



Cambian Pengwern College Main Campus



Cambian Pengwern College, Pengwern Hall, Bodelwyddan Road, Rhyl,
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<https://www.cambiagroup.com/specialist-education/our-colleges/cambian-pengwern-college/>

Date of inspection visit: 28 October 2025.

Service Information:

Operated by:	Cambian Whinfell School Ltd
Care Type:	Care Home Service Adults and Children Without Nursing
Provision for:	Care home for adults - with personal care, Care home for children - with personal care, Provision for learning disability
Registered places:	20
Main language:	English
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The service is currently unable to provide an active offer of the Welsh language. While care staff are committed to promoting inclusive communication, the absence of Welsh-speaking personnel limits the ability to provide services bilingually.

Ratings:



Well-being

EXCELLENT



Care & Support

EXCELLENT



Environment

GOOD



Leadership & Management

EXCELLENT

Summary:

Pengwern College is a specialist residential education and care provider that supports young people with complex learning needs.

The wellbeing outcomes for young people are excellent. They continuously benefit from high-quality, person-centred care provided by care staff who build strong, trusting relationships. This promotes safety, emotional resilience, and positive development.

The care and support provided to young people is excellent. Care staff understand individual needs and consistently provide nurturing, responsive care that leads to positive outcomes and supports overall wellbeing.

The service provides a good, safe, and welcoming environment that supports the needs of young people. Renovation works are nearing completion in some accommodation areas of the college, with further improvements planned. This reflects a clear and ongoing commitment to investing in the physical environment, ensuring it continues to meet the evolving needs of young people.

The leadership and management are excellent, with clear direction, robust governance, and a culture of continuous improvement that support care staff and ensures accountability.

Findings:



Well-being

EXCELLENT

The wellbeing outcomes for young people are excellent. Observations of young people confirmed they are safe, valued, and supported, with their emotional, physical, and social needs. Their needs are consistently met through nurturing relationships and bespoke care. Young people are supported to express their views and opinions through a variety of individualised communication methods, including Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Makaton, and their own spoken language. This inclusive approach ensures each young person is heard and understood in a way that suits their individual needs. The effectiveness of this is further enriched by the diversity of the care staff team, who bring a wide range of cultural perspectives and languages.

Noticeboards in each accommodation promote familiarity and connection, displaying photos, interests, and behaviour support strategies for each young person. This supports care staff to provide responsive, person-centred care. A parent shared, *“Pengwern College care staff are amazing, our child is thriving... it’s the perfect place for him.”* This reflects high family satisfaction and trust in the nurturing care provided.

Each young person has access to a personalised activity programme that reflects their individual interests, needs, and goals. Programmes are designed to promote engagement, build confidence, and support emotional and physical well-being. Care staff work collaboratively with young people to ensure activities are meaningful and contribute positively to their overall development and care experience. Daily and weekly menus are developed in collaboration with young people to ensure meals reflect their individual preferences, dietary needs, and cultural backgrounds.

Young people are safeguarded at Pengwern through the implementation of robust safeguarding procedures, vigilant supervision, and a strong culture of safety and trust. Care staff are well-trained in recognising and responding to signs of harm or distress, and they maintain clear lines of communication with leaders and external safeguarding agencies.

The environment at Pengwern is consistently maintained to a good standard, providing a safe and supportive home for young people with complex needs. The premises are secure, well-organised, and conducive to both learning and personal development, with appropriate measures in place to ensure the safety of young people.



The care and support provided to young people is excellent. We observed young people receiving care and support from care staff in a manner that was both compassionate and respectful. Care staff have developed trusting relationships with young people, and provide person-centred care that promotes well-being, safety, and positive outcomes. Care staff demonstrate genuine empathy and attentiveness, engaging with young people through calm, supportive communication. Feedback from a parent further supports this; *“Pengwern has transformed my child’s life. With his complex learning and developmental needs, he is now able to live a safe, secure, and happier life ... I couldn’t recommend Pengwern more.”* This statement reflects Pengwern’s positive impact on young people’s well-being and development, highlighting the value of personalised care.

Pengwern have developed a care staff-to-young people compatibility roster. This is a strategic tool designed to ensure each young person receives support from care staff whose skills, experience, and interpersonal style align with their individual needs. This approach enhances the quality of care, reduces incidents, and supports a stable environment where young people can thrive. Personal plans are clearly structured and tailored to each young person’s individual needs, instructing care staff to provide effective and consistent care and support. Plans outline specific strategies, goals, and preferences, enabling care staff to provide person-centred care that promotes well-being, independence, and positive outcomes. Regular reviews ensure plans remain relevant and responsive to any changes in young people’s circumstances, supporting a dynamic and caring approach.

To support effective placement compatibility and ongoing monitoring, a traffic light method is used to assess young people’s compatibility both pre-admission and during placement. This method provides a clear visual indicator of suitability: Green denotes a high level of compatibility with the environment, care staff, and peer group, with minimal risks identified. Amber indicates moderate compatibility, where some support or adjustments may be required to ensure stability and engagement. Red highlights incompatibility regarding the young person’s fit within the setting, other young people, requiring further assessment, planning, or consideration of alternative arrangements. The traffic method enables timely interventions, promotes safer placements, and ensures each young person receives bespoke support aligned with their fluctuating individual needs.

