



ANNUAL REPORT

April 2024 - March 2025

That all may reach their potential

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OBJECTIVES

- Ensuring that the people we support are at the heart of everything we do
- Creating a culture focused on best interests, choice, control and rights
- Working creatively as a team with the individual, their family, friends and community to provide the best possible service
- Continually developing the service, ourselves and our practice
- Always role modelling the values, qualities and behaviours we expect from others

ACHIEVABLE BY

- Involving the people we work for in the planning and delivery of their care and support.
- Working in partnership with our colleagues in social work and health.
- Treating everyone with dignity and respect.
- Promoting people's independence.
- Providing high quality, cost effective and efficient services.
- Promoting equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Promoting physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.
- Empowering people to lead the life that they choose.

AIMS

For Potential Living to be outstanding in it's mission of supporting the people we work for to meet their individual aspirations and be the best possible version of themselves.

MISSION

That all may reach their potential.

VISION

To open up the opportunities we provide for people of all ages, with differing disabilities and none, throughout Lanarkshire, so that they too can reach their potential.

JOHN THOMSON HOUSE



BACKGROUND

Potential Living came into being with the formation of a supported living project operated by VAMW Care. VAMW Care was formed in the early eighties by a group of local people concerned about the limited opportunities available for people with learning disabilities in the area



In 1982 VAMW House in Motherwell was opened as a registered residential home and throughout the remainder of the eighties and nineties other homes were opened in Wishaw and Motherwell providing accommodation and support for individuals of all ages and a wide variety of needs.

Towards the latter end of the nineties opportunities were beginning to present themselves to us and the people we worked for, that would allow us to offer them something better and in 1999 we formed the Potential Living Project, initially by supporting people with the transition from our own residential establishments to their own homes.

The majority of the people we now support have their own tenancy, with the remainder living at home with family. In 2017 we moved away from using the name VAMW Care in favour of Potential Living.

THE LAST YEAR

This was another difficult and demanding year for us, operating in a challenging environment. Despite the challenges, Potential Living remains resilient and is in a strong overall position.

It has nevertheless been profoundly frustrating and disheartening for us to have found ourselves in 2025 in a situation where due to the need for the statutory authorities in Scotland to make difficult spending decisions; we have been on the wrong end of funding cuts and an Employers' National Insurance Contribution rise. Not to mention the continuing failure to deliver Fair Pay for the Social Care workforce.

At Potential Living we have once again embraced the challenges as opportunities to grow, improve and develop our service and throughout the report you will see examples of how we have managed to achieve this. Without our fantastic team of highly motivated, passionate and skilled staff though, this would not have been possible. Recognition for this commitment was, once again acknowledged and rewarded by the Care Inspectorate when we were awarded two sixes and a five in three key question categories following an unannounced inspection.

How good is our staff team?

6 – Excellent

“We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for people. Staff spoke warmly about their experiences within the service, consistently sharing that they feel happy, fulfilled and supported in their roles. The overall atmosphere among staff was one of motivation and mutual respect. Team meetings described a hardworking and cohesive group that communicated well and supports one another. This created a stable, compassionate environment where people receiving care benefit from consistent, attentive and person-centred support.”

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

6 – Excellent

“We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for people. People consistently experienced exceptional outcomes through the support provided, with high levels of satisfaction reflecting strong emotional wellbeing and deep trust in staff. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with individuals and their families expressing heartfelt appreciation. Staff interactions were consistently compassionate, attentive, and deeply informed. For individuals with limited verbal communication, staff demonstrated exceptional skill in interpreting and advocating for their needs. This reflected a profound understanding of each person and a commitment to delivering care that is not only safe and effective but also deeply respectful and empowering.”

How well is our care and support planned?

5 – Very Good

“We found significant strengths in many aspects of the care planning and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore, we evaluated this key question very good. Care plans consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to identifying and addressing assessed needs and risks, with regular updates supporting relevance and responsiveness. This delivered a clear focus on delivering person centred care. Reviews were generally well managed, with sampled records indicating timely completion and up-to-date information. This reflected a strong commitment to maintaining oversight and responsiveness in care planning.”

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS



To continue with our work, in providing outstanding quality and personalised care; we recently employed Sharon Fisher as our own Health and Social Care Trainer. In the past we, like most other organisations, contracted an external provider to deliver training that we were unable to facilitate in-house.

Having our own trainer has meant that we can now offer our own staff a more bespoke experience with greater flexibility and convenience. It also means that we are now in a position to offer training to other organisations who are in the position that we found ourselves in for so long. In addition to a trainer, we can provide all the required course paperwork, necessary equipment and a suitable venue, along with catering and refreshments if required.



