

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 privately owned and run. It provides a specialist service for children with autism spectrum disorder and/or other complex needs. The home also provides care for children who may have learning and/or emotional difficulties. It can accommodate up to five children from the age of six to 18 years. The planning for care is individually tailored to address the specific and changing needs of the child.

The registered manager post is vacant. The operations manager is overseeing the home until a manager is recruited.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
18/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
13/06/2017	Full	Outstanding
08/11/2016	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have lived at the home for a long length of time and have formed trusting relationships with staff. Together, they enjoy a variety of activities, including sensory play, walking and raising money for charity. This gives children a chance to develop their relationships with staff and to socialise. Staff capture these special moments by taking photos of the children while they are having fun and making memories.

Staff understand the children's complex needs and are able to work effectively with them. Staff deliver care that is tailored specifically to the individual child and is in line with their care plans. This means that the children are receiving consistent care. This has resulted in trusting and secure relationships between children and staff.

Children communicate in a variety of ways with the staff, including verbally, through communication in print, and, on occasions, through using the Picture Exchange Communication System. This enables children to express their views, emotions and wishes for what activities they would like to do. This helps children to express themselves no matter what their communication style is.

Communication between leaders and managers, school, social workers and parents is positive. This cohesive approach is strengthened by the input from specialist services, such as epilepsy nurses and the child and adolescent mental health services. These services enable staff to provide appropriate care to meet the child's individual needs.

All children are in education and attend specialist provisions that meet their individual needs. Due to the support from staff at the home and school, children are making progress in education. One teacher said, '[Name of child] is making remarkable progress in school, and the development in their speech is very pleasing.'

All children are supported to attend their routine health appointments. They are encouraged by staff to eat a balanced diet and are active. This is promoting the children's health and well-being, which aids a healthy lifestyle.

Children are supported by staff with family time. One child is now visiting their parent overnight. This means children are spending time with the ones who mean the most to them.

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

Staff make sure that children feel comfortable and safe in their home and in the community. Stable relationships mean that children are making sustained progress as a result of living in the home.

Staff work in line with the children's individualised behaviour support plans and are consistent with their approach. This reinforces boundaries and routines to the children. As a result, incidents of unwanted behaviour are reducing in frequency.

Some physical intervention documents are well recorded. They give a good level of information about the incident and what staff did to reduce risk of harm to the child. The child and staff are debriefed following interventions. However, staff do not routinely record that they are monitoring children's breathing during and following restrictive physical interventions. This does not help to ensure that the child's safety is being consistently monitored.

The registered person has oversight of agency workers' recruitment files. However, the registered person does not verify their references before they start to work in the home. This is carried out by the agency. This limits the registered person's oversight of agency workers.

Leaders, managers and staff can identify changes in moods, and, on some occasions, are able to stop disruption before it escalates. Children's emotional stability and their ability to cope when angry are continuously improving. This is evident as there are very little incidents in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The operations manager is in day-to-day charge of the home until a manager is recruited. She has a vast understanding of the children living at the home and has a positive relationship with them.

Allegations against staff are investigated in consultation with the local authority designated officer and the children's social workers. Leaders and managers ensure that the appropriate actions are taken to prevent misconduct reoccurring.

The operations manager will professionally challenge others when needed. This ensures that the children have access to the support they need to achieve.

Staff receive high levels of support and encouragement from leaders and managers. This includes regular supervision and team meetings. Both are reflective and encourage staff development. All staff spoken to at the inspection said that their supervision sessions are reflective and that they learn from them.

Leaders and managers are aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring systems are in place which highlight any shortfalls. Where shortfalls were identified during the inspection, the operations manager was quick to act. Leaders and managers have development plans in place for the home. This means that the home is evolving to continually meet the child's needs.

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, 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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))	10 March 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that good employment practice is maintained. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: CareTech Community Services Limited, 5th Floor
Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Shelley Whiting

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

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