



# Enter and View Milton Ernest Hall Care Home

**Announced Visit**

8<sup>th</sup> August 2023

# Contents

What is Enter and View .....	3
Provider details.....	3
Acknowledgments.....	3
Disclaimer .....	3
Authorised Representatives.....	4
Who we share the report with .....	4
Healthwatch Bedford Borough’s details.....	4
Healthwatch Principles .....	5
Purpose of the visit .....	6
What we did.....	6
Findings: .....	7
• Environment .....	7
• Essential Services .....	7
• Access .....	8
• Safe, dignified and quality services .....	8
• Information .....	9
• Choice .....	9
• Being listened to .....	10
• Being involved .....	10
• Current challenges for the home .....	10
Comments.....	11
Recommendations.....	12
Provider feedback.....	12

## What is Enter and View?

Part of Healthwatch Bedford Borough's remit is to carry out Enter and View visits. Healthwatch Bedford Borough Authorised Representatives will carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows 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 that we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand. Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Safeguarding Policy, the service Manager will be informed, and the visit will end. The local authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

## Provider details

Name and Address of Service: Milton Ernest Hall Care Home, Bedford Rd, Milton Ernest, Bedford MK44 1RJ

Registered Manager: Ms Heather Donnell

Service type: Specialises in Residential, Nursing, Dementia, and short-term Respite care.

Client type: Mixed

## Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Bedford Borough would like to thank the Registered Manager, staff and all the residents for their co-operation during our visit.

## Disclaimer

Please note that this report is related to findings and observations made during our visit made on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The report does not claim to represent the views of all service users, relatives, and staff members, only those who contributed during the visit.

## Authorised Representatives

Emma Freda, Lead Authorised Representative

Shanice Kazaly, Authorised Representative

## Who we share the report with

This report and its findings will be shared with the Manager of Milton Ernest Hall, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Healthwatch England. The report will also be published on the Healthwatch Bedford Borough website.

## Healthwatch Bedford Borough's details

Address:

21-23 Gadsby Street

Bedford

MK40 3HP

Website: [www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk)

Telephone: 01234 638678

# Healthwatch principles

Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Enter and View programme is linked to the eight principles of Healthwatch, and questions are asked around each one.

- 1. A healthy environment:** Right to live in an environment that promotes positive health and wellbeing.
- 2. Essential Services:** Right to a set of preventative, treatment and care services provided to a high standard to prevent patients reaching crisis.
- 3. Access:** Right to access services on an equal basis with others without fear of discrimination or harassment when I need them in a way that works for me and my family.
- 4. A safe, dignified and quality service:** Right to high quality, safe, confidential services that treat me with dignity, compassion, and respect.
- 5. Information and education:** Right to clear and accurate information that I can use to make decisions about health and care treatment. I want the right to education about how to take care of myself and about what I am entitled to in the health and social care system.
- 6. Choice:** Right to choose from a range of high-quality services, products and providers within health and social care.
- 7. Being listened to:** Right to have my concerns and views listened to and acted upon. I want the right to be supported in taking action if I am not satisfied with the service I have received.
- 8. Being involved:** To be treated as an equal partner in determining my own health and wellbeing. I want the right to be involved in decisions that affect my life and those affecting services in my local community.

## Purpose of the visit

The visit was announced and was part of the ongoing work programme of Healthwatch Bedford Borough.

## What we did

On arrival to the building, we rang the bell, waited for the staff to let us in and introduced ourselves. We were asked to sign in electronically and we were then greeted by the Manager.

We were made very welcome from the beginning of the visit; and were offered refreshments.

We spoke to staff, residents and relatives and then spent a good amount of time talking to the Manager.

The Manager has been in her role since February 2023 but had previously been the Deputy Manager, so has been at this setting for several years.

The home is a 24-bedded care home with a maximum capacity of 29 residents. On the day of the visit 21 residents were in situ, one being in short-term respite care. Bedrooms are spacious, yet quaint rooms with beautiful features. One room we visited with permission from the resident had a lovely view overlooking the nearby woodland.

Milton Ernest Hall Care Home also offer double rooms particularly for couples who wish to stay together. One relative said that they "couldn't fault it".

There is also a separate 5-bedded unit called the Clover Suite – which is particularly for advanced Dementia residents.

# Findings:

## Environment

### External

Milton Ernest Hall Care Home is situated in a stunning rural setting with lots of greenery and vast open spaces. The grounds are immaculately maintained. The home itself is a stunning Grade 1 mansion house. It is spotlessly clean and welcoming from the offset.

The gardens are expansive with lots of outdoor seating and canopies providing necessary shade for residents. The Manager explained that many summer activities take place at Milton Ernest Hall and that children from the local school come over to play and partake in activities in the grounds. They also get involved in gardening with some of the residents.

There is a large-scale annual summer barbeque where other care homes are invited to join in.

