

ISSUE 14 | SUMMER 2026

lifewayslinks

The Lifeways newsletter for the **South East** region

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Welcome to
the Summer
edition of
Lifeways Links!

Interactive PDF



Hello, I am Bridget Sitters, local Lifeways Business Development and Relationship Manager for the **South East**.



Hello, I am Bridget Sitters, local Lifeways Business Development and Relationship Manager for the South East. I'm currently working with developers and housing associations around new opportunities in the region. If you would like to discuss current gaps in provision and how Lifeways can help you meet these needs, then please contact me on bridget.sitters@lifeways.co.uk.

I hope you enjoy this latest issue of LifewaysLinks where we take the opportunity to look at some of the exciting developments taking place across Lifeways and celebrate some of the great achievements of the people we support in your region.

How we can support

Lifeways supports adults living with learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, acquired brain injuries or mental health needs to lead more fulfilling and independent lives in their local communities.

Our experienced assessment team - now joined by some new team members - are always available to work together with you, from arranging introductions, assessments and visits, all the way through to the move being complete and the kettle going on.

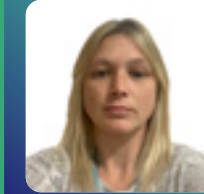
Get in touch today

If you'd like to make a referral, you can do so by clicking on any of the services in this newsletter, or call us on:

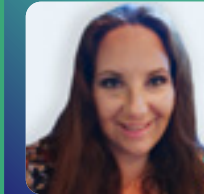
0333 321 4881

Email us at:

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Celebrating Lifeways' Achievements and Ambitions for 2026

by Andrea Kinkade, Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to our Summer issue of Lifeways Links. I'm delighted to share that our Annual Review for 2025/26 has been published, our yearly look back at the achievements of our brilliant team and, most importantly of all, the amazing people we support.

This is the third Annual Review in my time here as Chief Executive and I am so proud to share the remarkable progress Lifeways has made in that time; continuing our mission to support people with mental ill-health, learning disabilities, autism and complex needs to their very best lives.

I never tire of telling our story as it unfolds. I called 2023/24 our year of transformation, investing time and resources in future proofing our organisation, and I recall describing 2024/25 as a year of reward for all the hard work we have invested. Well, 2025/26 has unquestionably been a year of celebration as we have taken time to reflect not only upon our journey but also thirty years of Lifeways support – a brilliant milestone. In my experience, the very best organisations make time to celebrate success. It recognises

and re-energises hard-working team members, reminding them that the inspirational work they do – that they sometimes cease to recognise – has real, lasting impact.

One of the reasons that I am passionate about celebration is that, as anyone who has a relationship with our sector knows, the challenges are significant and enduring. I will say to anyone that will listen that our principal challenge is that need is increasing, funding is not keeping pace, and that great people are hard to attract, train and retain. But, at Lifeways, whilst we can – and do - campaign for positive change in adult social care, we can only control the work that we do and the way that we do it.

So, our approach is to relentlessly demonstrate how things can be when people with the right values, backed up by the right organisation, give their love, energy and expertise to delivering the very best support. It is this positive outlook and can-do approach, underpinned by our continued investment, that will make us the provider and employer of choice in our sector.

This is a key driver behind our 'You're Not Just Anyone' campaign that you will see more about in the coming year. Our message is clear: if you come to work at Lifeways, you are not just anyone – you are someone with the values and desire to support people to thrive. And, if you are supported by Lifeways, you are not just anyone to us – you are an individual person that we understand, someone we will involve in co-producing your support, designing your own aspirations and outcomes, living your best life.

Some of my favourite stories within the Annual Review feature people with really complex support needs; people for whom institutionalised living has been their past (usually in placements that have failed) and would be their future were it not for the work that our teams do to support them to live with increasing independence in their community. Our aim to get everyone out of institutions and into their own home continues.

The Annual Review features our team members talking about great lives being led, improving quality, systems that work,



greater efficiency, better homes and increased colleague engagement that have led to our commissioners entrusting new support to us. You will also read about Lifeways as a listening and learning organisation: positive risk-taking, trying new things, pushing boundaries to improve lives. Lives worth celebrating!

So, as always, I finish this introduction where I started: celebration. Let us celebrate our teams, the people we support, their passionate families and, of course, hard work, investment, creativity and resilience. Thank you to everyone who has helped make our year of celebration so rewarding.



