



Enter and View

Heywood House

January 2026

healthwatch

Contents

Contents	1
Introduction	2
What is Enter and View?	3
Overall summary	4
Methodology	5
Summary of findings	6
Recommendations	11
Service provider response	12

Introduction

2.1 Details of visit

Name of home	Heywood House
Service provider	The Next Best Place Ltd
Date and time	7 th January 13.30-15.30
Authorised representative (s)	Patricia Lattimer, Philip Turner Sandra Gouldbourne Maureen Matthews

Futures House, The Moakes, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU3 3QB.

Heywood House is a day centre operated by *The Next Best Place Ltd*, a provider specialising in health, social care and educational support for adults and young adults with learning difficulties and additional needs. The service offers a programme that aims to promote wellbeing, independence, social engagement and meaningful activity for those attending.

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 visit 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. Heywood House is a day centre 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, in addition to daytime provision for people with learning disabilities. Given the ongoing need for more inclusive, personalised and accessible services, including in non-residential settings, 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

The Enter and View visit to Heywood House took place on 7th January and offered valuable insight into the experience of individuals attending the day centre, as well as the perspectives of staff. Heywood House is a community day service for adults with learning disabilities and complex needs, including individuals with autism and physical disabilities.

The atmosphere within the centre was calm, welcoming, and inclusive. Communal areas were clean, well-maintained, and designed to promote a sense of comfort and personal expression. Residents were observed engaging confidently in the space, with activities and resources tailored to their individual abilities and preferences.

Staff were described as kind, respectful, and approachable. Observed interactions were warm and supportive, and residents shared positive views about the relationships they had with staff. Several individuals highlighted the emotional support and encouragement they received, with one stating, *"They help me with my problems and always listen."*

Residents reported satisfaction with the meals provided, the range of activities available, and the level of involvement they had in their own care. Staff demonstrated good awareness of residents' care plans and communication needs, including the use of Makaton and visual aids. The centre also supported visits from healthcare professionals when required.

No significant concerns were raised during the visit. However, some suggestions were made regarding the continued development of resident feedback mechanisms and ensuring all dietary preferences are clearly captured and reviewed.

Overall, Heywood House was seen to provide a positive, person-centred environment with a strong focus on inclusion, dignity, and wellbeing. The service demonstrated a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of those who attend and supporting them to live fulfilling and empowered lives.

Methodology

The Enter and View visit to Heywood House took place on **7th January 2026**, from **1:30 PM to 3:30 PM**. The visit was carried out by four Authorised Representatives from Healthwatch Luton: **Patricia Lattimer, Philip Turner, Sandra Gouldbourne, and Maureen Matthews**. The provider had been informed in **December 2025** that a visit would occur in January, although the specific date and time were not disclosed.

Upon arrival, the team introduced themselves to the person in charge David Heywood and Education Manager Victoria Heywood. The purpose of the visit was explained, and the manager confirmed which areas could be accessed. A brief tour of the communal areas was provided, and the team was introduced to available staff and residents.

The Authorised Representatives were given access to communal areas of the service and used a structured observation checklist to assess the environment, layout, and atmosphere. Interactions between staff and residents were also observed during the visit.

A semi-structured conversation approach was used to gather resident and staff feedback. Residents were engaged in communal areas and supported one-to-one, with flexibility in how questions were presented depending on communication needs. Staff completed written feedback forms during the visit.

In total, feedback was collected from:

Three residents, through supported interviews

Three members of staff, via questionnaire

One manager, through a separate written questionnaire

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. All feedback was anonymised and reviewed following the visit.

Summary of findings

6.1 Overview

Heywood House is a day centre supporting adults with learning disabilities. The service is operated by The Next Best Place Ltd and is based in Luton. The visit took place on 7th January 2026.

The centre is managed by **Clare Heywood**, who has been in post since 2012. The building is spacious, well maintained, and clean throughout. Communal spaces are clearly defined and support a calm and welcoming environment. Rooms are arranged to enable both individual and group support, with adaptable spaces for different needs.

The atmosphere during the visit was observed to be relaxed and person-centred. Staff were welcoming and attentive, and residents appeared at ease. The environment was accessible and well-lit, with personalisation visible throughout.

