



Arolygiaeth Gofal
Cymru
Care Inspectorate
Wales

Inspection Report

Pale Road



Neath



01792 813663



www.autism.org.uk

The inspection visit took place on 03/02/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	National Autistic Society
Care Type:	Care Home Service Adults Without Nursing
Provision for:	Care home for adults - with personal care, Provision for learning disability
Registered places:	4
Main language(s):	English
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider is not promoting the Welsh language and culture needs of people, and this requires improvement.

Ratings:



Well-being

Good



Care & Support

Good



Environment

Good



Leadership & Management

Good

Summary:

Pale Road is a small care home for people with autism. It is in a residential area of Skewen, Neath. People have lived together and been supported by the same staff for many years, creating a strong family-like unit. People experience fulfilment connecting with others and following their interests and routines. Care staff provide good quality care to help people remain healthy and active. The accommodation is homely and supports people to develop their living skills.

The home has good leadership and management. It is run by an experienced manager, with the support of a small, dedicated team of care staff. The staff team work effectively together to give people positive, rewarding experiences. However, staffing levels need improvement to better support people with their one-to-one hours and community access. The Responsible Individual (RI) oversees the running of the service and drives forward improvements.

Findings:



Well-being

Good

The service recognises and respects people for who they are. Care records contain detailed information about what is important to people, their backgrounds, interests and preferred routines. People enjoy eating together and take turns to pick meals and shop for ingredients. Care staff actively support people to make choices by communicating with them effectively. For example, they use pictures and picture boards to help people make decisions and plan their days. People's communication needs are identified within personal plans and information about the service is available in an easy-read format. There is no current demand for a service in Welsh.

People enjoy a good quality of life. They have well-established routines, which care staff respect. Care staff support people to connect with their community. Records show that people have visited places of interest and enjoyed other social occasions, such as meals out, parties and theatre trips. People also attend clubs where they socialise with others and take part in a variety of activities, such as arts, crafts and dance exercises. Care staff have helped people plan holidays in the UK and abroad. We saw photos of the fun times people have had, capturing moments for them to look back on and remember. Care staff support people to stay in touch with family and visit friends at other services. People have keyworkers to help them reflect on their experiences every month and plan future activities and events.

The service promotes people's safety and upholds their rights. Care staff recognise when people need emotional support and provide this calmly and confidently. People appeared to be very comfortable with care staff, and we saw them respond positively when given reassurance and direction. The RI observes interactions and gathers feedback from people during formal visits. Care staff know how to manage risks when supporting people and log all incidents. Records show that these are dealt with and monitored appropriately. Legal authorisation is sought when people face restrictions, to ensure these are applied in their best interests. The complaints procedure is explained to people during monthly keyworker meetings. Safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures are displayed in the office for easy reference.

People live in comfortable accommodation. The home is nicely furnished and includes leisure items for people to use, such as sensory games and equipment. We also saw people relaxing together as they watched films. Photographs add a personal touch to both communal and private areas. The domestic style of the property supports independent living, and we saw people helping with household tasks, such as laying the table. People have access to private and outdoor space, which is well maintained.



Care & Support

Good

People experience a good standard of care and support which is tailored to their individual needs and preferences. The manager promotes person-centred care by challenging habitual practices and reflecting with care staff on how they can support people to try new things and make informed decisions. Feedback from a professional includes *'It's clear that staff are caring and person-centred in their approach'*, which is consistent with what we observed. People's care preferences and routines are clearly outlined within detailed risk assessments and personal plans. Care staff support people to build their skills and set and achieve individual goals. Records confirm that care staff also encourage people to contribute to the development and review of personal plans.

The service actively promotes people's health and well-being. Care staff continuously monitor people's physical and mental health and make referrals to health professionals when there are concerns. We saw that people's health needs are fully accounted for within personal plans. Care staff support people to attend appointments and work with professionals to adequately prepare people for planned medical tests and intervention. The support strategies they use, such as social stories, explain what people can expect and help to put them at ease.