You can read the full Annual Review on the Lifeways website, where you can explore more stories, insights and achievements from across the year.

You're not just anyone – Lifeways launches a brand-new recruitment campaign

James Westwood-Beere, Chief People Officer at Lifeways, shares why the new *You're Not Just Anyone* campaign is encouraging more people to consider a career in care.

Every day at Lifeways, our teams support more than 4,000 people across the UK to live independent and fulfilling lives. The compassion, patience and dedication shown by our team members make a real difference to the people we support and their families.



That's why we've recently launched a new recruitment campaign called *You're Not Just Anyone*, encouraging people with empathy, compassion and a genuine desire to support others to consider a career in social care.

Supporting people to live the life they choose

The campaign shines a light on the incredible work of Lifeways' frontline teams and the positive impact they have every single day.

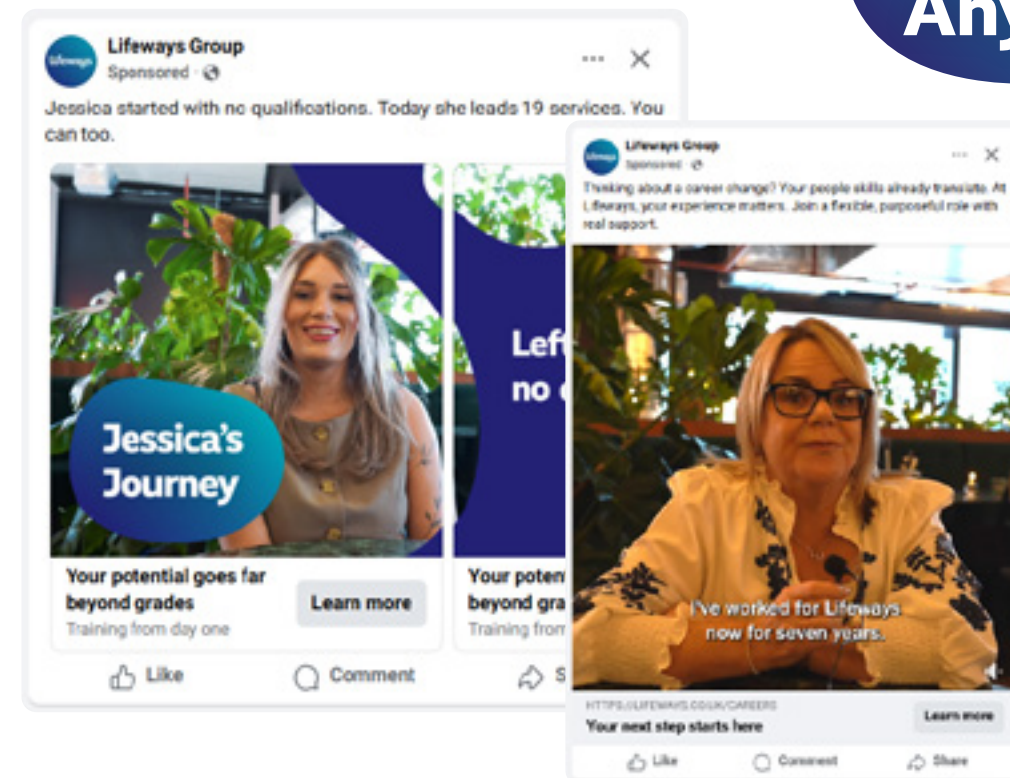
At the heart of the campaign is a powerful short film that captures the real impact of this support. The film features Jessie and Caroline, two brilliant people supported by Lifeways, and celebrates the compassion and empathy that help people live the lives they choose.

Inspiring people from all walks of life

You're Not Just Anyone is designed to inspire people from all walks of life to consider a career in care, even if they've never thought about it before.

We hope the campaign will encourage people looking for a career change, those returning to work, military veterans, retirees seeking a new purpose, young people starting their careers, and people from other sectors such as hospitality.

**You're
Not Just
Anyone**



'It takes people with care at their core'

Not just anyone can do this job. It takes people with care at their core. I'm proud to see the difference those people make every day for the individuals and families we support.



