

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	08/11/2016
Unique reference number	1221437
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Potensial Limited
Registered provider address	Potens, 68 Grange Road West, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 4DB

Responsible individual	Lisa Alcorn
Registered manager	Sarah Kington
Inspector	Jennifer Reed

Inspection date	08/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1221437

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- The young people are happy to come and stay in this home. They have fun, make friends and enjoy the time they spend here. They take part in a wide range of activities, both within the home and out in the community.
- Good matching of the young people staying each night contributes to a safe and harmonious home where the young people feel safe and secure.
- Families and professionals hold very positive views of this short-breaks service and praise the quality of care provided to the young people. They commend the high quality and homely atmosphere of the house.
- Effective communication between the home, parents and professionals results in a high standard of individualised care and support being provided to each young person. Staff provide innovative support to assist the individual development of each young person.
- The stable staff team provides continuity of care to the young people. Staff know individual young people well and understand how best to help and support them.
- Very positive relationships exist between the staff and the young people. A young person said, 'The manager and the staff are my best friends.'
- Comprehensive behaviour management and support plans contribute effectively to keeping the young people safe from risks of harm.
- Staff work closely with families and other professionals and agencies to deal with any arising issues. Leaders and managers take prompt action to resolve issues as quickly as possible, with the aim of keeping the young people safe and well at all times.
- The 'hands-on' style of the leaders and managers of this home provides strong oversight of the daily running of this short-breaks service.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the employment of an individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. In particular, point 6 of the schedule, which states that a full employment history, together with a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment, is provided in writing. (Regulation 32 (3)(d))</p>	<p>16/12/2016</p>

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Prepare and implement policies setting out arrangements for the safeguarding of children from abuse. In particular, to provide:
 - (1) procedures for staff when lone working outside of the home and the safe management of toileting/changing arrangements for individual young people
 - (2) clear guidance for staff regarding the usage of their personal mobile phones when they are working with young people within the home and in the community, and the usage of the home’s mobile phones by staff when working in the community. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 44, paragraph 9.19)

- Ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, ensure that the administration of medication training for staff is updated. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home was opened on 18 March 2016, following the closure of a local short-breaks children's home operated by the previous provider. The registered manager, the staff team and young people transferred over to this registered short-breaks service. This home is operated by a national private provider.

The home provides a short-breaks service for children and young people with physical and/or learning disabilities. A maximum of five children and young people may be accommodated at any one time.

Recent inspection history

This is the first inspection of this service since its registration with Ofsted.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>The young people are happy coming to stay at this home for their short breaks. They enjoy the opportunities each stay provides. They especially like being able to spend their leisure time with other young people. A social worker said, 'I can tell the young person likes coming here from their demeanour and body language.'</p> <p>The home thoroughly considers the needs and abilities of individual young people to ensure that the young people staying overnight in the home at any one time are compatible. This structured planning assists young people in getting to know other young people who often stay on the same nights as they do. These arrangements help the young people to make friends and feel at ease when they stay away from their family homes.</p> <p>The registered manager has made good efforts and taken necessary steps to resolve issues with neighbours. She has made sure that positive relationships are maintained between this new home and neighbours so that the young people feel comfortable while staying in the home. The young people continue to enjoy playing outside in the spacious and safely enclosed rear garden.</p> <p>Families and professionals hold very positive views of this short-breaks service and praise the quality of care provided to the young people. Professionals said, 'Young people respond well and do well here,' and, 'Staff go above and beyond what is necessary to support young people. They come up with great ideas to support individuals.'</p> <p>The staff know individual young people and their families well and understand how best to help and support each young person. Staff consult with the young people and their families to gain their views about the quality of the care and support the young people are receiving. Staff listen to their opinions and make appropriate changes in practice to bring about improvements in the service. They are vigilant in their care of the young people, recognising physical signs, symptoms and moods that may indicate that all may not be well with an individual. Staff work respectfully and sensitively with individuals, ensuring that due regard is given to maintaining their dignity and privacy at all times. Warmth, humour and patience are evident in the relationships that exist between staff and the young people.</p> <p>Staff rigorously and effectively implement the young people's care and support plans, enhancing their personal and social development. Individual young people are making notable achievements and progress that improve the quality of their daily lives. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ improvements in communication with others, using the picture exchange 	