The service was operating as usual during the visit, with residents and staff engaged in day-to-day activities.

6.2 Premises

Heywood House is a single-storey day centre with a spacious, accessible layout. The environment was clean, bright, and well maintained at the time of the visit, with no unpleasant odours or obvious hazards observed. The temperature was appropriate, and the centre appeared calm and comfortable.

Communal areas are compartmentalised to allow for both one-to-one support and group activities. Rooms were observed to be adaptable and well organised,

promoting both independence and structure. Staff reported that the layout supports different needs, including for wheelchair users, and this was reflected in the observed accessibility of all areas.

Signage was clear and appropriately placed, supporting accessibility for individuals with a range of needs. Décor throughout the space was colourful and engaging, contributing to a warm and personalised environment. While the centre does not include bedrooms, residents were seen moving comfortably through the spaces and did not appear to require assistance to navigate the layout.

Accessible bathrooms were available and in good condition. While gardens were not directly observed during the visit, previous service user comments suggest that outdoor spaces are available and accessible. The premises overall gave a strong impression of a safe, well-maintained, and person-centred environment.

6.3 Staff interaction and quality of care

Throughout the visit, staff were observed engaging warmly and respectfully with residents. Interactions were supportive and responsive, and residents appeared comfortable and at ease. Staff were seen offering help when needed, and residents confirmed that they felt listened to and cared for.

Residents described staff as *“kind,” “approachable,”* and *“helpful.”* One resident shared, *“Staff are really nice, they talk to me properly and help when I ask.”* Another said, *“They always check how I’m doing, they’re really supportive.”* Several individuals highlighted the positive relationships they had with staff and noted that they felt safe and able to express their views.

One resident explained that they were involved in daily discussions about their care and could contribute to changes in their plan, stating, *“We do reviews every day. I can say what I want to change.”* This indicates a person-centred approach and a commitment to involving residents in decisions about their support.

Although the service is a day centre and not responsible for personal routines such as waking, dressing, or bathing, residents did report receiving appropriate support with mobility and individual needs during the day. Staff demonstrated awareness of residents’ preferences and goals, and care plans were referenced confidently.

Staff confirmed that a formal complaints process is in place and understood. Communication support, including Makaton, is used where needed. Residents appeared to know who they could speak to if they had a concern. One individual stated, *"I know who to talk to if I've got a problem, they listen."*

Access to medical support is arranged where required. Staff reported that some healthcare professionals, such as GPs and dentists, visit the centre directly, while others support residents through external appointments.

All staff who took part in the visit reported receiving relevant training, including induction, safeguarding, and specialist areas such as communication and learning disabilities. Ongoing training is available, and staff showed a willingness to continue developing their skills to meet residents' needs. One staff member commented, *"We're always learning, if we need more training, we can ask."*

6.4 Social engagement and activities

Residents at Heywood House reported taking part in a variety of activities, including music sessions, games, and occasional group outings. One resident told us, *"I like when we have music and games. It's fun and everyone joins in."* Another mentioned a recent visit to the beach as a highlight.

The centre offers communal areas where activities can take place, as well as opportunities for free time. Several residents referred to being able to use personal devices such as tablets or mobile phones, and one commented, *"I use my phone or the tablet if I want quiet time."*

Feedback suggests that residents are encouraged to participate but also given the freedom to choose how they spend their time. Staff were observed to support and engage positively, adapting activities to suit differing needs and communication styles. Although no single activities coordinator was mentioned, staff contribute to planning and delivering activities during the day.

Residents confirmed they were able to stay in touch with family and friends. One told us, *"Mum, Dad and Ellie come to see me. They know when I'm here."* Access to technology also supported contact, particularly for those without frequent in-person visits.

Staff explained that feedback is collected through annual surveys for residents and carers. While no formal meetings were referenced during the visit, feedback mechanisms appeared to be in place.

6.5 Dining Experience

The dining experience at Heywood House was described positively by residents. Several individuals stated that they enjoyed the food and appreciated the variety available. Specific meals mentioned included hot dogs, beans, and omelettes. One resident commented, *"The food is really good – I had omelette and that was nice,"* while another said, *"I eat with everyone."*

Residents confirmed that they were offered choice regarding what they ate and where they had their meals. Both communal dining and individual options were available. The dining environment was relaxed, and residents appeared comfortable eating with others.