You can watch the short film featuring Jessie and Caroline, and learn more about the campaign, on the Lifeways website at www.lifeways.co.uk/careers.

National Women in Tech Award for Lifeways leader!

by Kieron Steele, Chief Financial Officer

I'm absolutely delighted to share the fantastic news that Amanda Brooke, our Chief Transformation Officer, has won the Women in Tech Award at the 2025 Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards – better known as the WAGS.

The WAGS celebrate the extraordinary women leading, innovating and elevating social care, so this is a tremendous achievement. Amanda's win is also a powerful endorsement of the way Lifeways is using technology and innovation to drive improvements in the way we deliver support every day.

Amanda shared how much the recognition means to her: "I feel truly honoured by this recognition. It's a fantastic acknowledgment of Lifeways and the transformation journey we've been on and continue to drive forward.

"I'm deeply grateful to my team and everyone who has contributed to and supported the projects that made this possible. This award isn't just an individual achievement; it



reflects the collective effort of everyone who helped turn these changes into a success."

I couldn't agree more. This award speaks of her dedication, expertise and the real, measurable impact she and her team have made, not only within Lifeways, but across the wider sector. Amanda is a true leader and it's wonderful to see her recognised on the national stage.

What makes this even more special is the calibre of this year's awards. They received an unprecedented number of high-quality nominations, showcasing the passion and talent of women driving progress in social care across the UK. To be recognised in that context is a remarkable achievement.

I'm also thrilled that three more incredible team members were shortlisted:

- *Karen Roberts, our Head of Health & Clinical Governance, for the Lifetime Achievement Award*
- *Amber Kingsnorth and Caroline Lynch, shortlisted in the Social Care Superwoman category for their outstanding work supporting people with complex needs*



The winners were selected by an independent judging panel led by awards Patron and former Royal College of Nursing president, Dr Cecilia Anim, which underlines the rigour and credibility behind these accolades.

For me, this recognition is about more than a trophy. It reflects the strong leadership, innovation and clinical excellence we're building across Lifeways, shaping the way we deliver support across the organisation.

Huge congratulations again to Amanda and to all our shortlisted team members. Achievements like this show what's possible when talented, values-driven people come together with a shared purpose.

Our 30 wishes journey continues!

by Gareth Roberts, Quality Director

As part of our 30th anniversary celebrations last year, we introduced our 30 Wishes initiative, creating special, meaningful experiences for the people we support. Following its success, I'm delighted that we're continuing this into 2026.

Our teams nominate people they support for a once-in-a-lifetime treat that could be something fun, memorable or truly personal. We've loved seeing the joy these wishes bring and below are some of the latest examples.

Addison builds confidence with a trip to London

Addison, who we support in Warwickshire, was nominated for a 30 Wishes award to visit London Zoo and enjoy an overnight stay in the city.



A passionate volunteer and active member of the Mental Health LEAP Council, Addison has grown in confidence over time and is now travelling more independently and connecting with others in ways that once felt out of reach.

On hearing about the award, Addison shared:

I'm overwhelmed but feel very pleased. I have always wanted to go to London, and visiting London Zoo will be a lovely experience for me.

For Addison, this wish is a chance to recognise and celebrate how far she's come and supports her to keep building confidence for the future.

Ugne's dream trip to St James' Park

Ugne, who lives at a supported living service in Berwick-upon-Tweed, is set to enjoy an autism-friendly tour of her favourite football team Newcastle United's home ground, St James' Park.

When Ugne heard the news, she was over the moon. The visit is expected to be a truly special experience, giving her the chance to explore a place she loves in a way that feels comfortable and accessible for her.

Her Service Manager, Lorraine Noble, who nominated her for the initiative, shared just how much the trip will mean: "We can't begin to tell you how much this means for Ugne. This one trip has possibly made her year and we all know she's going to come back with a new Newcastle FC shirt."

For Ugne, this wish is about more than football – it's about confidence, excitement and creating a memory she'll treasure.



Alastair reconnects with a friend in Edinburgh

Alastair, who lives in a supported living service in Northumberland, will soon travel to Edinburgh to spend quality time with a close friend and enjoy a meal together.

He summed it up simply: "I'm so pleased. I will get to see my friend and get to go out and have food."

Reconnection and relationships are such an important part of wellbeing. For Alastair, this trip is all about friendship and having something special to look forward to.

