

# 1221437

Registered provider: Potensial Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This independent children's home is operated by a national provider of health and social care support services for children and adults who have disabilities and complex needs. The provider operates one other children's home, which is located nearby.

This home provides short breaks for up to five children and young people, who may have physical and/or learning disabilities, at any one time. Currently, a total of 22 children and young people receive a service.

The home may not accommodate children and young people permanently. Children and young people usually live at home with parents or foster carers and attend schools within the local authority area.

**Inspection dates:** 11 to 12 May 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account:** **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 23 January 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Sustained effectiveness.

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- The children and young people receive very good, individually tailored care from well-trained and dedicated staff who understand their needs.
- The children and young people really enjoy coming to stay for their short breaks and, in spite of the brief nature of their visits, many make good progress as a result of the high-quality care they receive.
- The registered manager and her staff ensure that all children and young people are kept safe from harm through effective risk assessments and good safeguarding practice. Children and young people do not go missing or engage in any harmful activities.
- The home places a high priority on providing entertaining and healthy activities, including those which help children and young people who have disabilities to keep physically active.
- The children and young people are very well consulted about every aspect of their care. The staff use a variety of communication systems to enable residents to express themselves freely.
- Professionals and parents who were interviewed commented on the home's flexibility and commitment to 'going the extra mile' to support families, some of whom are in crisis.
- Professionals also commented on the home's excellent communication with social workers, teachers and parents to help to ensure that the children and young people receive the best possible care.
- The home provides a delightful environment for the children and young people. They stay in bright, spacious and nicely decorated bedrooms, personalised for each visit. They enjoy relaxing in the home's lounge and dining area and in the large, attractive garden.
- The home has a very experienced and skilled registered manager who is well supported by a very able deputy and senior care staff. She has responded very positively to previous inspection requirements and recommendations, and can produce clear evidence of the home's progress and development.

The children's home's areas for development

- One medicine, Lisdexamfetamine, which is a Schedule 2 controlled drug, was listed in a child's file without the dose contained within each tablet clearly stated. A recommendation has been made.
- Fire alarm tests are conducted approximately weekly, but there were several examples when this had been done one or two days early or a few days late. Overall, there have been the correct number of fire alarm tests, so no requirement has been made on this occasion, but it would be good practice to conduct these on the same day each week so that they become part of the home's routine.

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
23/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/11/2016	Full	Good

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

### Recommendations

- Ensure that records are kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. In particular, ensure that when the names of children and young people's medications are recorded, that the specific dose is included. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, paragraph 7.15, page 35)

### Inspection judgements

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

The children and young people receive a flexible, responsive service which meets their needs and supports their families to care for their children and young people at home. The quality of the relationships between staff and the children and young people is exceptionally good. As a result, children and young people thrive when they come to visit the home and enjoy their short breaks.

Key information about each child or young person is recorded to a high standard. This ensures that there is good continuity of care for the children and young people and that their needs are well understood.

Parents, teachers and social workers are very positive about the service, saying that it is 'an absolute lifeline'. Parents say that they could not manage without this support and they only wish that there were additional local authority resources to fund more sessions. They said that the registered manager is extremely accommodating and will take in children and young people in an unexpected crisis, even if they are not booked for a break at that time. As a result, parents have developed considerable trust in the service and regard it as a valuable resource for the whole family.

Professionals also commented favourably on the service's flexibility. They said that many parents find the home to be extremely supportive and have, over time, become more confident about leaving their child for a short break. The home frequently hosts team-around-the-child meetings, when professionals meet with parents and review the child's situation. The staff attend these meetings and provide important insights into the child's progress. Social workers praised the registered manager for her commitment and the quality of communication with parents and professionals. They feel confident that their children and young people receive a safe, high-quality service in very attractive and homely surroundings.

The registered manager is very child focused and is determined that the children and young people who stay at the home should enjoy opportunities that may not always be open to them when they are with their own families, where the complicated logistics of

taking several children, one of whom has a disability, out for the day may mean that this cannot happen very often. The children and young people who come to stay in this home are kept busy with lots of activities and involvement in the community. This in turn helps them to relax, enjoy themselves and to eat and sleep well.

Consequently, the children and young people thoroughly enjoy their short breaks and come into the home after school excited and full of enthusiasm. It is clear that they have formed strong attachments to individual staff and are keen to spend time with them and with each other. The staff spend a lot of time with the children and young people and give them their undivided attention. One member of staff was helping a child with her homework. A young person who was feeling very worried about a pending change of school was taken out for a drive in the car to take her mind off her concerns.

Although some children and young people only stay infrequently, the staff try to ensure that all receive a lasting benefit from their stays. For example, some children and young people are now able to toilet and dress themselves independently and are trying new foods. Some are making their own toast in the mornings, which they were not previously able to do.

Other children and young people are making new friends and engaging in outside activities for the first time. Children and young people who have difficulties in moving independently find going swimming relaxing and liberating. Two children have found that they have a shared love of dancing. Coming to stay at this home therefore provides a new dimension to children and young people's lives.

The registered manager explained that the health of some children and young people has improved while they are visiting the home. Some do not require the same high levels of medication as they do at home. All children and young people have their health needs monitored closely.

Medication is stored in children's and young people's own bedrooms, and is administered from there to reduce the risks of staff walking around the home carrying large quantities of medicines. Administration is usually well recorded and the manager has to overcome the major challenge of having large volumes of medicines entering and leaving the home on a daily basis. One isolated example was found where a Schedule 2 controlled drug was named on the child's file without the important information about the dose contained in each tablet. The manager remedied this immediately after the inspection, but a recommendation has been made.