People receive effective support with their medication. Personal profiles describe how people prefer to take their medicines and records indicate that people consistently receive these at the right time. We saw that protocols are in place for 'as required' medicines, to ensure they are used appropriately. Care staff maintain clear records in relation to medication administration, although handwritten instructions should be consistently checked and countersigned by a second trained staff member. Medicines are stored tidily, securely and at appropriate temperatures.

The service promotes a good standard of hygiene to minimise infection risks. People live in a clean, hygienic environment. They follow cleaning rotas and complete domestic tasks, such as hoovering and laundering clothes, during their 'home day'. Care staff have access to a good supply of personal protective equipment and ensure suitable infection control measures are in place. The home's training programme includes food hygiene and infection control, although records show that most care staff need to complete their infection control training. The manager assured us this would be addressed.



Environment

Good

People are truly at home in their surroundings. We observed them to be comfortable as they went about their daily routines. People have a choice of bathing facilities, with access to either a bath or shower. Private and communal rooms are appropriately furnished and decorated. The lounge, dining area and kitchen include some homely features, and large windows create a bright, spacious feel. These rooms are located on the first floor, and their elevated position offers scenic views of the garden and countryside. We saw that the décor, furnishings and other items in people's bedrooms reflect their personality and interests.

The home has pleasant outdoor space. A balcony off the lounge includes seating areas, which people enjoy making use of during fine weather. There is also a lawned rear garden that offers more space for outdoor activity. People access community facilities via car or public transport.

People benefit from environmental developments. Bedrooms have been freshly painted in people's preferred colours, and some new furniture has been purchased. The layout of people's bedrooms is adjusted as needed to maximise the space available. Redecoration and general upgrades are carried out by external contractors or the provider's maintenance officers. The manager liaises with the relevant teams to ensure works are correctly prioritised.

The home and facilities are properly maintained. Care staff understand health and safety procedures and carry out checks routinely. These include water temperature checks, fire alarm checks and vehicle checks. People regularly help to complete security and other health and safety checks, giving them a sense of purpose and responsibility. Records confirm that staff complete training in relation to fire safety and health and safety. The manager alerts the landlord when the property needs general maintenance or repair and ensures recommendations following independent fire risk assessments are acted upon. Fire safety equipment is serviced within recommended timescales and staff carry out regular fire drills. We saw that a grab sheet outlining the evacuation procedure for each person can be accessed quickly and easily from the office.



The home is managed well. There is mutual trust and respect between the manager and staff team, which contributes to a healthy working environment. The service has up to date policies and procedures to support safe systems of work, and staff are clear about their individual roles and responsibilities. Staff at all levels feel they can speak openly with colleagues regarding the running of the home. The RI monitors the quality of the service during formal visits, setting actions when improvements are needed. There is evidence of investment in the environment, with upgrades underway and further enhancements planned. A new electronic system has also improved how shifts are planned and covered.

The service is committed to supporting and developing staff. Care staff told us they feel valued and content in their roles. One staff member said, *"I enjoy it. I'm always happy to come to work"*. Staff attend regular team meetings and receive formal, individual supervision more often than the Regulations require. These meetings are useful for reflecting on people's experiences and sharing information and ideas. Care staff feel encouraged to develop their skills and potential, which keeps them motivated. The manager ensures care staff register with Social Care Wales and complete an ongoing programme of training. Annual appraisals are also held, which focus on care staff's professional development and provide further opportunities for reflection.

The service has a team of experienced staff who work together to ensure the home runs smoothly and people are well cared for. Care staff feel safe with the lone-working arrangements and find the on-call system to be very effective. The rota is designed to accommodate the needs of the people living in the home, although we saw that an evening shift has been regularly unstaffed. Staff sickness is also adding pressure to the team. This requires improvement because staff shortages are impacting on how flexibly care staff can provide one-to-one support. This issue is also limiting the time people can spend in the community. We expect the provider to make these improvements. The service is actively recruiting new staff, and the manager assured us that the vacant shift will be covered imminently. New staff are introduced to the service gradually, to give people time to get to know them and adjust to the change. Staff go through a robust recruitment and vetting process to ensure they are suitable for their roles.

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.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

Summary of Areas for Improvement	Date identified
People must be supported by adequate numbers of staff to meet their care and support needs and help them achieve their personal goals.	03/02/26

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

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