



### Beech Cottage



1-4 Beech Terrace, Abercwmboi, Aberdare, CF44 6AW



01443 479907

Date(s) of inspection visit(s):

16/04/2025

### Service Information:

Operated by:	Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council Adults and Children's Services
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 service provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture, or is working towards a bilingual service.

## Ratings:



**Well-being**

**Good**



**Care & Support**

**Good**



**Environment**

**Good**



**Leadership & Management**

**Good**

## Summary:

Beech Cottage is a respite service for adults with a learning disability and associated needs. It is located within a residential area in Abercwmboi, near Aberdare.

People experience good well-being outcomes when they stay at Beech Cottage. They are supported to maintain their health and well-being and are treated with dignity and respect. There are effective systems to help keep people safe in an environment that meets their needs. The quality of care and support is good. People's families are generally positive about the service, with personal plans providing clear, detailed guidance for staff. There are reliable systems in place for safeguarding, medication management, and infection control. The physical environment is good, being safe and designed to support the needs of people who stay there. Leadership and management is good. Staff enjoy working for the people they support and feel positive about the team. 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.

## Findings:



### Well-being

**Good**

People experience a safe and healthy respite break when they stay at Beech Cottage. People are treated with dignity and respect, with families generally providing positive feedback about people's stays and emphasising the importance of having an opportunity for a break from the caring role. People and their families are involved in decisions about their care and support, with their preferences considered and adhered to in daily routines. Personal plans are tailored to each person and reflect their choices and how to maintain their safety. Where people have difficulty making decisions, the service works closely with families and professionals to ensure decisions are made in their best interests. The service has good relationships and lines of communication with relatives, who tell us staff keep them informed and updated and feel able to contact the service as often as they need during a respite stay.

People receive the care they need to stay as healthy as possible. Support needs are reviewed prior to each stay, and personal plans are updated when changes are needed. The service works closely with health and social care professionals where required, acting on their advice and ensuring this is incorporated into people's files for care staff to adhere to. Medication is administered safely and as prescribed. Infection control procedures are followed appropriately. Dietary needs are understood and adhered to, with healthy options encouraged.

The service has systems in place to keep people safe. Staff are recruited safely, with all necessary checks completed before they start work. Risks to both people and care staff are identified and managed through clear plans. Information is available to help people raise concerns. A written guide explains what the service offers and how to raise a complaint with the Local Authority if needed. People's families report they feel the service is safe.

The service provides a comfortable and supportive environment. Beech Cottage is an adapted property over two levels that caters for a wide variety of needs. Specialist equipment is in place to aid people with mobility needs. The environment can be adapted as required to meet people's needs. Rooms are spacious and comfortable. The home has access to specially adapted transport, meaning local facilities and amenities can be accessed.



## Care & Support

Good

People receive a very good standard of care when they stay at Beech Cottage. People's families told us *"it's great for us – it gives us freedom and a break"* and *"they seem to enjoy and seem settled – they would let you know if they weren't happy"*. The service undertakes a thorough assessment before someone stays, working with families and specialist learning disability professionals, and drawing on a range of information. Compatibility is central to planning respite breaks, so everyone enjoys a safe stay. The service tailors the environment to best suit everyone who stays there. This includes planning where furniture is situated so staff support can be less restrictive and give the person more freedom. It also includes reducing environmental risks and using specialist equipment to lessen the risk of injury. Personal plans are sufficiently detailed and tailored to reflect the type of support each person requires, helping care staff understand and meet each person's individual needs. Risk assessments support safe care, with care staff understanding these and how to follow them. Care files contain assessments and guidance from other professionals, such as learning disability nurses and consultant psychiatrists. Plans are reviewed before each stay and updated as needed. Contact sheets contain detailed information about a person's stay. This information is put into a document and shared with people and their families at the end of their stay. Personal spending records show people are supported to manage their money and are being safeguarded with this. Nutritional requirements are understood and well-catered for.