### Internal

The entrance way to Milton Ernest Hall is clean however slightly dark. This is however indicative of the gothic architecture and use of dark wood during the build era. A GDPR compliant electronic signing in/visitors tablet is visible just inside the entrance. We were asked to sign in before entering the main home.

The home itself is vast and decadent whilst also being functional. It has numerous rooms. We started our visit by visiting the Manager's office, where she gave us a comprehensive overview of the home, its staffing, and residents.

There is a spacious, beautifully furnished lounge area for residents and relatives. Several people were sitting in the lounge whilst we were visiting, along with a resident on respite's dog laying by the fire. Some of the residents were being visited by relatives. There is a games corner, an art corner and spacious, comfortable seating throughout.

Milton Ernest Hall offers a smaller dining/drawing room for residents who do not want to eat in the main dining hall, if feeling overwhelmed or wanting some quiet time.

The main dining hall is magnificently grand. We observed residents seeming to really enjoy eating their lunch in such a beautiful setting. The tables are laid out beautifully by staff, with folded napkins, gleaming glassware, and beautifully polished cutlery.

The hallways were clear and free from hazards, with lots of artwork and notices on the walls of upcoming and past events and need-to-know information.

It was however noted that none of the staff appeared to be wearing name badges. The Manager showed us their standardised name badges in her office. We had a discussion in relation to promoting the wearing of the bright yellow 'my name is' formatted badges. Particularly pertinent for those residents with worsening vision

and Dementia, as well as for relatives and visitors to see to whom they were liaising with.

The doors displayed clear signage that were easy to read.

## **Essential services**

The Manager explained that new residents are supported by staff when they arrive and a support plan is drawn up containing their acute and long-term needs, likes and dislikes etc. It was noted that these support plans are constantly reviewed as needs changed. Milton Ernest Hall's care plans are recorded in paper format; however, daily notes are filed electronically on electronic devices which are backed up.

The Manager explained that when they receive a concern or complaint, they log it and follow the necessary steps in line with their complaints policy.

The residents that we engaged with said that they were happy living at Milton Ernest Hall and one expressed that "it's very nice, I like it here". All residents appeared to be very comfortable around the staff and we were encouraged to hear one openly state "we love them".

## **Access**

The Manager explained that residents tap the office door and enter whenever they wish to. We noted that there is even a chair that is fondly named the 'residents chair', as residents come in sometimes to sit and just have a chat.

The Manager expressed that the home and its residents were "her life". This was very evident to see. The care she offers residents is heart-warming. She advised that she did not live far from work, so was usually available in an emergency. This includes taking residents to the hospital etc., when required.

## **Safe, dignified and quality services**

It was very evident that residents at Milton Ernest Hall Care Home feel safe and very well looked after. This was expressed not only by residents, but also their relatives.

We observed how caring and gentle staff were with residents and how patient they were even with agitated residents, struggling with worsening memory loss. One relative expressed "I don't know how they do it. They're amazing. He tries to hit and shout at them sometimes, but they still come out smiling". One staff member said that "when residents look lonely, I'll go and just have a little chat with them."

Another relative said "it's very, very pleasant being here", with one stating that it's "a big family environment. Mum was living elsewhere and it was awful. I had to move her and as soon as I walked in here I knew this was perfect for Mum. They're so lovely with her. I feel so blessed now after all the problems before."



All residents and relatives we spoke to expressed that they feel safe.

Neither staff, residents or relatives had anything negative to say about the home or the care they receive, which is a testament to what we observed for ourselves whilst on the visit.

## Information

Information is bright, welcoming and accessible at Milton Ernest Hall. The residents and relatives raise any concerns or complaints directly with the staff; and brought to the attention of the Manager or raised directly with her. Either way, these are swiftly actioned.

One resident expressed that there was “no problem” doing this in terms of potential repercussions and advised that they felt listened to. The same could be said of staff.

The staffing at Milton Ernest Hall is well thought out, with great leadership. Despite this being a large home with lots of maintenance requirements to keep it to a high standard, the staff seemed welcoming, relaxed and nurtured. This is true testament to the support and wellbeing needs of staff being considered by the Manager. This in turn means that they can project this nurturing onto the residents they care for, who were jolly and well engaged.

## Choice

Most of the residents that we engaged with expressed that they had a good choice; this includes food, snacks, activities etc.

There is a quality, balanced choice of foods on the menu – each meal of the day was a 3-course meal (starter, main and dessert) and there was also a vast selection of snacks/drinks during the day that can be requested by residents as they wish. These are also routinely offered. Residents have alternative options if they do not wish to have either of the main meals provided. These additional options often included either jacket potato, omelette, soup, or sandwiches. One relative said that she was “convinced that it’s the food that’s keeping mum alive.”

