



Enter and View

Alicia Nursing Home

healthwatch

January 2026

1 Contents

1 Contents.....	2
2 Introduction.....	2
3 What is Enter and View?.....	4
4 Overall summary.....	6
5 Methodology.....	7
6 Summary of findings.....	8
7 Recommendations.....	12
8 Service provider response.....	13

Introduction

2.1 Details of visit

Alicia Nursing Home is a care home located in Leagrave, Luton, and operated by Apex Care Homes Ltd. The service provides residential and nursing care for adults with a range of needs, including physical disabilities, dementia, learning disabilities, and mental health conditions. Support is available for individuals

Name of home	Alicia Nursing Home, Wingfield, Atwell House
Service provider	Apex Comfort Homes
Date and time	20th Jan 2026 - Time 9.15am
Authorised representative (s)	Patricia Lattimer, Phillip Turner, Sandra Gouldbourne, Angela Andrews Maureen Mathews Stephanie Power

both under and over the age of 65. The home forms part of a group of care homes operated by Apex Care Homes Ltd across Bedford and Luton.

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 purpose of this Enter and View visit was to observe the environment and to understand the experiences of people living and working at Alicia Nursing Home. The visit formed part of Healthwatch Luton's wider programme of engagement with local health and social care services.

Enter and View visits allow Healthwatch Authorised Representatives to speak with staff and observe how services are delivered in practice. The aim is to gather feedback about people's experiences of care and to identify examples of good practice as well as any potential areas for improvement.

This visit also provided an opportunity to hear directly from staff about their experiences of working at the service and to observe the environment in which care is provided.

3.2 Strategic drivers

This visit was part of Healthwatch Luton's wider work to hear from people using residential and nursing care services within the community. Understanding the experiences of people living in care homes helps Healthwatch Luton gather insight into how services are delivered locally and identify areas where improvements may be needed.

Healthwatch Luton has previously gathered feedback from people using a range of health and social care services and continues to expand this work into different community settings. National discussions around the quality of care and the importance of safe, person centred services highlight the need for ongoing local engagement and insight.

This visit also supports our commitment to ensuring that the voices of people living in care settings, and those supporting them, are heard and can help inform improvements to services across Luton.

Overall summary

The Enter and View visit to Alicia Nursing Home took place on **20 January 2026** and provided an opportunity to observe the environment and gather feedback from staff working at the service. Alicia Nursing Home is a residential nursing care home providing care and support for adults with a range of needs.

On arrival, the external condition of the building appeared well maintained and accessible, with parking available including provision for disabled visitors. Internally, the environment was observed to be clean, light, and comfortable. Signage was clearly displayed, and information for residents and visitors was visible in several areas. Fire exits were clearly marked and the building appeared accessible for wheelchair users.

Staff who took part in the visit described a supportive working environment and reported good teamwork within the home. Staff stated that they felt comfortable raising concerns with management and that the manager's door was open if they needed support. Training opportunities were also reported to be available, and staff expressed satisfaction with the training they had received.

Staff explained that communication with residents is adapted to meet individual needs, including the use of pictures, non verbal cues, and simple sign language. Care planning was described as person centred, with staff reporting that they review care plans and involve family members where appropriate.

Staff reported that regular handovers and staff meetings help ensure that information about residents' needs is shared effectively. Staffing levels on the day of the visit were described as normal, and staff indicated that the team works together to support residents.

Overall, the home presented as a calm and organised environment. Staff responses suggested a positive team culture and a shared focus on supporting residents' wellbeing and individual needs.

Methodology

The Enter and View visit to Alicia Nursing Home took place on **20 January 2026**. The visit was conducted by Healthwatch Luton Authorised Representatives **Angela Andrews, Sandra Gouldbourne, and Philip Turner**, Patricia Lattimer. The visit was **partially announced**, with the provider informed in advance that a visit would take place, although the specific date and time were not disclosed.

Upon arrival, the Authorised Representatives introduced themselves to the manager and explained the purpose of the visit. The manager confirmed that the team could proceed with observations and speak with staff members where appropriate. The visit focused on observing the environment and gathering feedback from staff.

During the visit, the team completed an observation checklist covering areas such as accessibility, cleanliness, signage, information availability, and the general atmosphere within the home. Observations were recorded throughout the visit.

Staff members were invited to complete questionnaires to provide feedback about their experiences of working at the service.

In total, **two staff members** completed questionnaires. These responses included information about staffing levels, communication with residents, training opportunities, teamwork, and support from management.

Notes were taken during the visit and feedback was later reviewed alongside the observation findings to inform this report. All information included in the report has been anonymised.

Summary of findings

6.1 Overview

Alicia Nursing Home is a residential nursing care home located in Leagrave, Luton, and operated by Apex Care Homes Ltd. The service provides residential and nursing care for adults with a range of care needs, including physical disabilities, dementia, learning disabilities, and mental health conditions. Support is available for individuals both under and over the age of 65.

The home forms part of the Apex Care Homes group, which operates several care services across Bedford and Luton. Alicia Nursing Home provides accommodation and nursing care for residents who require support with daily living and ongoing healthcare needs.

At the time of the visit, the home was operating as a residential nursing care setting with staff providing support to residents across the service.

6.2 Premises

Upon arrival at Alicia Nursing Home, the Authorised Representatives observed that the external condition of the building appeared to be in good order. Parking was available for visitors, including spaces for disabled access. Entry to the building was straightforward and the team were welcomed by staff on arrival.