One child came into the home with an infection which rapidly deteriorated and, had the staff not been vigilant, this situation could have been very dangerous. The staff immediately called an ambulance and the child was admitted to hospital for treatment. The registered manager went with her and stayed for several hours to reassure her and provide the hospital staff with necessary information.

The children and young people are very well supported to attend school. In some cases, this involves a journey to a distant part of the county. The manager and staff have very

good links with the local schools and hire a school swimming pool for the home's sole use every weekend. This enables the children and young people to enjoy healthy exercise in a safe environment, with a lifeguard on hand.

The children and young people are consulted before they come to stay and at every point while they are visiting the home. Their care plans show attention to detail and very clear assessment of their likes, dislikes, strengths and vulnerabilities. This helps to ensure that when they come to stay, the staff can tailor the menu and activities to suit the group of children and young people on any one day.

The children and young people all have key workers. The registered manager explained that she is very keen to promote key working. She likes the staff to focus on simple and achievable outcomes for the children and young people. Some children and young people can say what they want to achieve, while others use non-verbal signs. Feedback is sought regularly through the use of 'how are you feeling' folders, using whichever method of communication suits the child or young person. Many of the children and young people have electronic tablets which help them to communicate. All the staff have been trained in understanding alternative communication systems.

The home provides a very bright, warm and homely environment for the children and young people. The large garden, complete with a low-level trampoline, provides an exceptionally good space where they can play and let off steam. Each bedroom is personalised for the child or young person coming in that night, with their own duvet set and toys, photos and other items that are important to them.

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

The registered manager and staff are working in a setting where, because of the children's and young people's serious medical conditions, there is an inherently high degree of risk. Consequently, every child or young person has a detailed risk assessment on file, summarised in a highly visual format so that the staff can see instantly where any specific risks lie. All the children's and young people's activities are risk assessed to endeavour to cover every eventuality. Individual strategies are clearly recorded. The home also has a location and premises risk assessment, which the police have read and signed off as accurate for the area.

The safeguarding of children and young people is a high priority in the home. The staff have all received updated training in safeguarding. Children and young people at risk of personal injury, for example those who may fall during epileptic seizures, have any marks and bruises carefully documented.

Three staff recruitment files were inspected and were of a good standard. Recruitment is completed in line with safer recruitment guidelines and the manager has received the relevant training.

The home is checked daily for any environmental hazards. Fire safety is generally very

good, with personal evacuation plans in place for all the children and young people. These are kept in two different locations to ensure that they are always accessible to the staff in an emergency.

Fire evacuation drills take place every month, including in the hours of darkness, to make sure that the children and young people know how to evacuate the building in the event of fire. Because the home cares for a constantly changing population of children and young people, the manager monitors this carefully to make sure that everyone has had the opportunity to practice leaving the building. All the children and young people have personal evacuation plans and there are specific instructions for the fire and rescue service on where to find them if they are in their safe sleeping spaces, as they do not always choose to sleep in their beds.

The fire alarms are generally tested weekly, but there have been five occasions since the last inspection when the testing has been less regular. The registered manager undertook to ensure that alarm tests are carried out weekly in future.

The children and young people are kept very safe in this home. No children or young people have left the building unaccompanied, there have been no safeguarding concerns and children and young people do not routinely place themselves at risk. Some children and young people have no perception of danger, which has made it necessary to apply, in one case, for a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DoLS). The manager is therefore familiar with the DoLS process and can put this into practice if necessary.

The staff manage behaviour very well and there have been only two physical interventions since the previous inspection. Both were low level and appropriate to the circumstances.

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

The registered manager is skilled, experienced and highly regarded. She demonstrates great passion for her work, combined with effective management of the home and a clear vision for the future. She leads her staff team by example and is fully committed to their professional development.

Progress is not always easy to evaluate with a short-breaks service, but the registered manager was able to give numerous examples of how the children and young people have developed and achieved important milestones.

The registered manager ensures that all staff receive regular supervision, at a frequency determined by individual need. Staff meet monthly to share information and ensure that they work together as a team. The registered manager praised her staff and said that they are the home's greatest asset. She is keen to retain staff by ensuring that they are well managed and given appropriate training and development opportunities. To this end, her deputy and senior residential care worker have both been enrolled on management training courses at levels relevant to their roles in the home. The registered manager also has ambitions for the home's environment. She plans to create

a sensory room and further develop the garden, to maximise the use of this space.

The home has a comprehensive and detailed statement of purpose, which was updated during April 2017. This document complies with the Children's homes (England) regulations of April 2015 and was sent to Ofsted, as required by regulation. The home also has a very informative children and young people's guide; it can be produced in any format required, to suit the young people's individual needs.

The home received one requirement and two recommendations at the previous inspection, which took place on 23 January 2017. All three areas of shortfall have been met in full. The requirement was made because the home was not recording escorting holds, which are used to guide children and young people away from a situation or from others, as low-level restraints. This has been remedied and there is now a bound and page-numbered book to record any physical interventions.

One recommendation related to the need to appoint an assessor for the registered manager's level 5 diploma award. The registered manager now has an assessor and is working through her level 5 award requirements. She already holds a National Vocational Qualification, at level 4, in leadership and management.

The second recommendation related to regulation 44 reports, which were insufficiently robust. There have been several independent visitors since the interim inspection. Some have produced excellent reports. The present independent visitor visits monthly and their reports are clear and detailed, with sufficient evaluation to provide adequate scrutiny of the service.

## **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 difference 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 who 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:** 1221437

**Provision sub-type:** 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

Heather Chaplin: social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2017