

# **Enter and View Programme 2024 Mental Health Services**

**Evergreen Ward Report**

# Contents

Summary	3
Methodology	4
Thematic Overview Findings	5
Thematic Recommendations for Review:	9
Next Steps	9

## Statutory functions of Enter and View

What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch have a legal power to visit health and social care services and see them in action. This power to Enter and View services offers a way for Healthwatch to meet some of their statutory functions and allows them to identify what is working well with services and where they could be improved. Although Enter and View sometimes gets referred to as an 'inspection', it should not be described as such.

Healthwatch statutory functions

- The legislative framework for Healthwatch is split between what Healthwatch must do (duties) and what they may do (powers). Healthwatch have a power under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007<sup>1</sup> and Part 4 of the Local Authorities Regulations 2013<sup>2</sup> to carry out Enter and View visits
  - Healthwatch should consider how Enter and View activity links to the statutory functions in section 221 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2003. The purpose of an Enter and View visit is to collect evidence of what works well and what could be improved to make people's experiences better. Healthwatch can use this evidence to make recommendations and inform changes both for individual services as well as system wide. During the visit, Healthwatch should focus on:
    - Observing how people experience the service through watching and listening
    - Speaking to people using the service, their carers and relatives to find out more about their experiences and views
    - Observing the nature and quality of services
    - Reporting their findings to providers, regulators, the local authority, and NHS commissioners and quality assurers, the public, Healthwatch England and any other relevant partners based on what was found during the visit
- <sup>1</sup> Section 225 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- <sup>2</sup> Part 4 of The Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013
- <sup>3</sup> Section 221 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Healthwatch decide to carry out Enter and View of mental health services following recent feedback of services.

[20220323 Enter and View guidance final.pdf \(healthwatch.co.uk\)](#)

# Thematic Review

## Summary

Healthwatch Luton would like to express our sincere thanks to East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) in partnership with Central and Northwest London foundation Trust (CNWL) and Evergreen Ward for allowing us to visit and observe their services on November 20th, 2024. Without their cooperation and insight, as well as the contributions from both staff and residents, we would not have been able to carry out this overall thematic review of the care provision available within mental health services in Luton. Healthwatch Luton plans to visit six mental health wards in November and December, with Evergreen Ward being one of these.

Evergreen Ward is an acute mental health inpatient service that provides 24-hour treatment and care in a safe and therapeutic environment for adolescents. Healthwatch members observed that the ward had a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, with staff and patients appearing relaxed and calm. The environment was noted to be modern and clean, contributing to a sense of comfort. Staff were described as approachable and friendly, contributing to a positive atmosphere on the ward.

Healthwatch Luton's Authorised Representatives conducting this Enter and View observed and took feedback from patients and staff. Given the range of conditions present, Healthwatch Luton recognises that some patients may exhibit symptoms linked to their conditions. While we collect individual perspectives, our report reflects overarching themes drawn from all the experiences gathered. Recommendations are based on these trends, which highlight how patients feel about their care.

Patients interviewed were adolescents, as the ward caters specifically to this group. Patients were not asked to disclose personal information, such as age, unless they chose to do so, and none opted to share this.

The report presents overall findings, with more detailed observations in specific areas. To protect patient and staff confidentiality, all names and job titles have been omitted.

## Methodology

Healthwatch Luton had previously notified ELFT and CNWL through an official announcement letter that we would be visiting the mental health wards as part of our Enter and View programme, scheduled for November and December 2024. During our visit, our authorised representatives conducted brief interviews with staff members, including the person in charge that day, and engaged with patients. The representatives explained the purpose of the visit and distributed questionnaires to gather feedback on key topics such as staffing levels, quality of care, safety, refreshments, activities, and admission and discharge processes. Additionally, Healthwatch Luton took the opportunity to informally speak with patients, asking about their experiences of the wards. The majority of our visit involved observational work, where representatives toured the communal and public areas, observing the environment and gaining insight into the operation of the ward. This allowed us to better understand how the patients interacted with the staff and the facilities.

During the visit, Healthwatch Luton engaged with two individuals, including one resident and one staff member, to gather their insights and feedback. By speaking with both patients and staff, we were able to gather different perspectives, providing a comprehensive picture of the atmosphere and workings of the ward. The insights we gained will help inform our review and recommendations on mental health care provisions in Luton. These observations are then themed across all Authorised Representatives views and perspectives to provide a single themed overview of our observations.