Internally, the environment appeared clean, light, and comfortable. The temperature within the building was appropriate and the overall atmosphere appeared calm and organised. The home was observed to be accessible for wheelchair users and facilities such as toilets were available and accessible.

Signage throughout the building was clear, with signs for exits, toilets, and other key areas visible. Fire exits were clearly marked and information boards were displayed with leaflets and relevant information for residents and visitors. Complaints information was also visible.

The Authorised Representatives observed that staff were easily identifiable and approachable. Information for residents and visitors was available in a number of areas, including leaflets and displayed notices. Overall, the premises appeared well maintained and organised, providing an environment that supports residents and visitors.

6.3 Staff interaction and quality of care

Responses from staff suggested a supportive working environment with strong teamwork within the home. Morale appeared positive, with staff describing satisfaction in their roles. One member of staff commented, "I am happy working here."

Communication with residents is adapted to meet individual needs. Approaches described included the use of facial expressions, non-verbal cues, pictures, and simple sign language to support residents who may have difficulty communicating verbally. One staff member explained that pictures can be used to help residents communicate responses such as "yes" or "no".

Residents' care was described as supported through person centred care planning. Care plans are reviewed by staff and families may be involved in discussions about care and support where appropriate. Maintaining open communication with residents and their families was described as an important part of ensuring that individual needs are understood and respected.

Staffing levels were generally described as appropriate for the needs of residents. Some staff referred to staffing arrangements as flexible, and indicated that the team works together to ensure residents are supported. Regular handovers and staff meetings were also highlighted as ways of sharing information about residents' needs and any changes in care.

Training opportunities were identified as a positive aspect of working at the home. Staff confirmed that they receive relevant training and that further training is available when needed. One member of staff stated, "Lots of training and I am happy with what I do."

Support from management was also highlighted. Staff indicated that they felt comfortable raising concerns and speaking with the manager or nursing staff if guidance or assistance was required. One response noted that the manager's door is always open. Overall, the responses gathered during the visit suggested a positive team culture, with staff describing supportive management, opportunities for training, and a shared focus on meeting residents' needs.

6.4 Social engagement and activities

During the visit, the Authorised Representatives observed communal areas where residents were able to spend time together. These areas appeared comfortable and provided space for social interaction and relaxation. Staff

feedback indicated that residents are able to take part in activities within the home. Staff reported that activities are organised to encourage engagement and social interaction among residents.

The environment appeared calm and organised, and the communal spaces provided opportunities for residents to spend time together or participate in activities. Based on the observations and staff feedback gathered during the visit, residents appear to have opportunities for social engagement within the home.

6.5 Dining Experience

During the visit, the Authorised Representatives gathered information about the dining arrangements within the home through observation and staff feedback.

Staff reported that residents are provided with meals that take into account their individual needs and preferences. Staff explained that residents are supported during mealtimes where necessary and that assistance is provided for individuals who require help with eating and drinking.

Staff also indicated that residents' dietary requirements are considered when meals are prepared. This includes taking account of specific health needs and preferences where possible.

The Authorised Representatives observed that water was available within the home and that staff were present to support residents as required. The overall environment appeared calm and organised, which helps support a positive mealtime experience.

Based on the observations and information gathered during the visit, the dining arrangements appeared structured to support residents' needs and wellbeing.

6.6 Choice

Staff feedback indicated that residents are supported to express their preferences and make choices about their daily lives where possible. Staff explained that communication methods are adapted to meet individual needs so that residents can indicate their wishes and preferences.

Staff reported that a range of communication approaches may be used to support residents. These include facial expressions, non verbal cues, pictures,

and simple sign language. One staff member explained that pictures may be used to help residents communicate responses such as “yes” or “no”.

Care planning was described as person centred, with staff reporting that they review care plans and consider the individual needs of each resident when planning support. Staff indicated that families may also be involved in discussions about care where appropriate.

Staff also reported that residents are able to communicate concerns or raise issues with staff or management if needed. Staff stated that they would report any concerns to the nurse or manager and record the information as part of the safeguarding process.

Based on staff feedback and observations during the visit, residents appear to be supported to communicate their preferences and to take part in decisions about their care where possible.

Recommendations

1. Continue to explore opportunities for gathering feedback from residents and their families.

During the visit, staff explained that residents can communicate concerns and preferences through conversations with staff and management. The service may wish to continue exploring ways to ensure that residents and families are able to share feedback regularly, helping to support ongoing service improvement.

2. Consider developing a clearly displayed activities timetable for residents and visitors.

Although staff described activities taking place, no activity schedule was observed during the visit. Displaying a weekly activity programme in communal areas could help residents, visitors, and staff better understand the opportunities available for social engagement.

7.1 Examples of Best Practice

Supportive staff culture

Staff responses suggested a positive working environment with strong teamwork. Staff described feeling supported by management and indicated that they were comfortable raising concerns or seeking guidance when needed.

Adaptable communication methods

Staff reported using a range of communication approaches to support residents who may have difficulty communicating verbally. These included facial expressions, non-verbal cues, pictures, and simple sign language. This approach helps residents communicate their needs and preferences.

Training and professional development

Staff indicated that they receive training relevant to their roles and that further training opportunities are available. Staff responses suggested that they feel supported in developing their skills and knowledge.

Accessible and organised environment

Observations during the visit indicated that the home was clean, well organised, and accessible. Signage was clear, information for residents and visitors was displayed, and facilities such as accessible toilets and wheelchair access were available.

Service provider response

Thank you for taking the time to visit Alicia Nursing Home 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 made to continue with current best practice. We have ensured that the weekly activity programme is displayed in communal areas so that all are fully aware of all opportunities available.

