

1221437

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This short-break centre is operated by a large independent national provider. The home is registered to provide short-break care and accommodation for up to five children at any one time. Children who stay at this home may have a learning disability and/or physical disability.

The manager of the home was registered by Ofsted on 14 March 2016.

**Visit dates:** 20 to 21 October 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 28 August 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** Requires improvement to be good

## Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

## **The care of children**

Children are comfortable in their surroundings and confident with the staff, who know them well. This creates a genuine home-from-home feel to the service. Children make progress because of the warm and nurturing relationships with staff. Children approach staff for help as well as for company and interaction. Staff are confident in their approach to care. Parents and social workers are complimentary about the service and the compassion with which staff ensure children have an enjoyable break.

The service remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions, and continues to provide a safe environment for children to play, relax and flourish. Staff have supported children well through the uncertain period with thoughtful approaches to managing the change in routines.

Children are free to choose the activities they engage in, and how they spend their time during their stay. The high staffing ratio means all children's needs are met in a safe and consistent manner. Joint working with home, school and relevant partner agencies has led to children's targets becoming more focused on the social and self-care aspects of their development. Children's successes are celebrated, with certificates and verbal praise.

Children's physical and emotional well-being are central to practice within the service. Strong links with health and education services ensure consistency in approach across the settings. Parents liaise with staff to inform them of indicate any changes in the child's health needs. However, changes in medication dosages are not always confirmed with the prescriber to ensure staff are administering the correct amount.

Children continue to access school while they have their short break. Children were seen to be excited to get onto the service's minibus when collected from school, and staff welcomed them warmly at the gate, receiving a handover from school staff.

## **The safety of children**

Children's actions and demeanour show that they feel safe while accessing the short-breaks service. They confidently approach staff, but also relax in communal spaces. Staff are acutely aware of each child's risks and vulnerabilities, and they take the right actions to keep them safe. Staff are confident in the processes that they need to follow should they be worried for a child's welfare.

Responses to child protection and safeguarding concerns are swift. Records highlight the prompt action and detailed communication with partner agencies. In addition, detailed recording of concerning marks or bruises are shared with social workers and safeguarding professionals. Detailed records aid in identifying any trends or patterns to injuries.

Staff understand what children are communicating through their behaviours, in times of calm and crisis. Incident reports are clear in their recording and consideration of the child's needs at the time. The input from the organisation's specialist behaviour support adviser ensures children's needs are considered, and approaches to supporting their behaviour are consistently reviewed. Staff are reflective in their approach, but do not always evidence the sensitive evaluation of the child's needs and how they could respond differently to support the child in the future.

The building is well maintained and reflects the differing needs of the children who access the service. The thoughtful approach to the impact assessment of children staying continues to be reviewed. Recognising the previous shortfalls in this area has led to an approach considering not only the children's needs and that of the group, but also of staff skills. They ensure staff are able to meet individual needs and that children are safe during their stay, with children they are friends with, or whom they can tolerate.

### **Leaders and managers**

The home is managed effectively by an experienced registered manager. Staff express confidence in the skills and support of the management team, who they say they can contact at any time. Staff benefit from regular supervisions, which they find supportive. They have continued with essential training online during COVID-19 restrictions. New staff talk of how supportive the staff team is, and how they have found their 'dream job', supporting children to have fun.

The management team effectively monitors the quality of care through evaluation of the service, linking areas for development to the development plan. They also respond swiftly to areas raised by the independent visitor as requiring development. The management team maintains effective relationships with partner agencies, ensuring consistent support for children. Children's care plans identify clear goals and targets, while highlighting individual progress.

The registered manager has continued to reflect on the quality of service provided, and reviews the responses and actions taken considering the shortfalls identified at the last full inspection. Despite meeting the requirements and recommendations set at that inspection, she is keen to ensure shortfalls do not go unnoticed in the future.

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

### Recommendations

- During a short break, staff are responsible for maintaining a child's ongoing health treatment, including the management of medication on arrival and departure from the home and recording and sharing information about when medicine was administered. Staff should be skilled in obtaining treatment for the child in an emergency. Children using short break provision may have very complex health needs. Staff will need to be appropriately skilled to care for them and understand that safeguards may need to be greater than for other children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 36, paragraph 7.20)  
In particular, that any changes in medication dose are confirmed with the prescriber.
- Staff should understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff should encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)  
In particular, ensure a record is kept of any reflection regarding a child's behaviour.

### Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1221437

**Registered provider:** Potensial Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Potens, 68 Grange Road West, Birkenhead CH41 4DB

**Responsible individual:** Bettina Jeppesen

**Registered manager:** Sarah Kington

### Inspector

Jennie Christopher, 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 children looked after, 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 [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](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 [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](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: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020