

1253623

Registered provider: The Spring Children's and Transitional Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service is operated by a private provider, and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people who have learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 December 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: Not applicable.

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable.

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people are well cared for by a motivated and caring staff team.
- Young people enjoy a wide range of activities and opportunities.
- Young people do well at school as a result of staff support.
- Staff feel well supported by the registered manager and the responsible individual.
- Staff are skilled in behaviour management. They strive to understand young people's needs and they recognise when young people are upset or distressed.
- Young people feel safe and secure.
- Managers and staff work well together so that they can focus on young people's care.
- Feedback from professionals is good.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Managers do not always challenge placing authorities when key documentation relating to young people's care is missing.
- Safeguarding notifications are not always sent to Ofsted in a timely manner.
- The location risk assessment is not always reviewed when new young people are admitted.
- When a young person went missing from the home, on his return he was not offered a return home interview.
- Managers have not ensured that the home has a social media policy for staff to refer to in their care of young people.
- There are minor shortfalls in the managerial monitoring of the home, specifically in respect of the need to check that date labels are added to food, once opened.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A	N/A	N/A

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any incident relating to the child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(e))	31/01/2018
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child, are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c))	31/01/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Ensure that the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home is reviewed at least every year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these, in particular when new young people arrive, and upon receipt of information from police or other agencies ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1). In particular, review the location risk assessment each time a new young person is admitted to the home.
- Ensure that the registered person builds a strong safeguarding culture in the home ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.8). In particular, develop a social media policy.
- The registered person should oversee the welfare of the children in their care ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23). In particular, check that food stored in the fridge is date labelled.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the home's first inspection since it opened in July 2017. During this period, there have been changes in young people. One joined the home for a short period before moving to a new placement. She was complimentary about her experience, and wrote to the staff saying, 'The staff were really nice, and I really enjoyed my stay.' Another young person moved to a new placement after staff were unable to keep him safe.

Young people currently living at the home are making good progress in many areas of their development. One young person has made great progress in developing her self-care skills. She takes pride in her appearance and her self-esteem has blossomed. She has become more confident about expressing her views and opinions, and she knows that staff are interested in what she has to say. Another young person is developing empathy regarding the needs of other people. He has developed an awareness of his behaviour, and its impact on others. Professionals commented positively about the difference in a young person in his first few months of living at the home.

Young people develop positive relationships with staff. One young person said, 'I love it here, the staff are really nice. I like them!' Staff listen to young people's views and opinions, and make sure that they are consulted on as many aspects of the home's running as possible. This includes young people being consulted about activities, menu choices, personalising their bedrooms and the decoration of the house. As a result, young people feel involved and know that their views matter.

Young people attend school full time. Staff have supported one young person to restart attending school after an eight-month period with no education. Managers and staff talk to the young person's teachers every day. This is helping the young person to make educational progress for the first time in a long period.

All of the young people are registered with local health professionals, and attend routine checks as necessary. Managers communicate well with health professionals when necessary, to promote young people's overall health needs.

Young people learn age-appropriate skills. This includes helping with chores around the home, keeping their bedrooms clean and tidy, and preparing drinks and meals. Young people enjoy a fantastic range of activities in the home and in the community. These include archery and other sports, and going to local parks and facilities. Staff and young people strive to find interesting and exciting activities to enrich young people's lives.

The home is well decorated, and offers a warm and homely environment in which young people are able to enjoy their lives. Bedrooms are personalised and reflect young people's choices and personalities. One young person's bedroom has a 'wall of achievement' that captures their activities and contributions since moving to the home.

This has given the young person a real sense of belonging.

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

Young people feel safe at the home. They have positive relationships with staff. They readily approach staff and discuss difficulties they are having or the highlights of their day. Relationships are built on trust and staff provide consistency, familiarity and routine. The staff team is a diverse group. Each member of staff joins the home with a range of prior experiences and skills. This established knowledge helps to keep the young people safe. Staff are knowledgeable about what to do if they are concerned about a young person. However, the staff do not have access to a social media policy, to assist them in protecting young people.

Since the home opened, there have not been any incidents involving physical restraints. Staff strive to understand young people's needs. They recognise when a young person's behaviour is becoming heightened, and take the necessary steps to help the young person to become calm.

There have been a few episodes when one young person has gone missing from the home. Staff made every effort to work with the young person, to encourage him to remain safe. However, due to escalating concerns, managers recognised that they were unable to keep him safe and he left to go to a new placement. Following the missing episodes, the young person was not offered a return interview. He lost an opportunity to talk to someone outside the home about anything that might have been worrying him.

The home is in an urban environment. The registered manager has completed a location risk assessment, and has liaised with relevant professionals to gain essential information about any risks and dangers in the area. The registered manager has not reviewed the document when new young people have moved into the home. This means that the risk factors relating to new admissions are being missed.

Since the home opened, there have been no incidents involving young people being at risk of sexual exploitation or radicalisation. Staff have received awareness training to help them to know what to look for, and what to do if they have concerns.

Managers and staff complete health and safety checks in the home, in line with organisational requirements. All young people are involved in fire drills, promoting their vigilance and safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post since the home opened in July 2017. He has a level 5 diploma in the leadership and management of residential childcare. He is committed to ensuring that young people receive good-quality care from well-trained and knowledgeable staff. He has good oversight of young people's care plans and their

progress. The registered manager has a clear focus on the needs of each young person. Staff discuss young people's achievements and difficulties in supervision sessions and team meetings.

The registered manager works well with other professionals. He recognises the importance of partnership working. This approach ensures that the service meets the aims and objectives set out in the statement of purpose. Feedback from professionals is positive. A social worker commented, 'Staff are brilliant, and I cannot praise the service highly enough. I have seen such progress in my young person, since being placed at the home.'

Some staff have a level 3 diploma in residential childcare and others are completing the qualification. Staff are highly motivated and feel supported. One said, 'We have a great team, and smashing young people. I have fantastic support from the team and managers.'

All staff are committed to understanding and promoting young people's individual needs in order to offer a fair and equal service for all. Managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the home.

The registered manager works well with the independent visitor, and addresses any shortfalls identified at the visits. This ensures that the service continues to improve for young people's benefit. Managers monitor the day-to-day running of the home. This inspection noted minor shortfalls in routine monitoring, including that of food storage. Food with a limited lifespan is not always labelled with a date when its packaging is first opened. This could place young people's health at risk.

The registered manager does not always challenge other agencies when information about young people is missing. This includes missing education and healthcare plans, review minutes and recent school reports.

There was a delay in the registered manager submitting a notification to Ofsted about a serious incident. This did not give the regulator the opportunity to scrutinise information about a young person's safety in a timely manner.

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 differences 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 whom 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: 1253623

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Spring Children's and Transitional Care Limited

Registered provider address: 9 Grenville Drive, Birmingham, Warwickshire B23 7YX

Responsible individual: Blessing Manyara

Registered manager: Alastair McDonald

Inspector

Julia Wright: social care inspector

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