## Overview of ward

East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) in partnership with Central and Northwest London foundation Trust (CNWL) describes the Evergreen Unit, a specialist, short-term mental health inpatient service for children and young people aged 12-17. Located on the first floor of Calnwood Court, Luton, the Evergreen Unit offers care to those experiencing complex mental health difficulties that cannot be safely managed within the community.

The unit provides a safe, therapeutic environment for young people who require support due to the severity of their mental health conditions. Evergreen delivers care for individuals whose needs are too complex to be addressed in less restrictive settings, ensuring they receive the necessary treatment and supervision during this critical period. The care provided is personalised through a multi-disciplinary approach, with a focus on stabilisation of acute symptoms,

and the development of personalised treatment plans to support long-term recovery. The unit also offers specialised assessments and management of risks, ensuring the safety and well-being of all patients.

## **Thematic findings**

### **Observations**

The observational report for the Evergreen inpatient ward, provides a generally positive assessment. The external building condition and internal decoration are noted as good, with parking available on the road at the side of the ward. The facility is wheelchair accessible, featuring wide doors and ample toilets. Essential signage for fire exits, rooms, and toilets is clear, and water is available for patients. The ward has a comment box, complaints information, and a designated staff privacy area. Literature and leaflets are available, but non-English information is limited. Hand sanitisers are provided. Staff are described as friendly and approachable, with clear guidance for patient arrival. Translation services and a payphone are not available. The ward is child-friendly and appropriate for adolescents. Staff photos and names are not prominently displayed. The environment is light, airy, and warm. The ward is clearly signposted, and the LHW poster is displayed.

### **Themes**

#### **Staffing**

Staff feedback indicated the ward is consistently well-staffed, and staff members take pride in the strong, cohesive team. Regular meetings and dedicated away days are held to facilitate in-depth discussions on various aspects of care and operational matters. These sessions are supported by bank staff, ensuring that patient care is uninterrupted during these periods.

Patient feedback indicates a positive perception of staffing levels, with an average of six staff members on duty at any given time. Patients feel that their concerns and needs are acknowledged by the staff. In addition, consultants consistently conduct regular rounds, providing patients with the opportunity to discuss their care and ask any questions. This frequent engagement not only ensures continuity of care but also offers patients reassurance, helping them feel supported and involved in their treatment decisions.

## **Admissions**

The admissions process is well-structured and thoughtfully considered, ensuring that both staff and patients are fully informed. Feedback highlights the comprehensive nature of the process, with staff emphasising the clarity and accessibility of the information shared with patients upon admission. Key elements of the process include clear communication regarding meal-times, daily timetables, and the provision of informative leaflets covering important aspects of care.

Additionally, patients are provided with details about advocacy services, ensuring they are aware of the support available to them throughout their stay. This thorough approach not only facilitates a smooth transition into the ward but also fosters an environment of transparency and patient engagement. Patient feedback indicated returning patients received some of this information verbally on readmission to the ward.

## **Care Plans**

Patients demonstrate a clear understanding of their care plans and are well-informed about the routines involved in their care, including regular discussions with consultants regarding their ongoing treatment. Communication with their General Practitioner (GP) is also effectively managed, ensuring continuity of care. Staff follow established routines for patient care, which include regular monitoring of vital signs such as height, weight, blood sugar levels, and general wellbeing. In addition, they are attentive to the personal needs of each patient, ensuring a tailored approach to care. Care plans are holistic, encompassing not only medical aspects but also educational needs, which are particularly important for the teenagers on the ward. Staff demonstrated a clear awareness of the teenage advocacy service available, and patients were provided with relevant information about how to access this support. This comprehensive approach appears well-rounded, offering a personalised care experience.

## **Activities**

Patients are provided with a variety of activities to encourage creativity, relaxation, and social interaction; examples of these activities include sketching, baking. A list of available activities is displayed on the ward's noticeboard, ensuring that patients are informed of the options available to them. The schedule is regularly updated to reflect any changes. Patient activities encompass both group events and individual one-to-one sessions.

