

SC483662

Registered provider: CareTech Community Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to six children with learning disabilities. It is a permanent home for up to five children and offers a short-breaks service for one child at any one time. The service is privately owned and forms part of a larger social care organisation.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2020. She is currently undertaking the level 5 management qualification.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

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: 7 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/12/2021	Full	Good
18/12/2019	Full	Good
22/10/2019	Full	Inadequate
10/12/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home and one child was receiving their short break on each day of the inspection. Children receive individualised, good-quality care and support, which enhances their well-being and experiences.

Staff build excellent relationships with children. Staff were observed to be nurturing, patient and kind with children. They know the children well and have excellent knowledge of the children's likes, dislikes and preferences. Staff are attuned to the children's differing communication styles and are adept at reading children's non-verbal communication. This ensures that children can communicate their preferences and views. Children's body language shows that they feel comfortable and relaxed in the presence of staff.

Children's health and well-being are prioritised. Managers and staff work well with healthcare professionals to ensure that each child's complex health needs are met. Staff support children to attend all routine health appointments. One child has been supported to attend the dentist, after a prolonged period of non-attendance. As a result, they are now enjoying improved oral health and they are eating better, which has improved their quality of life. Staff will also seek specialist support when required. Staff receive specific training to meet children's individual health needs. This enhances children's health outcomes.

Two of the children attend education settings according to their needs and abilities. One child is receiving home tuition. Staff work closely with education departments and other relevant professionals to make sure that children have opportunities to increase their academic ability and reach their full potential.

Children are becoming more independent. Staff help the children to develop self-care skills by using individualised prompting techniques throughout daily activities and self-care routines. As a result, one child is now learning to feed themselves and brush their own teeth. This personalised support ensures that children make meaningful progress in their independence and self-care skills.

Children take part in a range of activities, both in the home and out in the community. These include trips to the seaside, museums, zoos and local parks. These opportunities significantly enhance children's experiences and enable them to socialise, have fun and develop their confidence.

Staff make sure that children keep in touch with the people who are important to them. Children regularly see their families. Staff welcome children's families into the home. This ensures that children continue to build relationships and attachments with those people who are significant to them.

When children come to live at the home, matching is carefully considered. Where possible, children have a well-planned move into the home and are welcomed sensitively. In addition, the manager ensures that children who receive short breaks

are carefully matched to the children who live at the home. Managers complete compatibility assessments, which are kept under review.

The environment is spacious, and most areas are well decorated. There is specialist equipment available to meet the children's health needs and disabilities. There are pictures of children and staff around the home. Children's bedrooms are personalised, and lounges are comfortably furnished. However, some areas of the main corridor's decoration are looking tired, and, at the time of the inspection, the garden needed tidying. Toys had been left outside, empty plant pots were full of dirty water and a bag of soil had been left out. This doesn't provide a welcoming environment for children. Staff did tidy the garden during the inspection.

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

Safeguarding practices in this home are effective. Children are looked after by staff who know them well. Staff use their experience and knowledge of the children and follow behaviour support plans to keep children safe. As a result, incidents involving children have reduced. Since the last inspection, there have been no allegations or complaints and incidents are very rare. There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home.

Staff manage children's behaviours well. Staff use highly effective de-escalation techniques to support children when they are feeling anxious. As a result, physical interventions have not been used at the home. Managers ensure that children and staff receive debriefs after incidents to ensure that any actions taken by staff are necessary and proportionate.

Staff undertake good-quality training to help them to understand the additional risks to children with disabilities, including children's communication support needs. Staff support the children with their social interactions through high supervision levels and consistent, familiar routines. This helps children to feel safe.

Children live in a well-equipped, safe environment. Staff complete regular health and safety checks. Personal evacuation plans are in place for all children. There are regular fire drills to ensure that staff and children know how to exit the building in the event of an emergency.

The manager completes an annual review of the location of the home. They regularly consult with local safeguarding partners. This means that staff and children have the correct information to enable them to keep safe in the local community.

Recruitment practices are safe. Staff who work in the home are subject to all necessary checks. This ensures that only suitable people work in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced manager. She has high aspirations for children and staff alike. The manager is an excellent role model for staff. She is supported by an equally conscientious and ambitious deputy manager. Together,

they have created a positive team culture that maintains a persistent drive to improving children's outcomes.

Managers use effective monitoring systems to review the quality of care children receive. These systems help managers to identify and act on shortfalls, develop the service and ensure that children consistently receive a good quality of care.

There is a core, stable staff team in place. This ensures that children receive high-quality care from staff who know them well.

Leaders and managers support the staff team well. There is a robust induction plan in place to support new staff working at the home. Staff receive regular practice-related supervision and annual appraisals. Team meetings are regular and support staff to know how best to work together to meet the needs of the children. This makes the staff feel valued and supports their development. It also ensures that children receive consistent, high-quality care from staff. Staff said that they feel well supported.

The manager ensures that staff have access to a wide range of specialist training to meet the children's identified needs. Staff have a variety of skills, experience and qualifications. This ensures that all staff have the skills necessary to work with the children. However, while managers and staff have worked towards ensuring that staff have completed the qualification required for their role within the timescale set out in regulation, for one staff member this remains outstanding. This was raised as a requirement at the last inspection and is therefore repeated.

Managers work with a wide range of professionals to support the children to achieve the best outcomes. Parents and professionals recognise children's progress and the positive difference that staff's support is making to their children's lives. One social worker said that the home 'is the best residential placement. Staff are nurturing and caring.' Managers are confident in challenging those who are not meeting children's needs effectively.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	23 February 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, ensure that the garden is kept tidy and all communal areas of the home are maintained to a good standard. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC483662

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: CareTech Community Services Limited

Registered provider address: CareTech Community Services Limited, 5th Floor
Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Shelley Whiting

Registered manager: Sarah McConnell

Inspector

Sonia Sullivan, Social Care Inspector

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