

1244000

Registered provider: CareTech Community Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The service offers short-break care for children and young people who have learning disabilities. It is registered to accommodate up to five children or young people at any one time. The home aims to provide a comfortable, nurturing environment where every child and young person is supported to learn, grow and discover everyday life. The registered manager is experienced and suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 December 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 26 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
06/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
06/03/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

This is a delightful service where children and young people love to come for short breaks. They benefit hugely from warm trusting relationships with sensitive, dedicated staff. The home is full of children and young people's artwork and photographs. Enthusiastic staff welcome children and young people and their families into a child-friendly, nurturing environment.

Children and young people have great fun with the staff, who enjoy playing games and supporting children and young people to engage in a range of positive activities. Staff help children and young people to enjoy new, stimulating and exciting experiences together. For example, children and young people go on trips to the seaside, museums, a trampoline centre and an outdoor assault course. Staff are ambitious for children and young people and provide them with opportunities that support their social development, independence and confidence and broaden their life experiences.

The calm, welcoming atmosphere enables children and young people to feel secure and relaxed. This helps them to learn to identify and regulate their emotions and behaviour. Staff provide highly individualised care that helps children and young people to improve their diets and their sleeping patterns. For example, one young person has made huge progress and no longer needs to sleep in a safe space bed.

Staff empower children and young people to express themselves and to make choices. Staff ensure that children and young people's individual communication needs are understood and met. Staff are skilled in the use of different communication methods. These include Makaton and the use of symbols as well as body language and verbal communication. These approaches are tailored to each child and young person's needs and abilities.

Children and young people develop the confidence that they need to express their views, wishes and feelings. Staff listen to them and respond positively. Staff support children and young people to understand how to complain. They provide children and young people with social stories, daily routines and now and next charts, which help them to understand what is happening and reduce their anxieties. Children and young people contribute to meetings and complete questionnaires with staff to share their views more formally.

Children and young people make significant, sustained progress, which is often beyond expectations. They become more independent. Their ability to interact with peers improves and they develop empathy. Staff work with family members to identify children and young people's changing needs and help them to transfer the new skills that they learn to their family homes. A family member for one young person said that 'the home is fantastic' and explained that her child's social skills, confidence and ability to communicate have 'developed enormously'.

Sensitive staff provide excellent support to children and young people when they start to use the service and when they leave. Staff use individually tailored social stories, designed in collaboration with family members, to help children and young people to settle quickly when they start overnight stays and to prepare them when they leave. Children and young people benefit from balanced diets that meet individual dietary and cultural needs. Staff strongly value diversity and celebrate children and young people's individuality.

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

Staff keep highly vulnerable children and young people safe. Young people feel secure and trust staff. Parents say that they can confidently entrust their children and young people to the care of staff.

Staff training is excellent and includes topics like safeguarding, child protection, health and safety, self-harm, first aid and food safety. The registered manager recently arranged for the local police to deliver training in relation to child exploitation and county lines. Additional training is booked to help staff further reflect on child protection concerns specifically relating to children who have disabilities. This ongoing development programme keeps staff knowledge up to date, which benefits children and young people.

High staffing ratios and vigilant, perceptive staff ensure that children and young people are safe in the home and in the community. Individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans provide staff with highly effective guidance that helps them to minimise risks and keep each child and young person safe.

Staff know that trusting relationships with children and young people are pivotal to understanding them and keeping them safe. Staff are always aware of children and young people's moods and behaviours. They constantly assess changes in the dynamics within the home and are alert to triggers that could lead to children and young people becoming upset. Staff skilfully create and maintain a calm environment, which reduces children and young people's anxieties and enables them to learn to regulate their emotions and behaviours.

Staff recognise that children and young people should contribute to their own risk assessments and the development of the strategies that staff use to support them. Staff listen to children and young people when they indicate that a situation is becoming stressful for them and provide them with safe alternatives.

Children and young people do not go missing. They are not subject to bullying and do not harm themselves. There have been no allegations against staff. Incidents are rare and are well managed by staff.

Staff communicate extremely well with families and social workers to ensure that accurate information is shared in a timely way. Staff undertake excellent key-work sessions with children and young people. These sessions are designed to meet children and young people's individual needs and are appropriate to their age, ability and

preferred method(s) of communication.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The highly experienced registered manager and the deputy manager are passionate about the service that they provide to children and young people. They maintain an outstanding service through dedication and attention to the children and young people's individual needs.

Committed staff, many of whom have worked in the service since it opened, love working here. They enjoy seeing that children and young people are happy and making excellent progress. Parents and professionals explain that staff are a 'tight, cohesive team'. Staff feel strongly supported by each other and by the registered manager. They benefit from regular, reflective supervision and team meetings where they learn and contribute to the development of the home.

Excellent communication with children and young people, and all those involved in their care, ensures that staff know children and young people and their personal circumstances very well. Consequently, children and young people receive highly individualised care. This helps them to make significant progress and enjoy their short breaks.

The registered manager fully understands the strengths and areas for development in her team and uses supervision, team meetings, training and support to ensure ongoing staff development. The registered manager monitors and assesses staff practice effectively. She encourages staff to complete additional qualifications and training to enhance their knowledge and practice.

Matching and admissions processes are excellent. When a child or young person with specific needs starts having short breaks, the registered manager provides relevant training for staff. This ensures that the child or young person receives excellent care.

The registered manager monitors all aspects of the service regularly to identify ways to drive up standards even further. Current innovations include new look listen notes. The registered manager uses these to capture the progress that children and young people make. The registered manager and staff are also developing a new system to help children and young people understand the menus more easily.

The registered manager ensures that practice is informed by the latest research on the health and development issues relevant to the children and young people who use the service.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1244000

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: CareTech Community Services Limited

Registered provider address: CareTech Community Services Limited, 5th Floor
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Responsible individual: Shelley Whiting

Registered manager: Amanda Brace

Inspector

Louise Whittle: social care inspector

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