

SC376211

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 owned by a large private company and is registered to provide care for six children who have learning disabilities.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 January 2026

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: 1 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/10/2024	Full	Good
17/05/2023	Full	Good
22/08/2022	Full	Good
20/10/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy positive, trusting relationships with staff who know them well. Having a very stable staff team allows children to get to know consistent staff and helps staff to understand each child's individual needs so that they can provide sensitive, child centred care. All six children were seen during the inspection and relationships between staff and children are very nurturing. One child described being happy living in the home and trusting the staff who care for them.

Children's communication is understood by staff. Most children living in the home do not communicate verbally, however, staff are skilled at interpreting children's body language, sounds and gestures to help them understand what the child needs. The provider has been proactive in providing devices for each child with communication aids installed. This has been funded by the provider and has helped children to use tailored communication to express their thoughts. One child used their device to tell staff that they wanted a cuddle and ice cream.

Children attend school and college and attendance rates are good. There is good partnership working with schools and regular communication helps to ensure that any changes are passed on. One child has been out of education for a long period after they moved into the home. Staff used information from the child's previous school to create an education plan that includes a range of educational activities every day. This has helped to continue the child's learning until they can attend a new school.

Children are supported to lead a healthy lifestyle. Children enjoy a balanced diet, and children who have arrived at the home with a very limited diet are supported to increase the variety of food they will try. In addition, one child has undergone major surgery and has received excellent support from staff both before and after the operation. As a result, they are recovering very well.

Children are supported to maintain relationships with people who are important to them. Staff welcome children's families into the home and help to facilitate visits to see their relatives. One child enjoys attending a youth club where he is able to see lifelong friends and family members. Family members have very positive relationships with staff and value the support and care that they provide.

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

Children are safe because of high staffing ratios and consistent staff who know them well. Staffing is increased as and when needed based on children's current needs. For example, when one child's behaviours escalated, extra night staff were brought in to ensure their safety.

Children who present with self-injurious behaviour receive sensitive care. Staff are inquisitive about the triggers but because most children are pre-verbal, it can be difficult.

Specialist support is requested when needed to ensure that there are no underlying health issues that may be leading to the behaviours.

Children's plans are thorough and provide staff with clear guidance to follow. Protocols for specific health conditions are in place and are understood by staff. In addition, records are kept updated with any behaviours of concern or marks seen on children. This helps staff to monitor children's presentation in the absence of children being able to tell staff what is wrong.

There are very few behavioural incidents in the home. Staff are well trained to support children with their behaviour, and physical intervention is only used as a last resort. While records provide an overview of incidents, they lack full information. In addition, not all staff involved in the interventions have follow up discussions, and records of discussions with children include adult comments rather than the child's views. The records do not include sufficient information for the manager to assess whether the measure was proportionate, however this had not been identified, meaning that the manager's oversight of physical interventions is not thorough.

Medication is usually administered correctly. Most children's medication is given in line with their prescriptions. However, for one child a dose of medication was regularly missed because of a recording error. Despite regular medication audits, the manager has not identified the discrepancy. This is a topical medication, and no deterioration was noted as a result of the error.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a very experienced manager who has worked at the home for many years. They are committed to providing a high level of care to children with complex needs and giving them the best possible life while they are living in the home. The manager is well respected by staff, professionals and children's families.

The home benefits from a very stable, experienced staff team, and several members of staff have worked at the home for several years. Staff work well as a team, and all share a common goal to give children the best care they can. The home does not use agency staff; instead, staff are flexible to cover absences or work extra when needed so that the children only have care from a consistent team who know them well.

The home environment is safe and welcoming. Children benefit from a creative use of outbuildings that have been converted into a sensory room and cinema room. Any damage around the home is repaired quickly. This means children continue to live in a safe and welcoming environment.

Monitoring systems assist leaders and managers to have good oversight of the home, including a range of audits that are completed by managers and the responsible individual. While overall the monitoring is effective, it has failed to identify shortfalls found in some records, for example, where weaknesses in practice need to be

addressed. This means that staff may go unchallenged when there are shortfalls in practice.

Leaders and managers are proactive in supporting children to engage with their local community. They have completed charity activities to raise money for the local children's hospice and special needs nursery and have also raised funds for new equipment for their garden. Children take part in activities, including a garden party, and have welcomed friends and relatives into the home to enjoy the events with them.

Children's families and professionals are overwhelmingly positive about the home and staff. One family member commented on the significant progress their child has made while living in the home, sharing that the home is amazing and they would not want them to live anywhere else. One professional gave similarly positive feedback, stating: 'If my own child had to go into care, I would be happy for them to live at [name of home].'

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, The 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 registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the frequency of children's medication is in line with the prescription.	1 April 2026
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— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used, or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	1 April 2026

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that incident records include full details of any physical intervention used. Also, that discussions are completed with all staff who are involved in the intervention. In addition, that discussions with children are completed in a child centred way that captures their views as much as possible. Furthermore, management oversight must address when improvements are needed in recording or practice, and how these will be addressed.

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: SC376211

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: CareTech Community Services Limited

Registered provider address: 4th Floor, Parkview, 82 Oxford Road, Uxbridge UB8 1UX

Responsible individual: Shelley Whiting

Registered manager: Joanne Wootton

Inspector

Vicky Smith, Social Care Inspector

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