

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	23/01/2017
Unique reference number	1221437
Type of inspection	Interim
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	23/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
<p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.</p>	
<p>The leadership and management of this home are strong, and the home provides a well-organised short-breaks service. The home continues to look after the young people exceptionally well. This home has been operating for approximately 10 months and the service is already embedded within the locality.</p> <p>Social care professionals and parents commend the quality of the care provided to the young people. They are also impressed by the high standard of the premises and the homely, family environment the house provides for the young people to stay in.</p> <p>The collaborative partnership working that takes place between the home, families and other professionals is excellent. Professionals highlight the good advice and support families receive from the staff team. They note the staff team's effective, inclusive approach to working with families and professionals. Excellent, frequent communication between the staff, families and professionals ensures that each young person receives the appropriate care they need at that time. Professionals report how short stays in this home make positive differences to the daily lives of individual young people.</p> <p>The home's manager or deputy manager attends Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings and Children Looked After (CLA) meetings regularly, to contribute to planning and decision-making for individuals. An independent reviewing officer reported that their contributions were valuable. They assisted the professional network in making informed decisions about the young person's progress and development, and in making future care plans.</p> <p>Parents and carers trust the staff and appreciate the holistic support the staff offer – in particular, the assistance provided by the registered manager. Examples of support given by staff include: helping parents take their children for medical appointments; transporting families to specialist services that they find difficult to travel to with their child using a wheelchair; willingness to provide flexible periods of respite care in response to family crises; and just being able to talk to members of staff who really understand their child's particular care needs.</p>	

The young people enjoy coming to stay in this home. Parents and carers recount how their children show excitement when they realise they are coming for a respite stay. One parent said, 'They are full of smiles when they know they are coming and smiling when they return home. I have dropped into the home when they are staying and they and the other children were all calm and looked happy.'

The young people are also very positive about their stays. After they had been very sick, one young person wrote to the registered manager. Their note said, 'Thank you for looking after me. I really appreciated it. Thank you very much. You are a star. Thanks epic! LOL!' Another young person gave the 'thumbs up' sign to show the inspector how they felt about coming to stay in this home.

The young people are thriving. They are learning new independence and personal skills, spending time with other young people, and being stimulated by taking part in a range of activities within the home and outside in the local community. They have appropriate choice, for example, about how they spend their leisure time and what they eat. Staff demonstrate respect for each young person's individuality and dignity in the care they provide. Comprehensive care and support plans for each young person guide staff effectively in providing care aimed at assisting their development and enhancing the quality of their lives. The progress of each young person is recorded, and their achievements are displayed proudly for all to see on the home's 'achievement tree' located in the dining room.

Positive, warm relationships exist between individual young people and staff members. It is evident that the young people like to spend time with the staff. They enjoy playing games with them, looking at books together, watching TV, going out, or just being in close proximity, sharing a smile. The staff know each young person's likes and dislikes. They understand their personal needs, abilities and vulnerabilities. Many of the young people really enjoy swimming, and arrangements have been made recently for the young people to have regular trips to a local school's swimming pool.

Staff make sure the young people are kept safe and have fun when they come to stay. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, and understand child protection and health and safety issues. The well-considered staffing levels in place underpin the warm, protective and good-humoured support provided to each young person.

The responsible individual and registered manager demonstrate a strong commitment to the development of the home and the provision of an exemplary short-breaks service. The one requirement and two recommendations made at the first inspection of this home have been dealt with satisfactorily, increasing the protection and safeguarding of young people.

The home's development plan shows ambition and drive for improving the quality of the short-breaks service, and a commitment to rigour within the leadership and management of the home. Actions are being taken aimed at increasing the staff

team's knowledge and skill levels. Plans also include the development of innovative and outstanding care practices aimed at improving individual outcomes for the young people.

Both registered persons demonstrate a visible presence and a 'hands on' management approach within this home. The management monitoring systems in place are comprehensive and provide a thorough audit of the home's operation. The young people's case files and the home's records are detailed. They are reviewed and updated regularly to provide pertinent and accurate information to support staff in caring for the young people.

However, this inspection identified that the home's positive behaviour support model of control and restraint has not been fully embedded within the home's practice. Staff are not clear about the name of physical intervention holds within this model. Incident-recording describes the action taken, but does not name the hold used. This omission in understanding the model was rectified during the inspection. The information gained clearly shows that 'escorting' a young person is a low level physical intervention. To date, the staff have not been recording such actions as physical restraint, and the duration of the hold has not been recorded.

Since the home opened in March 2016, there have been several independent persons appointed to undertake the monthly independent monitoring visit. The quality of these reports has been variable. Leaders have made an effort to improve the quality of the visits and the standard of reporting. However, recent reports still do not show sufficient rigour. The December visit report shows no record of any discussion with staff, the manager, parents or young people. There is no record of any observations of care practice, and no evaluation by the visitor of the quality of care provided. The reports do not include the time or duration of the visit, and it is unclear whether or not any young people were present in the house at the time. Furthermore, the visitor's reporting lacks impartiality. The writing of the report using the formatted report form requires the independent visitor to provide answers to the particular questions listed on this form. Not all of these questions are relevant to this home. The 'auditing' style of this format restricts the visitor's ability to report on and meet the requirements of the regulation and the guidance effectively. The visitor's own opinion about the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the young people, based on the evidence they have themselves gathered at their visit, is weaved within the formatted responses. Consequently, the visitor's opinion about these matters is not focused and lacks clarity.

Being a short-breaks service, this is a very busy home that meets the diverse needs of a fluctuating group of young people. The registered manager and her team show dedication and flexibility in their working practice to provide the best service they can to support the young people and their families. The registered manager's strong work ethic, enthusiasm, commitment, and substantial knowledge and skill base assist her in balancing the competing demands of her exacting role. She excels in providing a positive role model for her staff team, leading by example and

demonstrating an outstanding ability to engage effectively with each young person and their family.

Ensuring the full and satisfactory completion of the home and organisation's operational procedures and systems demands a significant amount of management time. Although the home offers a short-breaks service to only five young people at any one time (and the home is staffed accordingly), 15 young people come to stay in this home for their respite care episodes. Consequently, the time required by the registered manager to complete the management tasks relating to the care of 15 young people is considerable – for example, attending TAC and CLA meetings, updating care and support plans, and dealing with parents and professionals who are in frequent communication with the home during daytime hours. The home's development plan objective to increase the occupancy levels within the home is likely to further increase the registered manager's workload.

The registered manager is completing her Level 5 Diploma qualification. She reports that she has experienced difficulty in the provision of an assessor; this has contributed to her lack of progress in completion. It is not confirmed at the time of this inspection that the registered manager is likely to complete this requisite qualification by November 2017, as is required within regulatory timescales.

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a national private provider. It opened in March 2016. The home provides a short-breaks service for children and young people who have physical and/or learning disabilities. A maximum of five children and young people can be accommodated at any one time.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/11/2016	Full	Good

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
35: Behaviour management policies and records	10/03/2017

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 a description of the measure and its duration.
(Regulation 35(3)(a)(iv))

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, this is in relation to the provision of an effective assessor to support the registered manager in completion of the Level 5 Diploma award within given timescales. All managers working in a children's home must have the qualification in Regulation 28(2) within the relevant timescales listed in Regulation 28(3). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraphs 10.11 and 10.12)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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