

# Checking learning disability services in Blaenau Gwent

What we found out



This document was written by the **Care Inspectorate Wales**. It is an easy read version of ‘**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) - Assurance Check of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Adult Community Team (Learning Disability specific)**’.

March 2024

# How to use this report



This is an easy read report. You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 30**.



Where the document says **we**, this means **Care Inspectorate Wales**. For more information contact:

**Website:** [www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)



[Easy Read Wales](#) made this document into Easy Read using **Photosymbols**. [To tell us what you think about this easy read version, click here.](#)

[Photosymbols Licence number 403527247](#)

# Contents

<b>About this report .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>What we do .....</b>	<b>5</b>
The way we did our checks .....	6
<b>What we found.....</b>	<b>7</b>
People.....	8
Prevention .....	15
Partnerships .....	20
Well-being .....	23
<b>What happens next.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Hard words .....</b>	<b>30</b>

# About this report



We are **Care Inspectorate Wales**.



From **26 to 28 March 2024**, we did an **Assurance Check** of:

**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Adult Community Team (Learning Disability specific).**



An **Assurance Check** is a check to make sure they are doing their jobs well and following the rules.



This report shares what we found out.

# What we do



We check how well councils are doing their jobs and helping people.

Our focus is on how well the council do these things:



**1. People** - Make sure everyone has a say and control in their life.



**2. Prevention** - Keep the need for support low and stop problems from getting worse.



**3. Partnerships** - Work well with others to provide good, lasting services.



**4. Well-being** - Protect people from harm and abuse, so they feel safe, happy, and supported.



We check if services are following the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** law.

## The way we did our checks



We looked at the social care records of 23 people. For 4 of them, we talked to the person, their family or carers and the workers.



We talked to 14 people or their carers who get services to hear what they think.



We talked with workers and checked documents.



We did surveys with people, carers, stakeholders and council workers to get their views.

# What we found



We found good work being done.



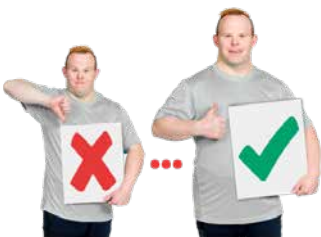
And also things that need to be better.



There are some things we want the council to do.



When we say **must**, this means changes that need to be done to follow the law.



When we say **should**, this means changes that will make things better but are not law.

# People

## Good work



Some people can choose what help they get. Help is about:

- what is important to them,
- and what they want to do.



Carers can help decide what support the person they look after needs.



Carers are offered a **carer's assessment**. This is a check to see what help they might need themselves.



The social care records we looked at included information about:

- how people are doing,
- what they are good at,
- and what might be risky for them.





Workers know how best to talk to a person. And understand what they want.



Most people said workers are good at listening to adults with a learning disability.



Workers like their jobs. They said their team is helpful and cares about each person.



They feel their bosses support them and they can talk to them. Most staff said the bosses are friendly.



Workers have special meetings with their bosses to talk about their work. They have time to think about what they do.



They talk about difficult cases 2 times a week. They like having these chances to talk and think.



Workers say they can learn new things when they need to.



People can talk in the language they like, and workers give them a choice.



Workers know people can need help to speak up for themselves. We saw people getting help from friends or family.

## Things that need to be better



Sometimes, people can get money to choose and pay for help themselves. This is called a direct payment.



Not everyone knows about it because some teams do not tell people.



Some people use direct payments to pay personal assistants. But finding them can be hard. This is the same in other parts of Wales.



**The council must make sure everyone knows about direct payments. They must give information, so it is easy for people to decide.**



**If the council says no to giving direct payments, they must explain and write down why they say no.**



A few carers said they were not always told what they can get or ask for. They do not know what help they can get in their community.



**The council must make sure carers know about all the help they can get.**



Some people said they do not get Easy Read information or pictures that help them understand better.



**The council should help workers give information in Easy Read and other ways so everyone can understand. This helps people know more and be involved.**



People and carers said contacting the council can be hard. Some carers did not know who to talk to. They said it would be easier if they had 1 person to contact.



Carers said having different workers all the time can be a problem. Changes can make them and the person they care for worried and upset.



**The council must make sure people do not have to tell their story over and over. They must make sure that when people contact the council, they get a quick and good answer every time.**



Workers said their bosses check how good assessments and care and support plans are.



When we looked at the social care records, we did not always see proof that the bosses checked the records.



**The council should make sure that bosses are checking work, and there is proof of this in the records.**



Around half the people we spoke to felt workers listened well when planning care. The rest said they did not feel listened to or only sometimes felt listened to.



**The council must get better at listening to people.**

# Prevention

## Good work



Most people, workers, and some carers, told us that there are lots of helpful things in the community. We saw proof of this in some social care records.