Sharon Fisher

Sharon has been involved in the field of health and social care for over 40 years. Initially working for the NHS and later Private Nursing Homes, Sharon was surprised and at times saddened by the lack of equipment and training for staff involved in the moving and handling of people.

From these experiences Sharon developed a passion for “doing it right” and has for years now as a full-time trainer devoted herself to sharing her knowledge and experience.

As an experienced trainer Sharon has been able to broaden her repertoire to include other areas of practice where training is required. Feedback tells us that her sessions are both fun and informative.

SVQ TRAINING



SVQ candidate Kirsty McNeil (L) with Kirsty Richmond Staff Development Co-ordinator.

Continuing with the staff education and training theme. We, once again this year, were successful in obtaining a grant from the Voluntary Sector Development Fund. The money has allowed us to pay for some of our staff to undertake an SVQ3 in Social Services and Healthcare; enabling them to obtain a qualification that meets the statutory requirement for their registration with the SSSC. Doing so has also assisted us as an employer to meet our responsibility to provide staff with support to gain qualifications under the Codes of Practice for Employers.

Further demonstrating our commitment in this regard is the work being carried out by Kirsty Richmond. We previously used some of North Lanarkshire Council's Self-Directed Support Building Capacity Fund to employ Kirsty's predecessor in a role providing additional support, guidance and mentoring to those struggling with obtaining an SVQ and/or recording evidence of their ongoing learning and revalidation. Kirsty has carried on this valuable work along with onboarding and supporting new staff in the initial weeks and months of their employment to help them settle. Both functions of the role have been proven to be of great value to Potential Living, our staff and ultimately the people we support.



"I feel like I have settled in well. The shadow shift experience was great and the induction was also good. The training is really good and really interesting. My last workplace was not the best at training; I have really enjoyed my training here."



"Everything has been great. Very smooth so far, I am really enjoying it. My shadow shift experience was great; everybody was really nice to me and supportive. The managers have been good with me also. Training has been good, I feel like I have completed a lot so far, but I think that's a good thing as I am new to working in care."

TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology continues to play a vitally important role in the work that we do through the provision of digital solutions that enhance safety, improve quality of life, and boost efficiency. Central to this for us is our continued and developing partnership with Frank Dunsmore and EMRES.

Recently Frank and EMRES triumphed in the Scottish Enterprise Awards 2025 as they were named Best Home Security Solutions Provider 2025 – Central Belt. Frank began working with Potential Living in 2012 and since then has worked in partnership with Potential Living to develop bespoke and cutting-edge technology to fulfil peoples' requirements on an individual case-by-case basis.

The technology is monitored 24/7 by ACT Response and our own ROC (Response On-Call) team who are able to attend in person should this be required. Further significant developments in this area are expected in the coming year.



“As some individuals’ conditions are complex, we need to think outside the box to meet the challenge. In some cases, we have built the actual technology to ensure the care overnight is seamless, which gives Focus People and their families complete peace of mind.”

Frank Dunsmore

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION



Recruitment has remained a huge challenge and this year we again increased our hourly rate for support workers by 50p/hour above the care worker minimum wage advocated by the Scottish government demonstrating our commitment to invest in our staff.

This commitment was acknowledged by North Lanarkshire Council when we were recognised by them as a NL Employer Charter Member and were presented with a plaque to officially mark the occasion.

The Charter provides an acknowledgement of Potential Living’s commitment to Fair Pay and, in particular, that all roles within the organisation are paid, at the very least the Living Wage rate. Other standards taken into consideration include having policies promoting Equality, Diversity and Health and Wellbeing to ensure our staff are also supported to reach their potential.

THIS YEAR'S LONG-SERVICE AWARDS



Now, more than ever given the difficult nature of recruitment, it is important that we retain the wonderful staff that we already have. Potential Living again this year celebrated our annual long service awards with a lunch in VAMW House.

We believe that loyalty, dedication and commitment deserve to be recognised and the Long Service Awards are a way for us to acknowledge the incredible contribution made by staff who have been with us over a period of many years. As part of the celebration each member of staff receives a gift as a token of our appreciation. Although no gift could fully reflect the true value they bring the gift serves as a reminder of how deeply appreciated they are.



RETIREMENT

At Potential living everyone knows Alan McCreadie. He started working with us in 2008 as a support worker. He thrived in this role and quickly became a firm favourite with everyone he met. Alan had a natural smile, a positive outlook and the attitude that nothing was ever too much trouble.



It was inevitable then that when we launched our Response On-Call Service (ROC) in 2011 that he would become one of the founding members. His dedication and commitment towards his new role further strengthened his reputation as someone who could always be relied upon, particularly in times of crisis.

