

SC005041

Registered provider: Caretech Community Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. It is registered to accommodate up to eight children with a range of disabilities and complex needs.

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: 13 and 14 December 2021

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/11/2019	Full	Good
26/06/2018	Full	Good
21/11/2017	Full	Good
03/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Seven children live in the home and have done for some time. Children make significant progress from their starting points. Staff support them extremely well to develop skills in line with their abilities. A social worker praised staff for their support in helping to improve their child's independence skills in using a cup, knife and fork. Staff support another child to shop and to cook their own meals. All seven children attend full-time education and are making good progress.

Over half the staff have worked at the home for over six years and nine of the staff for over 10 years. Staff know children's routines and their likes and dislikes, and they ensure that children receive nurturing individualised care. Staff recognise the uniqueness of each child and celebrate their achievements. For example, one child has received a certificate for talking more and another child for great artwork.

Detailed health plans and good working relationships with medical professionals ensure that staff meet children's complex physical health needs. However, staff do not consider how to address children's sexual and emotional health needs. This means that children's holistic health needs are not fully met.

Records accurately record the needs of children in terms of their day-to-day care and how they need to be looked after. However, targets and goals are not clear and measurable. Care planning for one child who is moving on is not sufficient. This risks children being without the necessary skills and support when they leave the home.

Staff are creative in providing stimulating activities for children and they ensure that children can join in everyday activities. For example, children made cakes for a charity event. One child regularly plays wheelchair football and staff supported another child to attend her school prom. Children also enjoy a range of activities with staff. Creating opportunities to spend time with children enables staff and children to develop warm nurturing relationships.

Staff work closely with social workers and they develop positive relationships with parents and carers. This enables children to spend time with people who are important to them, including staying overnight.

Some areas of the home have an institutional feel. For example, the entrance hall has a table with signing-in books and the front door has a high door handle. There are old defunct alarm systems, bedroom door alarms and keypads throughout the home, none of which are in use. The dining room is not a homely and welcoming place for children to enjoy a meal. Although children's bedrooms are generally highly personalised, one child has office-style blinds on their window.

Some areas of the home do not fully meet children's needs. For instance, doorways are of standard size and cannot easily accommodate a wheelchair. There are only

two bathrooms in use. A third bathroom is being used as a storeroom. There are other separate toilets throughout the building which are not used by children. Some are worn and tired and need attention to bring them up to a suitable standard. Rooms have insufficient power sockets, so currently each socket has several devices plugged in.

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

Staff are guided about children's needs through clear and detailed plans which tell staff about children's routines, their communication needs and their likes and dislikes. Staff have a good understanding of a range of de-escalation techniques that enable them to manage children's behaviours. Consequently, staff intervene quickly to de-escalate behaviours. As a result, no child has needed to be held to keep them safe.

Staff implement clear and detailed risk assessments which keep children safe and enable children to take age-appropriate risks. Staff educate children about online risks. Consequently, one child is able to spend time independently in the community and to safely use the internet.

Staff are knowledgeable about the safe administration and storage of medicine. They can demonstrate that good systems are in place.

Incidents of whistle-blowing are taken seriously. Managers work in partnership with children's social workers and the designated officer and carry out thorough investigations. As a result, staff feel confident to raise their concerns.

Regular checks are carried out to ensure that the environment is safe. Equipment required to support children's physical well-being is regularly serviced and maintained. All children have personalised plans to ensure their safety should there be an emergency. However, managers and staff do not consider the risks to children from brambles in the garden which children can access, or from hot radiators around the home. This risks the safety of children living in the home.

Managers do not always ensure they have required information for new staff before they start to care for children. On one occasion, managers did not ensure that staff provided proof of address. This means that managers do not always ensure that they recruit the most suitable people to work with vulnerable children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has a registered manager who has been in post for over five years. The manager is supported by a deputy who has worked at the home for 13 years and has held the deputy manager position for five years. Both the manager and the deputy hold an appropriate management qualification. Managers are enthusiastic and passionate about children's care.

A number of staff have recently left the home. Managers and staff try to ensure that children receive consistent care by working additional hours. However, despite their best efforts, children have been cared for by a number of agency staff, some of whom are unfamiliar to the children. Managers have plans in place to address the shortfalls in staffing.

Since September 2020, one child has left the home and two have moved in. Careful matching ensures that children quickly settle and that their needs are met to a high standard.

Staff receive good-quality supervision with a focus on the needs of children and on safeguarding. Annual appraisals are detailed and consider the achievements of staff and their development. Staff told the inspector that they feel supported by the manager and that this helps them to develop their practice.

Managers' monitoring is not always effective. For instance, although managers can talk about the causes of marks on children, they do not always clearly record the reasons and if this is a safeguarding issue. Managers have not communicated this effectively with schools. Managers have not updated a child's plans with emerging information about their health needs. They have not updated another child's plans with advice to staff about administering medication following an incident. Managers do not ensure that all staff read records of team meetings. This compromises children's care because staff and other professionals are without important information.

Managers ensure that staff receive a range of training to meet children's needs. However, staff training does not address all children's complex health needs. Managers have not been proactive in identifying additional training or in using research to increase staff knowledge and skills. Additionally, staff who are new to the company are working with children before they have completed training to keep children safe, such as safeguarding and health and safety.

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 health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) This relates to leaders and managers ensuring that children receive appropriate advice and support from staff about relationships and sexual health.	30 January 2022
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d))	30 January 2022

This relates to leaders and managers ensuring that brambles with sharp thorns are removed from the garden and that the risk from children accidentally burning themselves on hot radiators is acknowledged and managed.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child’s placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii)) This relates to leaders and managers ensuring that a child who will shortly leave the home has a plan in place and ensuring measurable targets are used to plan children’s care.	30 January 2022
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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met;	30 January 2022

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)(g)(i)(h)) This relates to leaders and managers effectively monitoring body maps and to keeping children's plans up to date with new information. Also, to ensure that staff read the minutes of team meetings. This also relates to leaders and managers ensuring that new staff receive training in safeguarding and health and safety before working with children, and that all staff have training in all children's complex health needs. In the interim, managers should use research and other resources to ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge to work with all children.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the 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 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This relates to leaders and managers ensuring that they secure proof of address when recruiting new staff.	30 January 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. The home should be a well maintained and attractive place for children to spend time in. (Guide to the

children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 13.9)

- The registered person should ensure that children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 13.10)

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: SC005041

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Caretech Community Services Limited

Registered provider address: 5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane,
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Responsible individual: Shelley Whiting

Registered manager: Lee Vaughan

Inspectors

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector
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