

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 and young people irrespective of gender, who present with autism spectrum disorder and/or other complex needs. The home can also provide care to children and young people who may have learning and/or emotional needs. It can accommodate up to five children or young people from the age of six to 18 years. The planning for care is individually tailored to address the specific and changing needs of the individual.

The registered manager has been in post since October 2018

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 18 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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: outstanding

Children and young people living in this home are making exceptional and sustained progress. The staff and management strive to create a homely environment where children can feel loved, cared for and part of a family. Staff are highly attuned to the complex needs of individual children and young people. This ensures that children and young people receive the support they need quickly and effectively from people they know and trust.

The children and young people develop exceptionally strong relationships with staff who understand their individual personalities well. Highly attentive care, from staff who offer unconditional positive regard, ensures that children and young people feel able to develop in an environment where they are loved and respected and accepted for who they are.

Children and young people who attend school have made exceptional and sustained progress given their starting points. Staff and teachers work effectively together, sharing in-depth knowledge of strategies to support individual children and young people. This ensures that children and young people receive consistent care and support to enable them to learn effectively at school. When it becomes evident that children and young people are not progressing at school, staff and teachers provide children and young people with innovative and structured alternatives. This ensures that children and young people's routines are maintained, and their learning continues while a school that meets their needs is identified.

Staff make it a priority that children and young people have a multitude of opportunities to tell people how they want to be looked after. The use of a photographic menu planner and individual activity books enables children and young people to gain a sense of independence and control. In addition, staff use a widget-based questionnaire to gather feedback from children and young people on how they feel they are being cared for at the home. As a result of staff talking to children and young people about what they want to do, children have benefited from trips to Blackpool, holidays in Wales and Great Yarmouth as well as many other fun and exciting activities in the local area.

Children and young people's health needs are comprehensively met. This is supported by excellent communication with professionals and parents. One health professional commented that '[Name of child]'s epilepsy is so under control that we are looking to take him off all his meds. I put that down to the good care he has received.'

Children and young people make significant and sustained progress while living at the home. All children and young people were found to have consistently improved their communication and self-care skills. One social worker said, '[Name of young person] is at the home until he transitions into adult residential or supported living.

Given the progress he is making at this home, supported living is a real option for him, and this is not something I would have considered before.'

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

Risk assessments and risk management plans are of the highest standards. Staff recognise and understand the strategies they must follow to keep children and young people safe. Staff use the expertise of parents and other professionals to regularly update risk assessments to ensure that they are comprehensive and accurate. Staff's intuitive knowledge of the children and young people and their behaviour helps them to produce highly individualised strategies that support children and young people effectively.

Children and young people feel safe. Displays of affection between staff and children and young people were appropriate and nurturing. One parent commented, 'We have noted our son takes the manager's hand to lead him, as he is non-verbal. This gesture by our son demonstrates a sign of trust and gives us reassurance.'

Good staffing ratios ensure that children and young people receive support and protection that is appropriate to their individual needs. This means that when children and young people feel unsafe or become anxious, there is always an adult nearby who knows what to do to make them feel better.

Safeguarding is a standard item on staff supervision and in all staff meetings. This gives staff every opportunity to discuss if they have any concerns about children and young people's safety. Incidents that are of concern are meticulously and transparently investigated and recorded. Evidence gained from investigations is used to inform and improve safeguarding practice.

Collaborative working between the staff and safeguarding agencies identifies and mitigates the risks that present in the location of the home. Building a safeguarding culture helps protect children and young people inside and outside the home.

Staff training is comprehensive and up to date. When the individualised needs of children and young people have been identified, staff are encouraged to learn from the latest research and disseminate good practice and knowledge throughout the team. This ensures that children and young people are receiving care from staff equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet their highly complex needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is highly motivated, inspirational and passionate about what he expects children and young people can achieve as a result of the care and protection provided by his team. The members of the staff team share his vision and continue to practise in a way that is innovative and tailored to the individual needs of the

children and young people in their care. As a result, children and young people who live in the home continue to thrive and develop.

The manager and staff have an exceptional understanding of the children and young people and their progress. The staff have high aspirations of what the children and young people can achieve. Staff spoken to do not see children and young people's complex needs as a barrier to participating in day-to-day life experiences. Staff encourage and support children and young people to take part in activities that stretch their ability. This enables children and young people to gain in confidence, learn new skills and challenges other people's perceptions about what they can achieve.

The manager and staff build strong and effective relationships with parents and social workers to ensure that highly individualised plans comprehensively identify children and young people's needs. One parent commented, 'We have excellent communication with the manager, we have peace in our hearts and feel relaxed and confident that our child's needs are being met.'

The manager is committed to continuous professional development, both for himself and his team. The manager uses current research and theoretical models to develop and inform practice within the home. Highly effective and forensic monitoring enables him to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Innovative and structured development plans evidence improvement over a sustained period of time.

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: Richard Lewis

Inspector

Mark Proffitt, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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