The service takes effective steps to protect people from harm. Care staff understand what safeguarding means, can recognise potential concerns, and know how to report them. They feel confident if they report issues to the management, these would be responded to appropriately. Incidents or accidents are recorded. Detailed risk assessments help support safe practices while allowing people to take positive risks. People's families tell us they feel their loved ones are safe when staying.

Medication is stored, managed, and administered safely. Medicines are stored securely in the staff room and administered in line with the prescribers' instructions. Medication records are accurate and well-kept. The service follows a medication policy, with auditing undertaken to ensure stock levels are correct. Care staff are trained in how to manage and administer medication, with competencies assessed every six months.

Infection control is well-managed, with appropriate measures in place to reduce risks. Staff have access to and use personal protective equipment. An infection control policy guides staff on how to manage outbreaks and protect people. Care staff follow thorough cleaning routines, and laundry processes are designed to minimise infection risks. Clinical waste is disposed of safely and

correctly.



## **Environment**

**Good**

The environment at Beech Cottage is clean, safe, and suitable for people's needs. The service is an adapted property on two levels, located in a residential area of the village of Abercwmboi. The service can accommodate up to four people who have a learning disability and associated needs at any one time, dependent on the compatibility of people. The building is secure, with visitors required to sign in and out to ensure safety. Bedrooms are a good size and comfortable. There are sufficient toilet and bathing facilities throughout to meet everyone's needs. Specialist tracking hoist equipment and adjoining bathrooms are available with two of the bedrooms. The lounge and dining area are homely and comfortable. The kitchen facilities are modern and appropriate and enable people to take part in preparing food if they wish. There is a well-maintained secure garden with accessible patio areas for people to use. Some refurbishment work is underway, which will help enhance the environment. The Responsible Individual (RI) advised more refurbishment work is planned. Safety measures are well-managed. Substances hazardous to health are locked in cupboards in line with regulations. Fire exits are clear of clutter and obstructions. There are fitted window restrictors in all bedrooms and bathrooms. Maintenance is managed by the Local Authority's Corporate Estates team. Maintenance records confirm the routine completion of utilities testing. The auditing and servicing of equipment is up to date and fire safety tests and drills are completed. Personal evacuation plans are in place and are accessible in the event of an emergency.



## Leadership & Management

Good

The service has governance and oversight arrangements in place to support its day-to-day operations. A positive culture centred on 'restraint reduction' promotes people's independence as far as is safe to do so. Care staff told us *"we're a well-organised team – we help each other well"*, *"the manager is understanding of concerns brought to her"*, and *"I really enjoy the work – I like being able to help people"*. We found the service to be open and transparent in its communication. It submits all required notifications to Care Inspectorate Wales and shares relevant information with partner organisations, such as community learning disability teams. The RI fulfils their oversight role by visiting the service every three months to speak with people and staff and completing quality of care reviews every six months. Audits and quality assurance processes are used to monitor performance and identify areas for improvement. Policies and procedures are in place to guide staff on their responsibilities and how the service should be delivered. A whistleblowing policy is in place, and staff are confident they know how to raise concerns if needed.

People are supported by staff with the necessary expertise, skills, and qualifications to meet their care and support needs. Training records show care staff have up to date training in core areas of care. Additional training is in place for specialist health conditions relevant to people who stay at the service, such as percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) feeding and epilepsy management. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities, such as safeguarding and infection control, and told us they can perform their duties safely and effectively. Recruitment practices are robust. Staff files include all legally required information, such as proof of identity, references, and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Care staff are registered with Social Care Wales. New care staff complete an induction and probation period to ensure they meet expectations. Ongoing supervision is provided to support care staff performance and development. The manager told us staffing levels are worked out based on the number of people staying and their level of need. This is adjusted as needed and is planned based on respite bookings. We are aware of staffing vacancies across the Local Authority's respite services, which has impacted on people being able to book respite stays. The RI explained the reasons for this and provided assurances around the actions being taken to address this.

## 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.



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