Julie enjoys a well-deserved spa day

Julie, who has made incredible progress in her mental health recovery at our service in Preston, will soon enjoy a relaxing spa day at Ribby Hall.

She has worked incredibly hard on her recovery, and this experience is a wonderful way to celebrate her achievements and enjoy something just for herself.

“There are plenty more wishes still to come, and I'm excited to see what 2026 has in store. It's been brilliant to see the smiles and confidence these moments bring.”

Proud moment for The Farmhouse with latest CQC rating

by Karen Jones, Managing Director, Residential

I'm really pleased to share that The Farmhouse, our residential service in Lincoln, has achieved an overall 'Good' rating from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), following its latest inspection in October 2025. It's a great recognition of the hard work and commitment of the team and what that means for the people we support.

Inspectors highlighted strengths across a range of areas from positive risk-taking and care delivery through to the environment and how we support people's independence.

What really stood out for me was that our team members demonstrated excellent safeguarding knowledge, and relatives expressed real confidence that their loved ones are safe. Risk is being managed in a way that supports people to live meaningful, independent lives, which is exactly what good care should be.

It was also fantastic to see recognition for the team's commitment to quality and consistency. Robust recruitment practices are firmly in place, and team members are receiving regular supervision and training



tailored to the needs of the people they support. Most importantly, the care being delivered is truly person-centred. Support plans reflect peoples' preferences and goals, with a strong focus on promoting choice, independence and proactive health management.

The team is also applying the Mental Capacity Act effectively, ensuring best interest decisions are clearly documented and advocacy is available when needed. Their use of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), alongside nationally recognised programmes such as STOMP, further demonstrates a commitment to evidence-based practice.

As always, we will continue to build on this and keep learning. I'm incredibly proud of the team at The Farmhouse. Their dedication, compassion and professionalism make a real difference to the people we support every day.

Delrose celebrates major turnaround

by Cherianne Howe, Head of Regulation and Governance

The latest CQC assessment at our Delrose service in Southampton shows just how far the team has come – having been rated 'Good' following a November inspection!

Delrose supports people with learning disabilities and autistic people, and this result is a great reflection of the hard work from the team and their commitment to raising standards and delivering better outcomes for the people we support.

The service was rated 'Good' in all five areas: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led. Inspectors recognised the team's strong safeguarding knowledge, holistic approach to risk management, and focus on person-centred, evidence-based care. These are all the qualities that create a safe, supportive environment where people can thrive.

What matters most to me is the difference this has made to people's lives. Families have shared very positive feedback about the changes they have seen over the past year. One relative told inspectors: "The new manager has transformed the service. Over the past year we have seen a significant improvement and feel our relative is not only safe but happy."

Health and social care professionals have also highlighted the progress. One professional told inspectors: "It has been a very positive experience to work with Delrose. I feel that we have worked well together to repair and rebuild relationships which has enabled Delrose to continue to improve their service and achieve a much better quality of life for the people living in the home."

While this is a great moment for the team and for families, I am clear that we cannot become complacent. We will continue working hard to maintain the high expectations we set at Lifeways and ensure people continue to receive the quality of care and support they deserve.



DJ Bulldog makes waves on Peterborough music scene!

by Ashia Milliken, Registered Manager, Copeland

I'm so delighted to share Matthew's story - or as many people are starting to know him locally, "DJ Bulldog" - and the incredible progress he's made during his time with us at our Copeland supported living service in Peterborough.

Matthew, who is originally from St Ives, has been living with us for just over 10 years. During that time, I've seen him grow in confidence and independence, and more recently, take exciting



steps into the local music scene by sharing his own DJ mixes online.

Music has always been a huge part of Matthew's life. Inspired by iconic trance artists like Paul van Dyk and Armin van Buuren, he now visits a local recording studio twice a week with support from our team. There, he's creating new mixes, developing his sound and building his skills. We can all see just how much he loves it.

What makes Matthew's journey even more inspiring is the positive change he's achieved in his personal life. When he first joined us, he was heavily dependent on smoking, at times going through up to 100 cigarettes a day, and was also drinking regularly.

With consistent, person-centred support from the team, he has since stopped smoking and drinking, which marks a huge milestone reflecting both his determination and commitment to living a healthier, more independent life.



