting residents to access healthcare services and community-based opportunities in line with their individual needs.

6.4 Social engagement and activities

Residents who participated in the visit spoke positively about the range of activities available both within the home and in the local community. Residents emphasised that they had the freedom to choose how they spent their time and whether they wished to participate in organised activities or pursue their own interests.

Activities mentioned included watching television, listening to music, arts and crafts, bingo, board games, shopping trips, meals out, cinema visits and attending local community venues. One resident stated:

"I enjoy watching television, doing arts and crafts, playing bingo, playing games like Snakes and Ladders. I also enjoy going out to local restaurants, the cinema and into town shops." Another resident commented: **"I enjoy spending time in my room listening to music, Marvin Gaye. I also go out to the local shops on a Tuesday and the corner shop on a Friday, and I go to church."**

This resident was also observed watching television in the communal lounge during the visit.

Residents also referred to receiving support to attend appointments and activities outside the home when required. Some residents chose to spend time in their bedrooms during the visit, while others used communal areas. Residents indicated that they were able to decide how they spent their time, including whether to participate in communal activities or remain in private spaces. No concerns were raised regarding the availability of activities or opportunities for social engagement.

Staff advised that information regarding activities and individual activity plans was available within the home. Staff emphasised that participation in activities is based on residents' individual choices and preferences.

Both residents spoken to reported having limited family contact. One resident explained that family members lived in America, while the other indicated that limited contact was a personal choice. Staff demonstrated an awareness of residents' individual circumstances and relationships and supported residents to maintain contact with family and friends where appropriate.

One resident stated that they had their own mobile phone, while another reported that they would use the office telephone if they needed to make a call. The home also holds regular residents' meetings and relatives' meetings, providing opportunities for feedback, involvement and discussion.

Overall, the evidence gathered during the visit suggests that The Beeches provides a range of opportunities for both structured and informal social engagement. Residents appeared to be supported to make choices about how they spend their time, maintain community connections and pursue activities that reflect their individual interests, preferences and wellbeing goals.

6.5 Dining Experience

Residents who provided feedback were generally positive about the food provided at The Beeches. One resident described the meals as **"really good with a really good choice of options."** Another resident commented: **"I am vegetarian. I have my own drawer in the freezer, there are a wide range of vegetarian and vegan meals available. I have a wide choice of dinners and my own cereals."**

These comments suggest a high level of satisfaction with both the quality and variety of food available, as well as the home's ability to accommodate individual dietary preferences.

Residents reported that they were able to choose where they ate their meals. Some preferred to dine in communal areas, while others chose to eat in their bedrooms. This flexibility reflected a person-centred and domestic-style approach to mealtimes, supporting residents to make choices about their daily routines.

Residents also stated that staff provide support with eating and drinking where required while encouraging independence wherever possible. One member of staff commented: **"We have lunch with the residents,"** reflecting the home's inclusive and supportive approach to mealtimes.

No concerns were raised regarding portion sizes, dietary requirements or access to refreshments. Staff explained that residents' dietary needs, preferences and nutritional requirements are recorded electronically to support personalised care planning and ensure that individual needs are met.

The dining areas appeared clean, comfortable and appropriately arranged during the visit. Drinks and snacks were available between formal mealtimes, and residents were able to help themselves independently or receive support from staff where needed.

Overall, observations and feedback gathered during the visit indicated that mealtimes form a positive part of daily life within the home. Residents appeared to be supported to exercise choice, maintain independence and access food and refreshments in line with their individual preferences and dietary needs.

6.6 Choice

Feedback gathered during the visit suggests that residents at The Beeches are supported to exercise choice and maintain control over aspects of their daily lives. Residents indicated that they were able to make decisions about how they spent their time, including whether to participate in communal activities, watch television, socialise with others or remain in their bedrooms.

One resident commented: **"I enjoy watching television, doing arts and crafts, playing bingo, playing games like Snakes and Ladders. I also enjoy going out to local restaurants, the cinema and into town shops."** This feedback reflected that residents felt able to pursue activities and interests that were meaningful to them.