- communication systems more ably, and learning new words
- socialising with other young people more and being able to take part in activities in the community
- a decrease in anxieties and incidents of challenging behaviour, and an increasing tolerance of the noise levels of other young people
- using the toilet more independently
- trying different food items, eating a better diet and being able to use cutlery and feed themselves
- getting their own breakfast, washing their hair, being able to get dressed
- sleeping better at night
- getting in and out of vehicles.

The young people have choices in how their short stays are managed. Their food preferences are taken into account and they can choose to take part in a wide range of activities offered to them, both within the home and the community. The young people go swimming, enjoy going into town, like spending time in local parks and visiting other places that interest them. One young person said, 'My favourite place is Crealy. I asked staff if we could go there and it was great.'

Staff value the young people and want the best for them. The short-breaks service provides a high quality and homely environment for the young people's stays. The home is well furnished and decorated and kept very clean by the staff team. There is a bright, comfortable interior and a welcoming front entrance for the young people on arrival. Communal rooms provide sufficient space and play equipment. Much of the displayed, colourful artwork has been produced by the young people, enhancing the home's appearance. The house provides an ample number of bathrooms and toilets, which are equipped with adaptations as required by individual young people. The home has adequate facilities to deal with soiled laundry.

Each young person usually stays in the same bedroom every time they arrive for their short break. The room is transformed for each stay with their personal pictures, toys, bedding and individualised adaptations. They are unaware that other young people also stay in this room on the nights they live with their families. They feel safe and secure in their familiar environment with the decor that they have either chosen themselves, or that has been chosen for them by staff and their families.

Staff are ambitious for the young people they look after. They encourage and support the young people to attend their schools. Over the past six-month period, the young people have achieved 100% attendance while staying at this home.

Insufficient attention given to recording on one occasion weakened the effective safeguarding of one young person. This omission in practice has been remedied by the home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Staff model and nurture positive social relationships. The young people learn to be kind to each other and to accept each other's differences. Good compatibility planning regarding the mix of young people staying each night helps to keep each young person safe, by reducing risks within the group and increasing individual enjoyment. Staff skilfully manage young people's challenging behaviour to calm situations and keep everyone safe from harm. No restraints have been required and no sanctions have been given to young people.</p> <p>The number of staff working each day is dependent upon the needs and abilities of the individual young people staying in the home. The registered manager ensures that there are always sufficient staff, including providing two staff for one young person if this level of support is required to keep everyone safe and well. No young people have been missing while staying at this home.</p> <p>Comprehensive behaviour management plans, support plans, communication passports and individual risk assessments contribute to keeping the young people safe from risks of harm. Staff understand each young person's support needs and implement their plans effectively. Staff know about the impact of medical difficulties and the management of care needs and medication for each young person. Staff members undertake specialist training to enable them to meet the health needs of particular young people safely. A social worker commented, 'The home has very specific care plans in place for the young person. They are well implemented by the team.'</p> <p>The young people are kept safe because of effective communication between the home, parents and other professionals. This communication supports collaborative and effective partnerships. A professional who was interviewed said, 'Any arising issues are quickly reported to parents and/or professionals; they are promptly dealt with and resolved.'</p> <p>The home's family-focused approach to looking after the young people is applauded by parents and social workers. One parent wrote, 'I felt very welcome coming to the home.' A social worker praised the abilities of the registered manager. They said, 'The registered manager facilitates working with families; she is dedicated to her work.'</p> <p>The young people and their families visit the home, and then come to stay for tea and meet other young people prior to their first short stay taking place. This gradual introduction to the home helps the young people and their families to</p>	

become familiar with the service. Staff make every effort to provide a continuity of appropriate care and support for young people as they move between the short-breaks service and their home. This lessens the young people's anxieties and strengthens their health regimes.

