

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	21/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC483662
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	CareTech Community Services Limited
Registered person address	5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, POTTERS BAR, Hertfordshire, EN6 1AG

Responsible individual	Mark O'Donnell
Registered manager	Rebecca Quinn
Inspector	Rebecca Quested

Inspection date	21/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	This is the first inspection
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Staff do not support young people to become increasingly safe. Leaders and managers seek to introduce improved methods of administration of medication but staff remain complacent and errors occur in the recording of controlled medication. This compromises children's and young people's safety.
- The registered manager has not ensured that staff have the experience and qualifications to meet the needs of each child and young person. She has not ensured that staff who lead shifts are qualified or have substantial experience in working in children's homes. Children's and young people's welfare is not safeguarded.
- The registered manager has failed to ensure that a record is made of each complaint, the action taken and the outcome of any investigation. This compromises children's and young people's safety as well as staff, where allegations are made against them. This prevents the registered manager from having oversight of complaints to monitor trends and improve the quality of care.
- The registered manager has not notified Ofsted about all serious incidents involving children within the home. This prevents Ofsted from monitoring patterns and having the essential oversight of the management of these issues.
- Staff do not ensure that children's case records are up to date. Important documents, such as statements of educational need and short break reviews are missing. Staff do not benefit from current information to inform their care of children and young people.

The children's home strengths

- The registered manager ensures each child and young person's individuality is recognised. Children and young people benefit from most areas of their care being well-planned and tailored to their complex needs.
- The registered manager ensures that the physical environment provided is welcoming. The quality of the facilities is excellent and meets children's and young people's needs. They are able to access a sensory room and a large secure garden; the kitchen has adjustable work surfaces and each bedroom is equipped to meet their specific needs. This ensures that the service is versatile and can respond to provide individualised care.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard to ensure that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe, the registered person must ensure – (2) (b) that the home's day-to day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and effectively safeguarded; this refers in particular to the safe storage, administration and recording of medication.	28/08/2015
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard to ensure that the children's home helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare, the registered person must – (2) (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	28/08/2015
The registered person must maintain records (case records) for each child which – (a) Include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to children; and (b) are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1) (a) and (b))	28/08/2015

The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))	28/08/2015
The registered person must notify HMCI if – (e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4) (e))	28/08/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that staff understand the system for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour and recognising where children have managed situations well. This refers specifically to establishing individual goals against which children's progress can be measured effectively. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, page 46, paragraph 9.39.)
- Ensure that any registered manager placed in charge of a children's home or staff member in a deputy or supervisory role such as 'shift leader' should have a substantial relevant experience of working in a children's home. This refers specifically to unqualified staff leading shifts with less than a year's experience of working in a children's home. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, page 54, paragraph 10.21)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This short break service provides respite care and accommodation for up to six children and young people with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The service is privately owned and forms part of a large social care organisation.

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Staff endeavour to ensure individualised care planning for children and young people. The registered manager develops a thorough understanding of their needs through observations of them at school and home. For example, she ensures that staff receive specific training in issues that most affect children's and young people prior to them using the service, for example: in attachment issues. However, she does not ensure that all relevant paperwork is available and up to date. For example, their statement of educational need and short break reviews are not present. Staff do not benefit from having this current detailed information to understand how to meet children's and young people's needs. This does not promote their welfare. Staff do not ensure that medication is safely and effectively managed. Staff receive training in managing medication and the registered manager reviews the effectiveness of systems, however, errors continue to be made. These errors include missed administration of medication, giving medication twice and giving medication at the wrong dose. Staff made three errors in a period of eight weeks and recording of controlled drugs is irregular. This has compromised children's and young people's health and safety. The responsible individual employs the services of a nurse to administer medication whilst further staff training takes place. This ameliorates the risks to children and young people in the short term. Staff recognise that children and young people make progress during their short breaks. They do not measure progress in a meaningful way so that their progress can be celebrated and developed. Staff develop high quality relationships with children and young people who enjoy coming to the short break service. Staff understanding of their cultural and religious needs is embedded into their practice. A parent said: 'My child has been ready and waiting to come since she woke up this morning...she loves the staff.' Another parent said: 'My child is able to do activities and go on days out that I	

can't do. I am very pleased with his care.'

Parents and carers value the careful way staff try to understand their children and young people. One carer describes the service as: 'utterly brilliant...it really matters to the staff that xxx has a good time.' This means that parents and carers are able to benefit from the short break care as much as the children and young people.

Children and young people engage well with education and staff ensure that they continue to attend and achieve. Staff encourage independence skills to promote young people's development. A parent said, '... staff encourage my young person to brush their teeth.'

Children and young people attend for their short breaks with their peers from school and are able to develop friendships and engage in a wide range of stimulating activities. For example, going bowling, visiting the farm, going to the park, shopping and out for meals. This broadens their horizons and encourages social interaction.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
Staff develop risk assessments which are not sufficiently specific. For example, some risk assessments do not identify how children and young people's needs can best be met for the identified risk. This does not promote children and young people taking appropriate risks and their independence. Staff receive training in child protection and are aware of safeguarding procedures. The registered manager has responded to whistle blowing, however, there was considerable delay in a member of staff informing the registered manager. Children and young people were not placed at risk through this delay and the issue has been addressed through further staff training. Staff are skilled in behaviour management and there has been no recorded use of physical intervention since the home was registered in February 2015. Children and young people do not go missing from the home. Staff ensure that there is clear plan in place to protect them if they did go missing. The physical environment is safe and secure and protects them from harm or the risk of harm. For example, the garden is fenced in so that children and young people can play safely outside. The registered manager ensures that all health and safety checks are undertaken and that regular fire evacuations take place. She is child-focused in her approach to these matters. For example, she has installed a rail from the bedroom to the fire escape for a visually impaired child.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
The home is managed by an appropriately qualified and experienced registered manager who is currently enrolled on the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. She has not ensured that the home is properly staffed with experienced and suitably qualified staff. Consequently, there are insufficient staff who are qualified and 'substantially experienced' to lead shifts. The registered manager's investigation of a complaint identified that the 'shift was poorly co-ordinated'. This is indicative of the lack of experience of staff. The staff team has not remained stable with eight staff leaving in the period since registration, including two staff appointed as deputy managers. This does not promote children's and young people's welfare. The registered manager has not effectively managed and monitored the home as demonstrated by the mismanagement and misadministration of medication and failure to notify Ofsted of the first occurrence of this. She has not managed complaints effectively and there is no clear complaint process established. This does not represent safe practice for children and young people and prevents Ofsted from monitoring patterns and trends regarding the management of these issues. The responsible individual and registered manager work effectively with the local community and a neighbour has complimented the service. The registered manager has been proactive in seeking the views of parents and professional stakeholders both through questionnaires and a forum.	

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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