Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

The Willows

Bridgend

01656659933

The inspection visit took place on 03/02/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Amethyst Healthcare Ltd
Care Type:	Care Home Service Adults Without Nursing
Provision for:	Care home for adults - with personal care, Provision for learning disability, Provision for mental health
Registered places:	4
Main language(s):	English
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

Well-being	Excellent
Care & Support	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership & Management	Excellent

Summary:

The Willows is a care home in the residential area of Brackla, Bridgend, offering care and support for up to 4 people.

People experience excellent well-being outcomes. They are supported to maintain their health and well-being, are treated with dignity and respect and feel listened to. People have autonomy over their daily routines and enjoy a broad range of activities. The care and support delivered to people is good. Care staff are knowledgeable about people's lives and their routines and preferences. They have enough information to provide people with the right care at the right time. There are robust systems in place for safeguarding, medication management, and infection control. The physical environment is good, being safe and supports the needs of people who live there. We rate the leadership and management at the service as excellent. There is strong management oversight and expectations of standards within the home are communicated clearly. Care staff have the correct training, recruitment practices are effective, and governance and oversight systems are in place to support the running of the service. At the last inspection improvements in both care and

support and leadership and management were recommended and it is positive to see that the service has now achieved this.

The service is actively working to strengthen its approach to the Welsh Active Offer. We saw a board of Welsh phrases promoting the use of Welsh within the home and greetings being said in Welsh.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

People experience excellent well-being at the service because they are listened to, respected and involved in decisions that affect their daily lives. Weekly house meetings and key-worker sessions give people regular opportunities to express their views and influence how their care is planned. A professional told us *"staff involve people in decision-making"* and that their *"voice is central to planning and day-to-day choices, which has had a really positive impact"* on the people in the home. People choose from a wide range of meaningful activities. We saw examples of people going on trips to favourite sports clubs, holidays, and taking part in enjoyable activities both within the home and the local community.

There is a warm and natural rapport between people and care staff. Care staff communicate with patience and kindness and understand how to meet people's communication needs highly effectively. This promotes trust and helps people feel secure. People described the home as feeling *"like a family",* highlighting the strong bonds and sense of belonging shared within the household. These positive relationships create a strong and supportive culture where people feel valued, safe and able to thrive.

People are protected by robust safeguarding arrangements. Care staff know their responsibilities and understand how to report concerns. Both care staff and family members told us they feel confident the manager responds promptly to any issues raised. People are supported to maintain important relationships, and we heard how the home has built positive relationships with families including support during challenging times. The location of the service allows people easy access to the community and, when appropriate, care staff encourage people to go out independently. Staff provide reassurance when needed, but they prioritise choice and respect people's autonomy. This helps to maintain dignity and promotes independence and has a significant impact on people's outcomes.

People contribute to decisions about their home environment. Bedrooms are personalised and comfortable, helping people feel settled and at home. Communal areas are warm, welcoming and well-decorated, providing pleasant spaces for people to spend time together. During our visit, people appeared relaxed and told us they enjoy living at the home. The large garden is well-maintained and used actively. People take part in gardening projects and take pride in growing vegetables, which supports both physical and emotional well-being. The overall environment is clean, safe and organised in a way that supports people's needs. It contributes positively to people's comfort, security and sense of well-being.

Care & Support — Good

People receive consistently good quality care and support. Personal plans are thorough and direct care staff on how to support people to achieve their well-being outcomes. Additional assessments enhance the quality of support by giving practical, tailored guidance. We saw how the approach used by the care staff has significantly supported a person in better managing their own behaviour. Care staff receive a good level of training to meet people's needs. The staff team is stable and experienced and they know people well. Care plans and risk assessments are reviewed regularly, and people are encouraged to contribute to this process. "About Me" plans are in place and are being further developed, including translated versions. This strengthens people's voice and makes future plans more person-centred.

We saw a whole-team approach to "supporting and doing with" rather than "doing for", to promote people's independence. Language in plans now reflects this shift and we saw and heard the Manager supporting this approach throughout the service. People have a named key worker and know who this is; key-worker meetings capture people's views, wishes and choices. Relatives speak positively about the support offered. One family member described their relative as *"the happiest they have been,"* noting positive change at the service.