Staff keep in regular touch with families to ensure that they are up to date in their knowledge of young people's current care and support needs and to tell them about significant issues. The registered manager has devised a 'daily record' sheet, which is completed by staff and then sent home to the family after each short stay. This means that families are aware of what their child has been doing and how they have been while away from their family home.

Families appreciate the flexibility that this short-breaks service provides. When family crises or health issues arise, the staff support the family by looking after the young person on an alternative night if there is a bed available. These respite care arrangements help reduce tensions in family life and provide the young people with a safe, familiar place to go when they need it.

All staff complete safeguarding training and know how to refer any arising child protection concerns. The home's safeguarding policy and local safeguarding children board procedures are implemented as required. The home works openly with safeguarding agencies and shares information appropriately. An omission in recording weakened the safeguarding of one young person. This shortfall was identified by the registered manager and appropriate action was taken to remedy this shortfall in practice.

Health and safety, fire and utility checks are regularly undertaken to provide a safe home for the young people and staff to stay in. The home has a recruitment and selection process, based on safer recruitment principles. However, insufficient attention has been given to the evaluation of prospective employees' application forms. Gaps in employment dates and a mismatch between dates of employment given by the prospective employee and previous employers have not been explained in a written record, as is required by regulation.

The home provides a good range of policies to guide staff in looking after the young people safely. However, there is insufficient guidance available to staff regarding the use of mobile phones while at work, and in regard to the arrangements for the toileting/changing of a young person when a member of staff is working alone in the community.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>'The manager is inspirational for parents and professionals,' and 'The manager is dedicated to her work and very facilitative in helping professionals and parents work together,' are comments made by two professional workers. The registered manager is very highly regarded within local professional networks, by parents and by the staff team. Her approachable, problem-solving management style and substantial experience and sound knowledge-base underpin her child-focused management of the short-breaks service. She was registered with Ofsted as the manager of this home in February 2016. She has previously been registered with Ofsted as the manager of another short-breaks service.</p> <p>The responsible individual provides strong leadership of the short-breaks service. They are suitably qualified and experienced to lead the service. Their monthly monitoring visits and supervision of the registered manager provides them with a good oversight of the running of the home and its care practices.</p> <p>This recently registered short-breaks service has made a good start in a relatively short period of time. Well-considered leadership and management have underpinned the smooth transition of the staff team and the young people moving from one short-breaks service to another. The responsible individual and the registered manager demonstrate commitment to the continuous improvement of this short-breaks service, aiming high for the young people the home supports. They have a good understanding of how the home runs and the needs and abilities of the young people staff look after. Plans for the development of the home focus on further staff development, succession planning and improving the quality of care provided.</p> <p>The staff team completes core training elements relevant to their caring role. The majority of staff have moved across from a previous short-breaks service and they have completed a wide range of training, including achieving appropriate, nationally recognised qualifications. More recently employed staff have commenced the level 3 diploma, and this is within the required timescales. The registered manager is currently completing the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare (England). Requisite training certificates are all valid, apart from the administration of medication training course, which requires updating.</p> <p>All staff receive regular supervision and attend monthly team meetings, providing them with forums of support and development to help them look after the young people well. High morale exists within the staff team, which works well together and with external services.</p> <p>Partnership working is outstanding, with good relationships with key agencies and</p>	

parents already having been established. The registered manager advocates on behalf of the young people to make sure that they and their families receive the services that the young people need to support them. The registered manager or a member of the staff team attend the young people's multi-agency meetings to contribute to decision-making and future planning for them.

Open and sensitive relationships with families help parents to feel confident in leaving their young people for their stays in the home and sharing any concerns about their welfare that they may have. Staff encourage parents to be involved, they are made welcome when they arrive and they are kept well informed of the young person's experiences and progress while at the home.

The registered manager has taken appropriate action to resolve complaints from neighbours, to ensure that the young people develop a sense of ease and security when they come to stay at the home.

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 children looked after 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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