

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, five children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2022.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

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: 3 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/07/2023	Full	Inadequate
07/09/2022	Full	Good
07/02/2022	Full	Good
11/02/2020	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The managers and staff have worked hard since the last inspection to significantly improve the quality of care provided to the children. They have taken accountability for the outcome of the previous inspection and worked together as a team to address the shortfalls. This has helped to create a homely and welcoming feel to this home.

Children benefit from living in a home that is clean, tidy and well maintained. Their bedrooms and bathrooms are individually decorated to their tastes and personalities. Staff have helped the children to create mood boards, to give the children a choice when decorating the home. This has resulted in cartoon characters, mermaids, unicorns and sea creatures being the theme of this home.

Children are supported to understand the world in a way that is helpful to them. When children are struggling to understand things, different communication methods and resources are used to help them. One child is being helped to understand a family member's illness. They are given lots of reassurance to help them understand the situation and manage their feelings.

The nurturing care provided by the staff allows the children to form trusted relationships. During the inspection, the children were observed to smile at staff and hug them when they walked into the room. The staff were observed to be patient and kind with the children. They take their time to explain things to the children in a way that they understand.

Children's plans are individualised to their own differing needs. One child is being supported to increase their independence skills, such as learning to use the washing machine and preparing their own drinks. A second child is responding well to a rewards chart where they can earn weekly and monthly rewards.

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

An open culture is promoted in this home. Staff say that the managers have clear expectations of child safeguarding. They say that the managers discuss this regularly in team meetings, supervision sessions and in general day-to-day conversations. Staff are clear in terms of their safeguarding responsibilities and know how and when to escalate concerns.

Staff are welcoming of the changes to the management structure. The manager works very closely with the deputy manager, who is keen to develop into the role of manager. Two new team leaders have been recruited. They have all received a thorough induction to support their development in their new roles. Staff say that the new managers are helping to continually improve the practice in this home.

There has been one incident that required the use of physical intervention since the last inspection. This was managed appropriately to keep the child safe. The child was spoken to after the incident to gain an understanding of what happened from their perspective. The child requested to create a booklet to help the staff understand what their trigger was and how staff could help them next time. While this information has been shared with the staff, it is not evident that this has been included in the child's key documents.

Staff respond to children's differing health needs. When children's needs change, the managers are proactive in providing appropriate training for staff. The staff are trained and understand the medication policy and how to administer the different medications to the children. When children require further medical support, staff ensure that appropriate services are in place, for example when children require support from the emergency services or medication reviews.

Children were observed to feel safe with the staff. When the inspector walked into the room, the children sought comfort and reassurance from the staff that things were okay. Children were observed to be happy and comfortable in the presence of each other, the managers and staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager and the deputy manager work well together. They are open and honest about the difficulties that led to the previous inspection judgement. They are aware of the home's strengths and have a clear vision for the continued development of the home. The managers know the staff and children well and have good oversight of what is happening in the home.

Staff speak positively about the managers. They say that they help them to provide good care to the children. The managers have clear expectations for the running of the home and the care provided to the children. They ensure that they maintain their oversight by carrying out daily, weekly and monthly audits. Staff are aware of these audits and ensure that these expectations are met. Audits are successful in identifying shortfalls, which the managers act on.

The reports provided by the independent visitor have not always been helpful to support the managers with continued improvements. They have not been consistently successful in identifying any shortfalls in the quality of care provided to the children. They have not always provided accurate oversight and scrutiny of the home. This hinders the manager's ability to improve further.

Staff supervision records are much improved since the last inspection. There is evidence of staff and the manager's reflection. The records are individualised to the staff and they focus on a different themes each month. Staff are supported to discuss their well-being, their practice, the children and any safeguarding concerns. The supervision sessions focus on staff's job descriptions and assess whether they continue to meet the expectations of their role.

The managers have introduced staff reflection sessions. These are weekly sessions that allow the staff and managers to focus on a chosen topic. Staff are encouraged to discuss topics such as different communication methods with the children, how language used may be stigmatising and other matters that are important to the children. This helps the managers to continually assess staff's development and keep the team motivated.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should listen to the child and take their views, wishes and feelings into account when planning and providing their care. This applies to all children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and/or other complex needs. In particular, when children tell staff what works and what does not work, this information should be included in their written plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.5)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulation 44) to ensure continuous improvement. In particular, the independent visitor reports should anticipate difficulties and review incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: Amira Burgess

Inspector

Jo Birtwhistle, Social Care Inspector

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