Staff confirmed that dietary preferences and needs are taken into account, including vegetarian options. No concerns were raised regarding allergies, meal access, or timing.

A menu was visible on the day of the visit, and drinks and snacks were accessible to residents throughout the session. Staff were on hand to provide assistance with eating where needed, and residents were observed to be supported appropriately without undue delay or intrusion.

Although there was no information gathered regarding how often the menu changes or how it is presented visually, residents appeared satisfied with the current arrangements. The overall approach to dining supports choice, comfort, and inclusion.

6.6 Choice

Residents at Heywood House appeared to have a good level of autonomy over their daily experience. Individuals were able to choose where to eat, whether to take part in activities, and how to spend their free time. One resident explained, *"I use my phone or the tablet if I want quiet time,"* reflecting the flexibility available to them throughout the day.

Staff reported that residents are involved in reviewing their care plans on a regular basis. One resident stated, *"Everyday review, add changes,"* indicating that their preferences are considered and regularly discussed. This collaborative approach supports choice and person-centred care.

While the day centre does not provide personal care such as bathing or dressing, staff confirmed that communication support is offered where needed. Makaton is used to assist residents with communication difficulties. There was no specific mention of formal interpreting services, but all staff reported receiving relevant training and appeared confident in supporting a range of communication needs.

Feedback is collected annually via surveys sent to both residents and carers. No regular resident meetings or forums were mentioned during the visit, but it was clear that individual views are gathered and respected. The environment itself encouraged independence, and staff were observed engaging with residents in a way that respected their choices and preferences.

Recommendations

Heywood House demonstrated many examples of strong, person-centred practice during this visit. Based on the positive findings, Healthwatch Luton makes the following light-touch recommendations to support ongoing development:

1. Continue to develop opportunities for regular resident feedback.

While annual surveys are in place, introducing more informal feedback methods – such as group discussions or suggestion boxes – could enhance ongoing engagement.

Suggested review: within 6 months.

2. Consider increasing visibility of activity planning for residents.

A clearly displayed weekly activity board or visual schedule could help residents better anticipate and choose what they'd like to take part in.

Suggested review: within 3 months.

7.1 Examples of Best Practice

The following areas of good practice were identified during the Enter and View visit to Heywood House:

Resident involvement in care planning: Residents reported being included in daily discussions about their care and support. This regular, inclusive approach promotes autonomy and person-centred care.

Positive and respectful staff-resident relationships: Feedback from residents was consistently positive, with staff described as kind, helpful, and supportive. Interactions observed during the visit reflected a caring and respectful culture.

Adaptable and inclusive communication: Staff were observed using appropriate communication techniques, and Makaton was available for those who required it. This helped ensure all residents could express their views and be understood.

Engaging and meaningful activity provision: Residents spoke positively about the range of activities available, including group sessions and individual choices. Opportunities for engagement were balanced with respect for personal time and choice.

Service provider response

Thank you for the Enter and View visit. It is always helpful to get an independent view on how we are doing. Staff have responded positively to getting the opportunity to discuss our service. Healthwatch's findings are inline with the feedback we have received from Luton Borough Council 's assessment team over the years.

We have reviewed the recommendations and understand the opportunity to improve. To best implement them we will adapt the suggestions to better meet the needs and abilities of our clients.

Recommendation 1. Continue to develop opportunities for regular resident feedback.

"While annual surveys are in place, introducing more informal feedback methods – such as group discussions or suggestion boxes – could enhance ongoing engagement."

Due to our client's communication and cognitive challenges they would have difficulty engaging in group discussions or using a suggestion box themselves. To provide opportunities for informal feedback we have home to centre diaries for families and carers to keep in contact. We will send a letter home reiterating that the diary can also be used for providing suggestions/feedback.

Recommendation 2. Consider increasing visibility of activity planning for residents.

"A clearly displayed weekly activity board or visual schedule could help residents better anticipate and choose what they'd like to take part in."

Our clients find it difficult to understand time and the concept of future activities. We do start each day with "Hello" sessions where we introduce the day to the clients in a fun way, This includes who is in their session, clients and staff, and activities for that day.