Care staff complete daily recordings that give a clear account of support provided. Care documentation is reviewed monthly and update it where needed. Records show the manager deals promptly and appropriately with incidents affecting well-being. Where people lack capacity to make specific decisions, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) authorisations are in place.

Medication is managed safely. Records are robust, audits are regular, and staff undertake competency checks. People are supported to attend health appointments, with timely referrals made when issues arise. People are actively involved in meal planning and preparation, with attention to specific dietary needs. Infection prevention is effective. The home holds a Food Standards Agency rating of 5 (very good). Cleaning schedules are in place, PPE is readily available, and staff apply safe practices, to maintain clean communal areas and support people to keep their private spaces to a hygienic standard.

Environment

Good

People live in an environment that is well-maintained, comfortable and equipped to meet their needs. The home is warm, welcoming and well-lit, creating a positive atmosphere as soon as people enter. People also benefit from access to a large garden, which provides space for outdoor activities and relaxation. There is ample parking for people's accessible vehicles, as well as for staff and visitors, which supports ease of access for everyone coming into the home.

People have choice and control over how they personalise their bedrooms. We saw bedrooms decorated in ways that reflect people's personalities, interests and comfort preferences. This helps people feel settled and promotes a sense of ownership over their living space. The service provider ensures people have suitable furnishings and equipment to meet their needs, and we saw examples of equipment that supports people's independence and well-being.

Most bedrooms have ensuite facilities, with three of the four rooms offering this provision. The accessible ensuite bedroom downstairs supports people with mobility needs and promotes dignity and independence. Across the home, the environment is clean, safe and organised in a way that supports people to live comfortably. The layout enables people to move around freely and make use of communal areas as they choose.

The environment is secure and well maintained. Care staff greet visitors on arrival, and they sign in and out in a visitors' book. We saw evidence of an ongoing schedule of servicing of facilities and utilities, with appropriate regular safety checks completed. Fire alarms and emergency lighting are regularly tested. The service provider has an in-house maintenance team, to whom the manager can raise any maintenance issues, and they are responded to promptly. Potentially hazardous items, such as medication and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) materials are stored securely. The environment is clean and tidy, with care staff completing domestic and laundry tasks with and for people living at The Willows, depending on their level of independence.

Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leadership and management at the service are excellent. The management team sets clear expectations about the standard of care and support people should receive, and care staff told us the manager has *"high aims"*. People and staff described significant improvements since the manager came into post. The service no longer uses agency staff and a stable core team now provides consistent care. The manager is highly visible within the home and leads by example. The service has a detailed Statement of Purpose that clearly outlines how people will be supported, alongside an accessible service guide for people living in the home.

Recruitment processes are safe and robust. People living in the home are involved in staff interviews, ensuring their views inform decision-making. Staff told us they feel valued, supported, and "*proud to work at the service"*. They described positive morale and a strong sense of teamwork. The manager also promotes wider wellbeing support and has introduced an 'extra mile' award to recognise staff contributions. Each staff member has also been provided with an essentials kit, which they appreciated.

A structured induction process helps ensure new staff are well prepared for their roles. Training compliance is strong. Mandatory online training is fully completed, and face-to-face training is progressing well, enabling staff to deliver care and support effectively. Care staff told us there is a lot of training, but that it is useful and good quality. Supervision and appraisals are up to date. Records show these have developed significantly, from brief, task-focused discussions into reflective and meaningful conversations; they are highly effective. We saw that practice issues were addressed promptly and in a supportive manner, helping staff understand what needed to improve and how to achieve this. Care staff said the improved supervision process helps them feel supported and confident in their roles. The service has extensive organisational policies and procedures, and we saw a monthly focus on a "policy of the month" to refresh knowledge and practice within the team.

Management oversight of the service is highly effective. The provider completes comprehensive audits across all areas of practice to monitor quality and identify improvements. The RI (Responsible Individual) is a regular presence in the home and engages frequently with both staff and people, in addition to the required quarterly visits. The most recent 6-monthly quality of care reports have improved significantly; they are clear, detailed and include strong feedback, defined actions and an improvement plan. We saw committed improvements in leadership and

management, which have had a positive impact on the wellbeing of people living in the home.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

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