We supported Matthew to attend non-smoking appointments, as well as helping him access college and build everyday life skills. It's been a real team effort, but most importantly, it's been driven by Matthew's own motivation to make a change.

To mark that journey, and to say thank you, Matthew even released his own track, The Lifeways Song, as part of Lifeways' 30th birthday celebrations. It's a brilliant example of how he's channelled his experiences into something creative and positive.

Hearing Matthew talk about what this means to him really brings it home. He's shared how losing friends to smoking and drinking made him reflect on his own path, and how proud he is now to be sober and pursuing something he loves.

From my perspective as Registered Manager, it's been a privilege to see this transformation. Matthew has shown real resilience and determination, and the progress he's made is something we're all incredibly proud of. His passion for music is infectious and we're always listening to his latest mixes. It's fantastic to see him gaining recognition locally.

We're excited to continue supporting Matthew as he develops his talent and builds his presence in the music world. Stories like this are a great reminder of what can be achieved with the right support, encouragement and opportunities in place.

John overcomes a long-standing fear at Barleycombe!

by Angela Dodds, Registered Manager, Barleycombe

John's story is a brilliant example of what can be achieved with patience, teamwork and truly person-centred support!

John had never had a blood test due to a long-standing fear of needles. While he had previously managed to have flu and COVID vaccinations with encouragement, the idea of a blood test, particularly due to the time involved and the fact that you can see the blood being collected, felt overwhelming for him.

After speaking to the team and reflecting on a similar success with another person we support last year, John decided he wanted to give it a try. That was a really important moment, and we worked closely with local GP colleagues to develop a gradual, supportive plan to help him build confidence at his own pace.

Together, we introduced a desensitisation programme, breaking the process down into small, manageable steps. Healthcare professionals visited John in his home environment, where he felt most comfortable,

and we gently familiarised him with each stage. This included trying on a tourniquet, looking at and holding the blood collection bottles, and talking through what would happen, always at a pace that felt right for him.

Throughout, the focus was on being open and honest, making sure John understood each step and felt in control. It was a real team effort, with John's support team, nurses and doctors all working together to provide consistent reassurance and encouragement.

On 12th January 2026, John achieved something he had previously felt was impossible - he successfully had his blood test.

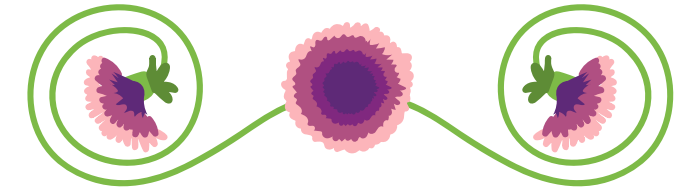
The impact of this has been significant. Not only does it mean John now has improved access to essential healthcare and ongoing monitoring of his physical health, but it has also made a real difference to his confidence and self-belief.



He has overcome a fear that once held him back, and that's something he will carry forward with him.

For me, this is what great support looks like - being responsive to each person's needs, adapting approaches, and showing the patience and creativity needed to help someone achieve their goals. Most importantly, John showed incredible courage throughout the process, and it's been a privilege to support him on that journey.

John is absolutely delighted with what he's accomplished, and so are we. His story is a fantastic example of how living our CHOICE values every day can lead to truly life-changing outcomes.



As a team we made sure to celebrate this milestone in a way that was meaningful to John.

He chose to go out for a Chinese meal and invited Shannon, his support worker, to join him. It was a simple yet personal way to recognise his achievement and mark the occasion.



Susan wins a PaCC Award for Excellence in Social Care

by Lorraine, Mum of a person supported by Susan

From the very beginning of our journey with Lifeways, I've always felt incredibly supported, not just for my son, but for our whole family. From those early months of transition through to where we are today, Susan has been by our side every step of the way.



When I nominated Susan for the Parent Carers' Council (PaCC) Awards 2025, I wanted people to understand just how much of a difference she has made. She didn't just step into a management role, she became part of our lives. She actively involved herself with all of us and has always been relentless in her determination to truly understand my son, as well as the other residents she supports.

One of the things that stands out most to me is Susan's commitment to learning. She has attended so many training courses to build her knowledge of my son's needs. She's eager to learn everything she can, but what really sets her apart is her communication - her willingness to listen, adapt, and make meaningful changes when needed.