Flexibility was also evident in relation to mealtimes, with residents reporting that they could choose where they ate their meals. Residents described being involved in decisions about their daily routines, and support from staff was

described as responsive to individual needs and preferences. Residents stated that staff listened to them and provided assistance when required while promoting independence wherever possible.

Information for residents and staff was displayed on a noticeboard within the dining area, supporting access to information about activities, meetings and other aspects of life within the home.

Staff described a person-centred approach to care, with regular one-to-one discussions taking place to review residents' preferences, wishes and support needs. Staff explained that this approach helps ensure that care and support are tailored to each individual's circumstances and goals.

One member of staff stated: **"We provide individual care to meet individual needs, which is recorded in their care plan. We check and update care plans."** Another member of staff commented: **"We record all verbal and communication needs. We take residents into the community to meet their medical needs, including attending Charter House."**

Staff also described encouraging residents to participate in a range of activities and community opportunities, including arts and crafts, games, seaside trips and visits to support local interests such as attending Luton Town Football Club matches.

Overall, the evidence gathered during the visit suggests that residents are supported to make choices about their daily lives and receive care that is responsive to their individual preferences, needs and aspirations.

Recommendations

The Beeches presented as a welcoming and inclusive service, with positive feedback received from both residents and staff. The following recommendation is intended to support the continued development and enhancement of existing good practice.

1. Consider enhancing the visibility of meal options

Residents spoke positively about the quality, variety and flexibility of meals available within the home. The introduction of written or visual menus may further support residents to make informed choices about meals, encourage

discussion about food preferences and promote independence and involvement in meal planning.

Suggested review period: Within 6 months.

7.1 Examples of Best Practice

The following examples of positive practice were identified during the Enter and View visit to The Beeches:

Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Healthwatch representatives were warmly welcomed by staff throughout the visit. Staff spoke positively about the home and the support provided to residents. The environment appeared clean, well maintained and homely, with a calm, friendly and inclusive atmosphere observed throughout the visit.

Positive Staff–Resident Relationships

Interactions between staff and residents were observed to be respectful, supportive and relaxed. Residents described staff as approachable, kind and responsive to their needs, and appeared comfortable engaging with staff members throughout the visit. Staff were observed respecting residents' privacy by knocking and waiting before entering bedrooms.

Promotion of Choice and Independence

Residents reported being supported to make choices about their daily routines, including how they spent their time, which activities they participated in and where they chose to eat their meals. Staff described a person-centred approach to care, supported through regular reviews of residents' preferences, wishes and support needs. Residents were encouraged to maintain independence while receiving support tailored to their individual circumstances.

Supporting Community Engagement

Residents described a wide range of opportunities to access the local community, including shopping trips, meals out, cinema visits, church

attendance and support to attend healthcare appointments. Staff demonstrated a commitment to supporting residents to maintain community connections and pursue individual interests and goals.

Personalised Care and Support

Staff described a proactive approach to personalised care planning, with regular reviews of residents' needs, preferences and communication requirements. Residents reported receiving support that reflected their individual circumstances, while maintaining as much independence as possible. The accommodation and residents' bedrooms also reflected individual preferences and personalisation, contributing to a sense of ownership and belonging within the home.

Service provider response

1. Consider enhancing the visibility of meal options

Residents spoke positively about the quality, variety and flexibility of meals available within the home. The introduction of written or visual menus may further support residents to make informed choices about meals, encourage discussion about food preferences and promote independence and involvement in meal planning.

A. Response: the home provides weekly written menus that are clearly displayed on the dining room notice board and on the coffee lounge noticeboard. The menus would have been displayed during the Healthwatch visit and must have been overlooked by the people carrying out the visit. I have attached a copy of the menu that was displayed on the date of the visit.

B. Meals and food choices are discussed at the monthly residents' meetings. These suggestions and ideas are then used to create the menu demonstrating independent choices and involvement in meal planning. The minutes for the last meeting were on display on the coffee lounge noticeboard during the visit and would evidence this

C. Residents have support plans documenting individual food choices/preferences.