Key worker meetings between young people and care staff are well-documented and visually engaging, incorporating photographs of both the young people and the care staff who have supported them. Records include photographs of activities and places of interest, helping to capture meaningful experiences and encourage reflection. A unique feature of the key worker record is the inclusion of a rating system, where young people express their perception of their home and care staff using a thumbs-up symbol, with ratings consistently noted as good.



Environment

GOOD

Pengwern is situated in a peaceful and well-maintained location that contributes positively to the safety, accessibility, and overall well-being of the young people who live and learn at the college. The site is secure, with controlled access points and clear boundaries that support safeguarding practices. Its layout promotes independence while ensuring care staff can maintain appropriate supervision. The surrounding area is quiet and free from significant environmental risks, offering a calm atmosphere conducive to emotional stability and learning. Local amenities and transport links are accessible, enhancing opportunities for community engagement and personal development.

The exterior environment of Pengwern is visually appealing and well-maintained, contributing to a calming and welcoming atmosphere for young people and care staff. The grounds are thoughtfully designed, offering a pleasant and accessible space that supports wellbeing and outdoor engagement. Additionally, the presence of a specialist educational college onsite provides tailored education for children and young people with learning needs, ensuring continuity of care, and learning within a familiar and supportive environment. The combined approach to care and education at Pengwern College enhances young people's experiences and outcomes, promoting holistic development and well-being.

The environment provides a safe, welcoming, and well-maintained space that supports the needs of young people. Garden Cottage and Coach House 3 have undergone renovations to an excellent standard, offering high-quality accommodation that reflects the service's commitment to safety, comfort, and continuous improvement. Renovation works for Coach House 4 and 5 are nearing completion, with plans in place to refurbish Coach House 1 and 2. This phased approach reflects a clear and ongoing investment in high-quality accommodation.

The Pengwern College yearbook for 2024/2025 provides a reflective and celebratory overview of each young person's journey, capturing their progress from the point of admission to their current achievements. It highlights individual successes and milestones, recognising both the efforts of young people and the dedication of care staff who have supported them throughout. In addition to showcasing personal growth and development, the yearbook also celebrates Welsh heritage and culture, reinforcing a sense of identity, belonging, and pride within the college community.

The administration of medication is both safe and appropriate. The Medication Administration Record (MAR) charts demonstrate clear and consistent practices in record keeping, administering, and handling of medication. Records evidence care staff effectively manage, monitor, and maintain accurate documentation, ensuring each young person receives the correct medication, at the right time, and in the appropriate dosage. The clinical oversight provided by the manager, who is also a registered nurse, further reinforces governance and accountability, supporting care staff in maintaining safe and compliant medication procedures.



Leadership & Management

EXCELLENT

Leadership and management of the service is excellent. The manager and their deputy provide clear direction, promote a strong culture of improvement and safeguarding, and ensure care staff are well-supported and accountable. The Statement of Purpose outlines the requirements set out in regulations for a regulated service, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements. It provides sufficient and accessible information to inform parents, carers, and professionals about the nature, aims, and scope of the service offered.

The Responsible Individual visits the service regularly to carry out a comprehensive quality assurance review. Each visit includes direct engagement with young people, care staff, families, and social workers to gather a broad range of perspectives on the service's performance. In addition to these discussions, the Responsible Individual scrutinises records and documentation relating to the young people to ensure compliance, consistency, and quality of care. As part of the visit, supervision is also provided to the manager, supporting reflective practice and leadership development. A formal report is produced following each regulatory visit, outlining key findings, areas of strength, and any recommendations for consideration. Denbighshire Local Authority completed a quality assurance visit to assess the safety and effectiveness of Pengwern College. The resulting report confirmed the service reflects a strong commitment to maintaining high standards of care, governance, and operational oversight.

Care staff are registered with Social Care Wales, the workforce regulator responsible for setting standards and promoting high-quality care across the care sector. A review of care staff recruitment records confirmed robust vetting practices are consistently followed during recruitment, including background checks and verification of qualifications. Permanent care staff receive regular supervision to monitor performance and enhance practice. New care staff on probation are coached by experienced colleagues and have twice-monthly supervision to track progress and development. These measures ensure potential new care staff are safe and suitable to work with vulnerable young people, reinforcing Pengwern's commitment to safeguarding and professional accountability.

The training matrix demonstrates care staff have received targeted and bespoke training in the complex needs, behaviours, and conditions of young people they support. This ensures care staff are equipped with both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills required to understand individual behaviours and respond safely and effectively. The breadth and depth of the training reflect a proactive, person-centred approach to care, safeguarding, and engagement. For example, care staff have completed training in areas such as Epilepsy, Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), cultural awareness, safeguarding, attachment, learning disabilities, and mental health awareness. The comprehensive training enables care staff to provide informed, compassionate, and responsive support tailored to each young person's individual needs.

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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