

# SC483662

Registered provider: CareTech Community Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This short-break service provides care and accommodation for up to six young people who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The service is privately owned and forms part of a large social care organisation. The registered manager was registered with Ofsted in July 2017 and is appropriately qualified and experienced for the role. She is currently absent from the home and the deputy manager is in day-to-day charge of the home, with the support of a new senior manager.

**Inspection dates:** 22 to 23 October 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/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** 10 December 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 10/12/2018      | Full            | Good                    |
| 16/01/2018      | Full            | Good                    |
| 09/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 18/10/2016      | 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   |
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| In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—<br>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))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 13/12/2019 |
| The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—<br>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;<br>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.<br>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—<br>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;<br>ensure that staff—<br>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;<br>treat each child with dignity and respect;<br>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—<br>meet the needs of each child; and<br>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.<br>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(i)(ii)) | 13/12/2019 |
| The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.<br>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—<br>that staff—<br>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;<br>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and<br>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child                                                                                                                                                          | 13/12/2019 |

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| from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v)(d))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |            |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential;</li> <li>and promotes their welfare.</li> </ul> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and</li> <li>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</li> </ul> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f)(h))</p> | 13/12/2019 |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</li> <li>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</li> </ul> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that arrangements are in place to—</li> <li>manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and 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.</li> </ul> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(ii)(iii))</p>                                                                                         | 13/12/2019 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</li> <li>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</li> <li>is necessary and proportionate; and</li> <li>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised. (Regulation 21 (c)(i)(ii)(iii))</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 13/12/2019 |
| <p>The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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—</li> <li>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</li> </ul> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.</li> </ul> <p>(Regulation 32 (2)(a)(b)(3)(d))</p>                                                                                                                                         | 13/12/2019 |

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| The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 13/12/2019 |
| The registered person must ensure that—<br>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”)—<br>has spoken to the user about the measure; and<br>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)(b)(i)(c)) | 13/12/2019 |
| Case records must be kept—<br>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))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 13/12/2019 |

## Recommendations

- Registered persons have a key role in seeking to develop the home’s effective working relationships with each child’s placing authority and with other relevant persons which may include services, individuals (including parents), agencies, organisations and establishments that work with children in the local community, e.g. police, schools, health and youth offending teams (Regulation 5 – engaging with the wider system to ensure children’s needs are met). These working relationships will also be key to success in delivering the care planning standard (Regulation 14). (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 52, paragraph 10.3)

Specifically, ensure that when necessary an interpreter is used when communicating complex information about young people’s care with their parents where there is a language barrier.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Staff do not always follow each young person’s care plan well and this means that young people’s personal care needs are not fully met. As a result, some young people and their families have, at times, felt worried that the level of care provided by staff is not consistently of a good enough standard.

The manager and staff do not effectively challenge placing authorities about poor care planning and this results in drift and delay in progressing children’s plans. This means that managers and staff cannot be assured that young people’s plans are regularly

reviewed and kept up to date with young people's current needs so that these can be fully met. This shortfall was raised at the last inspection and has not been addressed.

Young people's bedrooms are not warm and welcoming. Consequently, they do not provide a homely environment where young people can relax and enjoy their own personal space when they stay for their short break.

The sensory room, though well equipped with a lot of sensory toys and equipment, is not accessible to young people who use wheelchairs. This is despite the home's statement of purpose stating that all areas of the home are accessible to young people with physical disabilities. This means that some young people are not fully benefiting from the facilities offered by the sensory room. It also means that the home is not operating in accordance with its statement of purpose.

The manager and staff support young people's transition into the home very well. Young people initially have tea visits to familiarise themselves with the home, peers and staff and then gradually they have overnight stays. Young people quickly settle. However, transition planning for young people approaching adulthood is poor and this leaves young people and their families anxious about the future. The manager and staff do not act on these concerns and their work with placing authorities is ineffective in preparing young people for adulthood.

The inspection identified that staff do not always store young people's confidential records securely. Some records were seen in the communal lounge and in young people's bedrooms. At the time of the inspection, there were visitors being shown around the home. This poor quality of practice demonstrates a lack of respect for young people's information and a lack of understanding about the need to uphold their right to confidentiality.

Staff provide positive and enjoyable activities that some young people would not be able to access ordinarily such as going to the cinema, the park, bowling, eating meals out, playing in the garden and growing their own fruit and vegetables. Young people have fun, make new friendships and develop some good social and independence skills.

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

The manager does not consistently follow all safer recruitment processes to ensure that agency staff are suitable to work with children. For example, she does not explore information provided by employment agencies about gaps in staff's employment histories and whether disclosure and barring checks are satisfactory.

Surveillance equipment such as audio baby monitors used by staff in young people's bedrooms during the night are not risk assessed and reviewed to ensure that these are solely used as a safeguarding measure. This does not promote young people's right to enjoy privacy.

During the tour of the home, the inspector observed that staff are inappropriately using

wardrobes in young people's bedrooms to store extra bedding, electrical cables and heaters. Also, staff are not consistently undertaking required health and safety checks to ensure that all food stored in the fridge is clearly labelled with dates of when it can no longer be used by. These health and safety hazards can impact on young people's safety within the home.

Records show that staff use restraint as the last resort. Young people are not given opportunities to express their views and feelings about being restrained as staff do not carry out debriefs with them. This is poor practice and does not demonstrate that staff and managers are open to understanding the impact of restraint on young people and in turn this does not promote their safety. Furthermore, the manager does not conduct staff debriefs following restraint incidents. This is a missed opportunity to evaluate staff's practice and to identify any practice issues or gaps in training to ensure that all restraint practice is safe.

Since the last inspection, there have not been any incidents of young people being missing from the home. Staff have clear procedures to follow should this happen.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers was judged requires improvement to be good at the last inspection. Senior managers have not effectively overseen the management of the home to identify shortfalls and help bring about improvement. As a result, there has been a decline in the quality of care afforded to young people.

The manager did not receive supervision for five months and she did not supervise the deputy manager regularly. In addition, the manager did not undertake a detailed handover of the home before going on long-term leave. Failure to provide adequate supervision to managers demonstrates poor and ineffective leadership. This poor management oversight leads to weak and ineffective review and monitoring of how the home is run.

Leaders and managers have failed to meet three requirements raised at the last inspection. This includes working effectively with the placing authority to review and progress young people's care plans, safer recruitment and thoroughly overseeing restraint practice. This failure to take required action does not help young people to make good progress or to prioritise their safety and welfare.

The manager and staff are not proactive in using interpreters to communicate with parents when there is a language barrier. This can create delay in passing important information to parents and does not promote positive relationships.

Staff report that they feel supported by the manager and have access to good training, which enables them to develop some of the skills and knowledge they need to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

Parents value the service and say it is vital to their children and the wider family. Most

are pleased with the fun experiences and different opportunities that their children have. In addition, parents appreciate that their children get to socialise with their peers and develop positive relationships with staff. Nevertheless, the widespread shortfalls identified at this inspection do not fully promote young people's progress, welfare and safety.

The home has recently had new senior managers who have identified the shortfalls and have a development plan to improve the quality of care given to young people.

## **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:** 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:** Linzi Harper

## Inspector

Rumbi Mangoma: social care inspector

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