Workers said **assistive technology** can help people who need it.



**Assistive technology** are tools that help people do things they might find hard. In the home these can be things like:

- Digital planners for daily activities.
- Picture guides to understand tasks.
- Safety alarms to warn about dangers.



Workers give these tools quickly when someone asks for them.





**Information, Advice and Assistance** staff know a lot about these tools. They help people and their carers find the best tool for them.



Workers and carers said that there are good places where people can take short breaks. One of these places is Augusta House, and people and carers like it there.



Next to Augusta House there are 2 small houses called pods. These help people learn to do things on their own. They have **assistive technology** inside to make things easier.



## Things that need to be better



People want more chances to work and volunteer.



One person felt happy when she earned money from a local job, but it did not last long.



Some carers worry that many people do not grow their skills. This is because there are not enough chances to work.



**The council should make sure there are plenty of jobs and chances to volunteer.**



Emergency plans need to be better. This means having a plan for what to do if a carer cannot help. It is important to have this plan to make sure people feel safe.



**The council should make sure that workers help people and their carers make these plans.**



Some workers have trouble getting help for people from **Occupational Therapists** on time. These are workers who help you do things in your daily life.



Some are confused about what **Occupational Therapists** from different teams are supposed to do.



**The council must work with the health board to know who does what. This will help people with a learning disability get the right support they need quickly.**



Most workers said they had an OK amount of work to do. Some said they had too much. Yearly check-ins with people and carers do not always happen on time.



**The council must check care and support plans often to make sure people get the right help.**

# Partnerships

## Good work



Most organisations said they have good links with the council.



They said social workers are helpful and treat people well.



Working with health workers went well when the Learning Disability Health Team already knew the person.

## Things that need to be better



Health and social services teams do not work in the same place.



They use different ways to keep records and cannot see each other's files.



This makes it hard to share information about people's health or care.



**The council and health board must work to make sharing information easier.**



The **Integrated Service Partnership Board** has a plan for improving services.



The council should use this to plan what is most important for people.



Before COVID-19, the council talked to people with a learning disability and their families and carers. They found out what was most important to them.



But COVID-19 delayed things. The council and its partners have not done more work on this yet.



The council must work with people with a learning disability to plan services.

# Well-being

## Good work



Most of the time, workers check if people can understand and make choices for themselves. This is called **mental capacity**.



Most mental capacity checks we looked at were good. And showed that workers follow the rules.



Sometimes if people do not have mental capacity, the council makes decisions about their care for them.



When this happens, there are strict rules and checks in place to protect people's freedom as much as possible.



Sometimes there can be delays in the checks. But the council does check, they check well.



The council is good at following the rules when making decisions for people. They know what they are doing right. And where they need to get better.



The council is good at noticing when someone cannot agree to their care and is not free to stop getting the care. They quickly ask the **Court of Protection** for help.



The **Court of Protection** decides things for people who cannot make their own choices. This might be because they are too ill or not able to understand things well.





The council acts fast and fairly when they get adult safeguarding reports. These are reports that protect adults from harm.



Planning talks and meetings happen with the right people and on time.



Everyone agrees working well together is important. The most important thing for everyone is keeping people safe.

## Things that need to be better



People need a say in the safeguarding process. The person should be the focus, and this should be clear in all the records. We think people are not involved enough.



**The council must make sure they include the views of people, their families, and carers.**



When there are worries about someone's safety, the council needs to check how they handle it faster.



**The council should have a good way to check everything is safe. They should listen to worries and keep making their plans better.**



Workers and bosses do not always find out what people are good at in safeguarding reports.



Well-being assessments should show what is important to people. There was not much proof of this in the safeguarding records.



**The council should make clear rules for records to include goals and what people are good at.**



The safeguarding team check well and work hard to get information. We saw in some records that they can be slow at asking others for information.



**The council must make sure all workers know it is important to do things quickly and work well with the safeguarding team.**

# What happens next



We want the council to work to fix the things that need to be better.



We will talk to them often to see how things are going.



The council should share what works well with other councils to make services better across Wales.



You can learn how we use your information at: [www.careinspectorate.wales/how-we-use-your-information](http://www.careinspectorate.wales/how-we-use-your-information).



We were ready to use Welsh for this **Assurance Check**, but nobody wanted to use it.



Thank you to the staff, partners and others who helped with our checks.

# Hard words

## Assistive technology

Assistive technology are tools that help people do things they might find hard. In the home these can be things like:

- Digital planners for daily activities.
- Picture guides to understand tasks.
- Safety alarms to warn about dangers.

## Assurance Check

An Assurance Check is a check to make sure they are doing their jobs well and following the rules.

## Well-being

Well-being means feeling safe, happy, and supported.