In addition to these activities, patients have the opportunity to spend time outdoors, either alone or accompanied by family members or friends, offering them a welcome change of environment and promoting physical and mental wellbeing. The ward also features a dedicated games and social space, where patients can engage in recreational activities, socialise, and build connections with their peers in a supportive setting.

## **Safety**

Patients on the ward feel safe and have expressed no concerns about violence from other patients. They are aware that random room searches are conducted to check for illegal substances, as well as searches when a patient returns after being away for any length of time. Staff feedback indicates these measures help ensure a secure environment for everyone on the ward.

## **Discharge**

Feedback from both staff and patients highlights that there is a clear and structured procedure for discharge, with an emphasis on effective care and communication. Staff noted how important it is for the details of the patient's care to be communicated to all relevant parties, including those supporting the patient's next steps after leaving the ward, such as the GP/social services. The majority of patients are discharged to family homes, which often makes the process smoother and more straightforward.

## **Overall Findings**

The observational assessment of Evergreen Inpatient Ward provides an overall positive review of both the physical environment and the processes in place to support patient care. The ward is well-maintained, with the external building in good condition and internal decor that is both light and welcoming. The facility is fully wheelchair accessible, with wide doors, ample toilets, and clear signage, ensuring accessibility for all patients. Essential resources such as hand sanitisers and drinking water are readily available, although literature and leaflets provided are primarily in English, with limited non-English materials. Staff members are described as friendly, approachable, and dedicated to creating a positive environment for patients. However, there are gaps in the availability of translation services and a payphone for patient use.



Staffing levels on the ward are consistently viewed positively by both staff and patients. The team is described as cohesive, with staff taking pride in their collaborative approach. Regular meetings and away days are held to discuss care and operational matters, with bank staff brought in to ensure that patient care continues uninterrupted during these sessions. Feedback from patients supports this, with an average of six staff members on duty at any given time, and patients feeling that their concerns are heard and addressed. Consultants regularly conduct rounds, providing patients with opportunities to discuss their care and treatment plans. This frequent engagement fosters reassurance, continuity of care, and active patient involvement in decisions about their treatment.

The admissions process on the ward is well-organised and comprehensive, ensuring that both patients and staff are fully informed. Patients are provided with clear and accessible information on meal-times, daily routines, and available support services, including advocacy. This approach helps facilitate a smooth transition into the ward, and returning patients also receive verbal updates on these details when readmitted. This thorough and transparent process encourages patient engagement from the outset, ensuring they feel informed and involved in their care.

Patients demonstrate a good understanding of their care plans, with staff ensuring that communication about treatment is clear and consistent. Regular discussions with consultants help patients stay informed about their ongoing care, and staff follow established routines for monitoring vital health indicators, such as height, weight, and blood sugar levels. These plans are holistic, addressing not only medical needs but also educational needs, which is especially important for adolescent patients. Information about the teenage advocacy service is also provided, ensuring patients have access to additional support during their stay.

A variety of activities are offered to patients, designed to encourage creativity, relaxation, and social interaction. Activities such as sketching and baking are examples of the therapeutic options available. A list of these activities is displayed on the ward's noticeboard and is regularly updated to reflect any changes. Patient activities include both group events and individual one-to-one sessions, offering a balance of social engagement and personal time. Patients are also encouraged to spend time outdoors, accompanied by family or friends, which provides a change of environment and promotes physical and mental well-being. The ward features a dedicated games and social space, where patients can engage in recreational activities and socialise with peers in a supportive setting.

Patients report feeling safe and secure with no concerns about violence from other patients. To maintain a safe environment, random room searches are conducted to check for illegal substances, and searches are also carried out when patients return after being away for any period. These measures contribute to a sense of safety and ensure that the ward remains a secure space for all patients.

The discharge process on the ward is clear and structured, with an emphasis on effective communication between staff, patients, and external parties, such as GPs and social services. This collaborative approach ensures continuity of care after the patient leaves the ward. Most patients are discharged to family homes, which helps to streamline the process and facilitates a smoother transition back to their home environment.

## **Thematic Recommendations for Review:**

Feedback was positive for this provision and observation from Healthwatch representatives supported this. Recommendation is to continue to provide a high level of care and support.

### **Next Steps**

Feedback to the trust.



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