In 2016 a vacancy in the maintenance team saw Alan's role evolve once again. Transitioning from a full-time support worker into full-time maintenance worker, whilst continuing to contribute to the ROC team. This new combined role allowed Alan to spend more time outdoors, taking on both maintenance tasks and gardening, which is a personal passion of his. The change also provided Alan with the opportunity to stay connected to direct support by mentoring our volunteers and focus people. Alan, ever up for a bit of fun, also took on the role of Santa each December, delivering gifts to our focus people. His retirement has left a significant gap at Potential Living; however, he has promised to be a regular visitor and we look forward to continuing to see him around.



WELLBEING WEEK

In October we once again held our annual wellbeing week during which staff had the opportunity to experience some well-deserved pampering sessions including massage, reflexology, Indian head massage, and mini facials.

We also had a meditation and relaxation workshop. The week was rounded off with a Friday Fun Day, bringing staff together to get to know each other over lunch and games, including bingo! Everyone had a fantastic day.



SURVEYS AND FEEDBACK

Employee Survey Forms were issued in February to all support staff and line managers. A total of 23 completed survey forms were returned which included 22 from support workers and one from a manager.

It was both pleasing and encouraging that the overwhelming majority of responses to each of the statements was very positive, at just under 90% in each category. There was some indication that there are areas we could improve upon, however.

- Working towards improving the dissemination of information.
- Continuing to have a focus on recruitment, particularly for bank workers. Recruitment is an ongoing activity.

Some of the comments from respondents

"My experience has been great; my manager has been nothing but helpful and supportive and I feel more than comfortable going to them with issues."

"Training is spot on and consistent with changes in the care sector."

"Overall, a good Company to work for."

"Very supportive."

"I have been welcomed into the Company and all staff have been so nice and helpful."

Support and Supervision Evaluation Forms are completed following support and supervision sessions and once again demonstrate how much our staff really appreciate the support provided to them by their line managers. All of the comments made are truly inspiring.

Some of the comments from respondents

"They are willing to listen, comment and give advice. I feel very lucky to be able to come to work and know that if I have any problems I can discuss and get advice and answers and not feel any question is too silly."

"Very good with the way they word things, making me feel like a valued member of staff. I really value my managers' honesty, as it gives me reassurance. I like being able to approach them and their manager and can do this with ease."

"Calm. Makes me feel heard and supported. Always available when I need help with anything."

"I felt really good after my appraisal, it made me look forward to the future with Potential Living. I felt that discussing things that could have gone better very beneficial as I believe reflective practice is so important."

Focus People Survey Forms

were issued to everyone we provide with support in February 2026. A total of 22 completed forms were returned, five of them anonymously. As in previous years we were again pleased with the very positive results returned in our service satisfaction survey. The general comments made as part of the feedback were overwhelmingly positive and again indicative of the fact that people are happy with the service they receive.

Some of the comments from respondents

"Staff go above and beyond to support me."

"Have a good relationship with my support workers."

"My team provide me with essential support and are always there when I need them."

"They are a close-knit group who communicate exceptionally well; with each person having everything relevant to my care. This works really well for us and truly shows the dedication and commitment to their roles."

"It's good. I'm glad I started here."

FONDLY REMEMBERED

It was with much sadness that we received the news that William (Billy) Barr had passed away.

Billy was supported by Potential Living for over 20 years having spent a significant part of his life prior to this in Kirklands Hospital. Billy was such a big character for someone so small in stature and was known by everyone as someone with a wicked sense of humour and an impossibly huge smile. Many of our staff worked with Billy over the years and there is no doubt that his legacy will endure fondly in our collective memory.



TAYLOR AT THE PRIDE OF BRITAIN AWARDS



We're incredibly proud to celebrate one of our own – Taylor, who recently attended the Pride of Britain Awards as part of his amazing Ups and Downs Club. The group made headlines by winning a well-deserved award, recognising their hard work and positivity.

Taylor had an unforgettable evening, celebrating alongside his friends and his mum. Looking very dapper in his suit, he enjoyed every moment of the special event. The night was filled with excitement as Taylor met a number of celebrities and even had the chance to meet the Prime Minister.



DUTY OF CANDOUR

All health and social care services in Scotland must provide an annual duty of candour report for their service. As a supported living provider this information is sent to our regulator the Care Inspectorate.

As no notifiable adverse events have occurred in the past year, there is no specific learning to report as a result of any having taken place. Our Policies, procedures and Practices therefore remain unchanged as may have been necessary otherwise.

If you would like more information about this report, please contact us using these details:

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THE REALLY GOOD BITS

(The ones that make it all worthwhile)





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A full set of accounts for Potential Living can be found at both Companies House
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house

and The Office of the Charity Regulator (OSCR)
www.oscr.org.uk

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