



Castlecare Specialist Services Limited



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www.castlecare.org

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): The inspection visits for this service took place between 17/09/2025 and 19/09/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	CASTLECARE SPECIALIST SERVICES LIMITED
Care Type:	Care Home Service Adults Without Nursing
Provision for:	Care home for adults - with personal care, Provision for mental health
Registered places:	10
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

Excellent



Care & Support

Excellent



Environment

Excellent



Leadership & Management

Excellent

Summary:

Castlecare Specialist Services provide care, support and accommodation to up to ten people with mental health and/or learning disability needs. The service is in Aberdare, close to local shops and amenities, with transport links to bigger towns.

The wellbeing outcomes for people living at Castlecare are excellent. People's activities are tailored to be meaningful to them and give them value and feelings of purpose. Keyworkers focus on enhancing daily living and accessing the community, to build people's confidence and independence.

The care and support given to people living at Castlecare is excellent. People self-direct their goals, and those who are able can work towards regaining their independence to eventually move on from the service. There is constant consultation with people with regards to the type of support they receive, and innovative ways to encourage people to take risks and build confidence.

The environment excellently supports people's wellbeing. The service has a main house and two adjoining flats, which people move in to from the main house as a step towards fully independent living. The service maximises the space available to them, with a gym, sensory pod and courtyard area in the service for people to benefit from.

The leadership and management of the service is excellent. The manager and deputy manager have brought ideas from different areas back to the service and implemented them to great effect. People's progress is monitored and initiatives adapted to be as effective as possible. The service goes over and above to enhance staff wellbeing and make Castlecare a great place to work.

Findings:



Well-being

Excellent

People are empowered to thrive, with numerous opportunities to maintain, develop, and explore their interests, strengths, and skills. Support workers take time to get to know people living at the service, and show good knowledge of their history, likes and dislikes. There are opportunities for people to pursue learning, employment, volunteering and leisure. People's right to control their finances and personal property is respected and actively promoted as part of an assessed and risk managed pathway towards independent living.

Support workers encourage feedback using people's preferred languages and communication methods. There are staff at the service who can speak Welsh and use British Sign Language and Makaton to communicate. They have also been giving lessons in these to their team, and the people living at the service. The management team regularly ask people to give their feedback on their care and support, and activities they are doing. We saw evidence of activities and projects being adjusted following feedback to better support people towards their goals.

People are empowered to make choices about their health and how it should be monitored and managed. Support workers encourage people to make their own health appointments and help where necessary. Healthy lifestyle choices such as eating home cooked, nutritious meals and exercising are facilitated within the service, with people encouraged to opt in to these choices as much as possible.

Where they are able, people plan, co-produce, and take the lead in diverse activities of their choice, with superb support from staff. These well-designed programs of activities support and encourage engagement, significantly enhancing people's sense of well-being. The service has introduced 'jobs'- things which each person has offered to do, which the support workers can 'book'. For example, support workers book nail painting with one person who enjoys beauty. This gives people a sense of purpose, giving back to support workers and the running of the house. The service also has a market stall at the local market once a week, where they can sell unwanted gifts or crafts, with the money going towards group activities. Accessing the community for daily tasks, such as shopping, as well as leisure trips out, are facilitated with tailored support depending on people's needs.



People experience very high-quality care and support because the provider conducts highly effective assessments of whether they can meet the person's needs alongside those of people already accessing the service, before offering a place. At the time of this inspection, there was one vacancy in the service, and we discussed the thorough process of assessment and introducing people into the main house with the manager.

People's preferences and individual needs are clear throughout their highly personalised plans. Where possible, people self-direct their varied goals. Support needs are detailed and include people's preferences for routines and the approach that suits them best. Risks to individual's safety and the safety of others are assessed and management plans included. Positive risk-taking enables people to move further towards independence. People are included in their reviews, to allow them to see their own progress. The service also monitors people's progress annually to show their achievements.

People's rights to liberty are protected and safeguarded. People are supported by staff with knowledge, skills and understanding of how to minimise restrictive practices to ensure everyone feels safe while enjoying maximum freedoms, regardless of their needs. At present, no one living at the service requires any hands-on behaviour management, however all support workers are receiving specialised training in this should it be required in the future. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards are applied for appropriately, with minimal restriction wherever possible.

Staff work closely with people to involve them in understanding and administering their medicines where appropriate. They seek new ways to promote independence and collaborate with other agencies and advocates. There is a staged medication pathway in place at the service to support people towards administering their medication independently. People are risk assessed for their ability to complete each stage, and this is monitored and reviewed thoroughly before they progress. If needed, it is agreed with people to pause the pathway and receive more support with their medication until the time they feel able to progress again.



Environment

Excellent

People benefit from excellent use of the space available through creative use of living areas. The service comprises of a main house, with bedrooms, a small lounge, and a large lounge/kitchen/dining area. This enables people to choose where to spend their time, depending on how much interaction they want with people throughout the day. There are flats adjoining the main house, which people move into as a step towards fully independent living. They are responsible for running their flats, while still being able to have staff support. They can also use the main house for peer support whenever they wish. There is a room on the basement floor with gym equipment, which gets used daily. There are defined rooms for a manager's office, support worker office and medication room. A recent refurbishment of the support worker office has enhanced organisation and efficiency of its use. Outdoor space is limited, however the service have maximised this with a sensory pod, courtyard garden and space for a small pool when the weather is hot. All these elements of the environment support people's needs and lifestyle choices, enhancing their wellbeing outcomes.

The service is clean, tidy and well maintained. An external contractor provides maintenance support for repair and replacement jobs in the home. We saw evidence of a rolling schedule of servicing and maintenance of facilities and utilities to ensure the health and safety of everyone living and working in the service. The service is secure, and visitors make themselves known on arrival.



Leadership & Management

Excellent

Leaders in the service ensure there is a very strong positive culture that is supportive, inclusive, and respectful. Leaders confidently steer the service through challenges where necessary. Leaders are visible role models as they guide the strategic direction and the pace of change. There have been many changes to the service for both staff and people living there. The manager has implemented support initiatives and projects, which have been encouraged and facilitated by the deputy manager, with notable positive effect to people's progress towards their outcomes. There is an open culture of feedback and discussion, to further enhance the quality of the support being provided.

The service provider celebrates the achievements of staff through initiatives recognising those who provide outstanding care and support. We saw staff members have been nominated for awards in the care sector. There is also an employee of the month scheme where people being supported nominate support workers and give a reason for the nomination, to acknowledge positive work. Support workers are consulted with and asked to generate ideas for improving the service and they are involved in planning and putting those ideas into practice. Staff wellbeing has been prioritised since the last inspection, with support workers now offered a paid 'wellbeing hour' in every shift, and a subsidised healthcare plan they can opt into.

The provider has a very strong commitment to ensuring high numbers of skilled and knowledgeable staff are always in the service. The manager has changed the shift/rota patterns of support workers to improve work/life balance. Staffing levels are informed by evaluation of people's needs. Training for staff is both innovative and inclusive, with a 'house' set-up training room to give a more engaging training experience. Mandatory and specialist training is completed and refreshed regularly. All staff work with a current Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check, and are registered with Social Care Wales, the workforce regulator. Supervisions and appraisals are held to develop staff professionally and support them personally.

Quality assurance processes monitor the standard of care being provided. The Responsible Individual (RI) supports the management team and has regular check ins. They complete quarterly monitoring visits, gathering feedback from staff and people using the service. Biannual quality of care reports are also produced as required.

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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