

1236450

Registered provider: CareTech Community Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It provides a specialist service for up to five children who have learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and/or other complex needs and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, there were five children living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2022.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 7 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/09/2022	Full	Good
07/02/2022	Full	Good
11/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
18/12/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There are significant shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home, which means that the children's welfare and safety are compromised. Consequently, despite the progress for some children, their overall experiences are poor as their safety is not prioritised.

The registered manager and staff have failed to ensure that the home is kept clean, tidy and maintained to a suitable standard to provide the children with a nurturing home environment.

Language used by some staff and in some of the children's documents is not child-friendly. The staff label children with a diagnosis before this has been confirmed by a medical professional. This stigmatising language is not factual or helpful to children.

Children are supported to spend time with their parents and people who are important to them. Parents speak positively about the support that they receive from the home. One parent said, 'They [staff] are supportive of my time with [name of child].'

Children make some progress in some areas of their development as the staff work hard to communicate with them. As a result, one child's speech has improved while living in this home.

All children in the home are supported to attend school or college. At times when children are not in education, the staff encourage the children to engage in a range of different activities.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

One child was deprived of their liberty on one known occasion, resulting in the child being in significant distress. The organisation is investigating this incident. However, the managers have failed to notify Ofsted and other safeguarding agencies of a further serious allegation relating to this incident and the same child. This practice does not allow for appropriate safeguards to be put in place to safeguard the children.

Following potential concerns about staff practice, one member of staff has continued to work with children without additional support and supervision. This failure to act resulted in the child being placed at potential harm for a second time. This poor practice has not been appropriately addressed by the manager.

Managers and staff have failed to recognise or understand the children's experiences. Children are not being spoken to following significant incidents.

Therefore, their voice is not captured, understood and acted on. In addition, some of the children's records indicate that the staff are not considering trauma as a base for the children's behaviours, and in other records, the child's perspective has been dismissed as untrue. This is a weakness and the staff are failing to learn about the child's perspective.

Not all staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children. Some staff have failed to report or challenge staff's inappropriate behaviour. One member of staff has played loud music in the home, including at times when the children are in bed. This is of significant concern as not all children can verbalise their concerns or worries, this is now being investigated by the organisation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Significant shortfalls have not been identified or recognised with the current management monitoring and reviewing systems. Therefore, serious failures in relation to the protection of children have not been identified and addressed quickly and effectively.

Communication within the organisation is poor. The registered provider has not made the registered manager aware of safeguarding incidents when they became known by the organisation. This means that the registered manager cannot put appropriate safeguarding measures in place to help keep the children as safe as possible.

The staff are not provided with all the information they need to care for the children effectively as the written communication in the home is poor. The handover records do not include all the pertinent information about the children. In addition, not all incidents are recorded, and the staff do not consistently record when measures have been put in place to safeguard a child. While the manager has reviewed these documents, she has failed to identify these shortfalls.

Staff supervision is regular, and the staff use this as an opportunity to discuss the children and any personal issues. While discussions about safeguarding are taking place, the managers have missed an opportunity to assess the staff's knowledge on the provider's safeguarding and whistle-blowing policies and procedures.

Staff are not provided with individual supervision records as these are not unique. Some records are identical in places, where they have been cut and paste from previous notes or other staff member's notes. This oversight limits the meaning of these notes for personal individual reflection and hinders staff's development.

Most of the staff are committed to getting it right for children. Staff report safeguarding concerns when they arise and escalate this when required. Many staff have worked at the home for several years and are well established in the team.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— have the skills to identify and act upon any signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(d))	20 August 2023
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with	20 August 2023

the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; and demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(g)(ii)(h))	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii)(vii))	20 August 2023
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and	20 August 2023

feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))	20 August 2023

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the staff record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way. Information about the child must

always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1236450

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: CareTech Community Services Limited

Registered provider address: 5th Floor Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane,
Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Shelley Whiting

Registered manager: Amira Burgess

Inspectors

Jo Birtwhistle, Social Care Inspector
Rachel Walker, Social Care Inspector

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