Seeing Susan recognised as the winner of the Excellence in the Social Care Sector award at the PaCC Awards in Brighton was such a proud moment for us. The award was presented at a community event at Community Base on 17th March, and it felt so well deserved.

Reflecting on her achievement, Susan shared:



I came into care eight years ago and I have no plans on going anywhere any time soon. Receiving all the support from Lifeways and being recognised for something like this really shows how important you are to the people we support and that we are not just a number.

Lorraine said that I go above and beyond, but it's just a trait that comes to me naturally. It's just what I do.

My son moved into the service in August 2022, and I can honestly say it has become his forever home. Like many families, we had initial worries about what he might be able to achieve,

particularly due to his learning disability and acquired brain injury. But with Susan and the wider Lifeways team supporting him, those doubts have been replaced with pride.

Today, he's achieving things we once weren't sure would be possible. With support, he's learned how to cross the road safely, make himself a hot chocolate, prepare cups of tea for the family, and even make his own hummus. Watching him grow in confidence and independence has been nothing short of amazing and we know there's so much more to come.

For me, Susan's award isn't just about recognition, it's about the real, lasting impact she's had on our son's life and our family.

Current vacancies in the South East



Supported Living for 11 people

The Valley

Southampton, Hampshire

Purpose-built apartments

- ✓ Mental health specialism

The Valley is a development of 11 high-quality, self-contained apartments providing accommodation and 24-hour support for people with complex mental health needs. We support people to transition from institutional settings to their own tenancy in the community. Our focus is on enabling people to live independently while receiving the right level of recovery support tailored to their individual needs.

Our person-centred recovery support, provided by our on-site team of Recovery Support Workers, with additional support from our Quality and Practice team of mental health professionals, ensures a consistent, person-centred approach to recovery.

The Valley is close to local shops and facilities including a gym and leisure centre. The local bus route is only a few minutes' walk away, and we are 20 minutes away from Southampton which has two universities and a recovery college to enable access to education. Southampton also has a variety of theatres, museums and art galleries while Marwell Zoo, Itchen Valley Country Park and the New Forest are all within easy reach.



Supported Living for 10 people

Salem Lane

Wellingborough, Northamptonshire

Purpose-built apartments

- ✓ Mental health specialism

Salem Lane is a development of 10 self-contained and spacious apartments providing accommodation and 24-hour support to people severely affected by mental illness including psychotic, affective and personality disorders. We support people to transition from institutional settings to their own tenancy in the community. Our focus is on enabling people to live independently while receiving the right level of recovery support tailored to their individual needs.

Our person-centred recovery support is provided by our on-site team of Recovery Support Workers, with additional support from our Quality and Practice team of mental health professionals, including Registered Mental Health Nurses, Social Workers and Occupational Therapists. This helps ensure a consistent, person-centred approach to recovery.

Salem Lane is located in the heart of Wellingborough, close to shops, restaurants and other local amenities. Nearby Wellingborough station connects directly to London St Pancras and the local bus station has half hourly services to Northampton, Milton Keynes, Kettering and Corby. Wellingborough also has a public library, The Wellingborough Museum and The Castle Theatre.



Residential Care for 6 people

Kimbolton Avenue

Bedford, Bedfordshire

Life-changing residential care

- ✓ Learning disabilities
- ✓ Autism
- ✓ Physical disabilities
- ✓ Mental health

Kimbolton is a six-bedroom residential service supporting people with a range of needs including learning disabilities, autism and other complex needs. It's a welcoming and stimulating home where people aged from their 30's to their 60's are encouraged to live as independently as possible.

The property includes a kitchen, dining room, living room, laundry room and a conservatory. There is one communal bathroom and three en-suite bathrooms, all designed as wet rooms with two also including a bath. Kimbolton also has an accessible garden with a patio and a BBQ, perfect for socialising in the warmer months.

Kimbolton is located in a residential area with cafés, pubs and a post office. Bedford is within walking distance and offers the Harpur Shopping Centre, a Vue Cinema, The Higgins Art Gallery and Museum, a park and Bedford Central Library. Trinity Arts and Leisure provides year-round access to exercise classes, a gym, sports courts and a swimming pool. Northampton is also within easy reach and offers further attractions.

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