Most residents were more than happy with the meal selections. We noted one relative who expressed that their family member is not always happy with the meals, however, “at home they would only eat noodles anyway.”

One staff member stated that if there was one thing they would change, it would be “to add more cuisines to the menu as sometimes it’s a bit bland”.

The home has two Activities Coordinators, who offer a vast range of activities during the week for residents to enjoy. We observed the rota on the notice board with activities ranging from flower arranging, chair-based yoga, petting zoo, arts and crafts sessions, gardening and ample other options. A floristry session was taking place whilst we were on site which residents took turns to join in with and seemed to thoroughly enjoy.

They also have outside entertainers providing services to Milton Ernest Hall, as well as hosting their own summer BBQ's, family brunches and coffee mornings. Residents can partake in trips to the local pub and garden centre when they would like to. It was lovely to see the variety of activities residents can be involved in if they opt in and that the home is always open to new ideas and suggestions. One relative expressed "there's an opportunity for everything here" and that residents can do "whatever they please". They also shared that their relative is mostly bed bound now, but staff will still visit him daily and read to him.

One relative told us that her family member enjoyed having the hairdresser come every week for a shampoo and blow-dry and was most animated about getting her nails done.

## **Being listened to**

The residents and staff all felt that they could talk to their Manager about anything, even concerns, without repercussions.

One staff member said they "feel very supported and have meetings every day with my senior". Another told us "my supervisor is very good with my needs and keeps on top of everything". The staff's respect for the Manager at Milton Ernest Hall was evident.

## **Being involved**

The residents and relatives can speak to any member of staff around any concerns, comments or complaints they wish to make.

Despite it being such a large care home, there was a very relaxed atmosphere and residents seemed very content talking to friends, pottering about or taking part in planned activities.

## **Current challenges for the home**

The management, staff and residents were asked if they could change one thing what would it be and why.

One member of staff stated that the only thing they would change is "for a more modern building and facilities so that less maintenance is needed". This was echoed by the Manager who said "It always takes longer to get things actioned. Our day-to-day maintenance is quite complex and relentless due to the home being such a large scale."

None of the relatives or residents we spoke to had anything they would change about Milton Ernest Hall at all.

# Comments

"It's a big family environment"  
(Relative comment)

"I would raise concerns with any of the management team here. They're all nice"  
(Staff comment)

"Everyone's very friendly and it's been easy to settle in"  
(Resident comment)

"This was the first choice for my parents"  
(Relative comment)



"I like to be here for my residents"  
(Manager comment)

"It's a lovely home with lovely grounds"  
(Staff comment)

"There's an opportunity for everything here"  
(Relative comment)

"The food is perfect"  
(Resident comment)

"It's an amazing place and such a caring home"  
(Relative comment)

# Recommendations

## Recommendations to the service

There are very few things to consider when looking at a service of such high calibre as Milton Ernest Hall. We found the provision and general ambience to be superb, therefore our only recommendations are as follows:

1. Ensure that staff are wearing name badges which are easy to read. This means clear font and bright colour due to worsening eyesight and memory loss. For professionals and relatives having a photo board that contains photos of each staff member, their first name and surname, and job titles on a notice board near the entrance is good practice. Name badges should then ideally be in the format of the "My name is" yellow badges, displaying first names only to make them both easy to see and read.
2. Consider offering semi regular drop-in advice clinics from Healthwatch Bedford Borough for residents, relatives, and staff, to support each group to access wider health and care services and allow them to have their say on local service provision.

## Provider Feedback

It was a privilege to facilitate an Enter and View visit from the Healthwatch Bedford Borough Authorised Representatives. We highly value the input offered to our Home and we take this opportunity to work together, aiming to further improve the service that we provide by following the recommendations offered.

We appreciate the importance of ensuring that Residents, Professionals and Visitors are able to easily recognise members of the Team and have access to their names. This would also promote self-awareness among the Team Members and a sense of identity and belonging to what is for us our "Family", endorsing one of the values of Majesticare. Furthermore, there is desirability from our Home to maximise the benefits of the service provided from Healthwatch and facilitate clinics for Residents, Relatives, and the Team. We will endeavour to take any practical steps for this to occur in conjunction with recommendations and the service offered.

We are delighted to learn about the comments provided by Residents, Relatives and the People who work at Milton Ernest Hall, this is certainly testimony of the commitment and passion that our Team offers at service delivery, while working with endorsing each value of Majesticare. We will continue to monitor feedback from Residents, Visitors, Professionals, and the Team, striving to continuously improve the experience of People who live and work at Milton Ernest Hall.

21-23 Gadsby Street  
Bedford  
MK40 3HP

[www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk)  
t: 01234 638678

e: [enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk)

 [@HealthwatchBB](https://twitter.com/HealthwatchBB)

 [Facebook.com/HealthwatchBedfordBorough](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchBedfordBorough)

**healthwatch**  
Bedford Borough