

1245823

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 owned by a private company. It is registered for six young people. The home provides care for young people who have physical and learning disabilities. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2018.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 March 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean young people are not protected, or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 9 August 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/08/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/04/2017	Full	Good

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	30/04/2019
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 treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(iii))	30/04/2019
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 each child is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7 (1)(c)(2)(b)(iii))	30/04/2019
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;	15/04/2019

understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi))	
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(h))	30/04/2019
The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	30/04/2019
The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (2)(a)(3)(d)) In particular, fully explore previous employment histories and account for any discrepancies in employment start and end dates from references provided.	30/04/2019
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b))*	15/04/2019
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the	30/04/2019

measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; and a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
Case records must be kept securely in the children's home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there. (Regulation 36 (2)(c))	30/04/2019
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. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	30/04/2019

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Serious safeguarding failures contribute to the home being judged inadequate.

Managers admitted a young person into the home whose needs the staff could not meet. The young person's behaviour had an impact on another young person's routine, which left them feeling unsettled. The young person moved on within seven days of moving in. As a result, the young person did not experience stability and other young people's experiences were affected.

Managers and staff have not ensured that a young person who has communication difficulties and no family support has access to an advocate when required. This does not enable the young person to effectively participate and have a voice when decisions are made about their care and future plans. For example, insufficient information provided by the placing authority to potential foster carers went unchallenged by staff. This failure was compounded by the absence of an independent person to advocate on the young person's behalf.

Confidential information about young people's care needs is on display in a communal area of the home. This does not respect young people's privacy and shows a lack of consideration for young people's dignity.

Despite safeguarding concerns, young people receive some good care and support from staff. As a result, young people make progress in different aspects of their development. For example, they are attending routine and specialist health appointments, which promotes their general health and well-being. In addition, young people learn some good self-care skills and develop greater independence.

Young people engage in key-worker sessions and young people's meetings. This gives them an opportunity to contribute to the day-to-day running of the home.

Young people enjoy varied activities at the home and within the community. For

example, they enjoy playing and relaxing in their sensory toy room; spending time in the lovely garden; having meals out; going on holidays to the seaside and on day trips. These positive experiences improve young people's confidence, social skills and helps them to develop friendships.

The home environment is delightfully decorated and welcoming. Young people's bedrooms are beautifully personalised, and they enjoy relaxing in them.

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

Managers and staff failed to follow safeguarding procedures when staff noticed and recorded that a young person had unexplained marks on her body. They did not report this concern to the young person's placing authority, so that relevant professionals could review the information and decide about the next steps. This shows that managers and staff do not identify and act on potential safeguarding concerns promptly and this places young people at risk of harm.

When a young person made an allegation of abuse against an agency member of staff, this was not referred to the local authority designated officer in a timely way. This shortfall was only identified by the independent visitor some weeks later, when they undertook their monthly monitoring visit to the home. Although some steps were taken to safeguard the young person immediately following the allegation, failure to promptly notify the allegation of abuse to the local authority designated officer delayed the instigation of an investigation into the allegation. This shortfall shows that managers and staff lack sufficient understanding about safeguarding procedures and how to implement these to adequately safeguard young people.

Records of physical restraints do not contain all the information required by regulation. Some lack relevant details about where the restraint took place, the duration of each restraint and the young person's behaviour leading to the restraint. For example, during one incident staff reported that the young person had calmed down but staff then proceeded to restrain him. The incident record provided no explanation about why the restraint was necessary. Management oversight has failed to identify these shortfalls. As a result, it is not always clear whether restraint practice is safe and proportionate.

The registered manager does not consistently follow safer recruitment practice to ensure that all staff are safe to work with young people. For example, the registered manager does not always ensure that there is a satisfactory explanation for gaps in staff's employment histories. Furthermore, information contained in references is not always well scrutinised and any issues are not consistently followed up.

Young people's risk assessments do not contain information about all known risks to sufficiently inform and guide staff about how to reduce and manage these risks. In particular, risk assessments do not clearly set out the risks relating to young people's health needs and possible implications. Given young people's complex needs, this has the potential to compromise young people's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Ineffective monitoring means that managers have failed to identify and act on serious safeguarding shortfalls.

Managers and staff do not monitor and review young people's care plans sufficiently. One young person's care plan dated back to 2017. Given that the young person has complex health needs, this is concerning and has the potential to compromise the quality of care given to the young person. Managers do not always escalate concerns sufficiently. For example, the registered manager has not raised concerns with the placing authority about out-of-date care plans.

Young people's personal information and case records are stored in the dining room and are accessible to other young people and visitors. Failure to securely store sensitive information shows a lack of regard for young people's privacy.

The registered manager does not always ensure that Ofsted is notified of significant events in a timely way. This means that the regulator is not given relevant information to inform its monitoring and assessment of whether staff respond appropriately when serious incidents occur.

Staff reported that they feel supported by the registered manager. They receive good supervision, which is focused on their well-being, development and practice. Staff undertake a range of training that helps them to develop the skills they need to meet young people's specific needs. However, out of 23 staff only five are qualified to level 3 in caring for children and young people. This qualified group includes the registered manager and deputy manager. At least five staff have no previous experience of working in care. As a result, there is a lack of suitably qualified and experienced staff caring for young people who have complex needs and disabilities.

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: 1245823

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: Roberta Davies

Registered manager: Fiona Lawrence

Inspector

Rumbi Mangoma, social care inspector

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