

1253623

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

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 provides care and accommodation for two children who have learning disabilities.

The registered manager resigned with immediate effect on 26 April 2021. There were no children living at the home at the time of the visit.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 9 September 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 April 2021

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| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account | inadequate |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | inadequate |
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| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | inadequate |
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 10 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: This children's home was judged inadequate on 10 March 2020. Compliance notices were raised under regulation 12 and regulation 13. A notice of restriction of accommodation was also imposed.

On 7 April 2020, a monitoring visit was undertaken. Ofsted reissued a compliance notice under regulation 12. The notice of restriction of accommodation remained in place.

On 2 June 2020, a monitoring visit was undertaken. The compliance notice was deemed to have been met. Ofsted reissued a notice of restriction of accommodation.

On 16 July 2020, a monitoring visit was undertaken. The notice of restriction of accommodation was lifted. Ofsted issued a compliance notice under regulation 32.

On 9 and 10 September 2020, a monitoring visit was undertaken. The compliance notice was deemed to have been met. One requirement was raised under regulation 37.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 10/03/2020 | Full | Inadequate |
| 20/11/2019 | Full | Inadequate |
| 19/02/2019 | Full | Good |
| 19/12/2017 | Full | Good |

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

No children were living in the home at the time of this inspection. The young person living in the home at the time of the last visit has moved out. Only one child has lived in the home since this time.

The registered manager's planning prior to that child moving in was poor. The registered manager had not fully considered the needs of the child or staff's ability to meet those needs. The child had moved into the home despite there being insufficient permanent staff who were able to meet her complex needs. As a result, the child did not receive consistent care from the staff team. This compromised the child's safety and contributed to her time in the home coming to a premature end.

Care planning is disorganised and impacts on the quality of care provided to children. For example, on numerous occasions there was insufficient staff on duty to look after the child. As a result, agreed levels of staff supervision were not maintained. This impacted on staff's ability to manage the child's behaviour. This compromised the child's safety and welfare.

During the child's six-week placement, staff demonstrated that they did not have the knowledge or experience to meet her complex needs. This impacted on staff's ability to help the child settle or feel safe living in the home.

Despite the shortfalls identified, staff have had some successes. For example, one young person, who had lived in the home for a considerable length of time, was successfully supported to move to a new home.

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

Managers and staff do not follow safeguarding procedures. For example, the registered manager failed to act on an allegation that a child had suffered harm. The lack of action by the registered manager did not ensure that the child was protected from harm.

Specifically, on 9 April 2021, the home's quality assurance officer completed a visit to the home and was told by a child that they had been assaulted by a member of staff. This information was immediately shared with both the registered manager and the responsible individual. The quality assurance officer provided a clear action plan on how they should respond to the incident. However, both the registered manager and responsible individual did not follow the agreed action plan and, at the time of the inspection, the concerns had not been shared with appropriate safeguarding agencies. As a result of this, appropriate action was not taken to safeguard the child.

Managers failed to follow both safeguarding procedures and the advice provided by their own quality assurance officer. This incident demonstrates that managers, including the responsible individual, do not have the required skills to keep children safe.

The registered manager did not notify Ofsted of the above safeguarding incident in a timely manner. The lack of information sharing by the registered manager delayed the action required to be taken by the regulator. Additionally, when the notification was shared, the information provided was not reflective of the actual incident.

Managers' and staff's approach to safeguarding children is disorganised and poorly considered. When safeguarding incidents occur, the registered manager does not ensure that risk assessments are updated. This means that staff are not provided with clear guidance on how best to keep children safe.

Managers not made sure that staff are trained to use the home's behaviour management model. This means that not all staff understand what steps they should take to avoid the need to use physical restraint, or how to safely restrain a child should they need to do so. Staff are, therefore, ill-equipped to manage children's behaviours and keep them safe from harm.

Staff working in the home are not safely recruited. For example, managers have not ensured that they have full employment histories for all staff or that they understand the reasons for any gaps in employment. This does not guarantee that staff are suitably vetted to safely work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Two days before this inspection, the registered manager resigned with immediate effect. There are no contingency plans to manage the home.

Despite this, at the time of the inspection, the responsible individual was considering allowing a child to move into the home. This specifically related to the return of the child who had recently left the home. This does not assure Ofsted of the responsible individual's insight into the concerns identified during this inspection. The responsible individual has not demonstrated that he has the expected skills or knowledge to lead the home effectively.

The lack of permanent staff means that the home relies on bank staff to work in the home. This includes staff who are employed to work in the company's adult services. However, these staff do not have the required qualifications, skills or experience. Furthermore, these staff have not completed mandatory training or training specific to the needs of the children who have been living in the home. This contributes to the inconsistent quality of care provided to children.

The registered manager has not ensured that the statement of purpose is accurate or up to date. For example, the list of staff who are named as working in the home

is incorrect. This means that children, parents and partner agencies are not given accurate information about the care that will be offered to children.

The extent to which staff are provided with sufficient support and opportunities to develop their practice is unknown. This is because senior managers were unable to provide inspectors with access to staff supervision or appraisal records. This does not assure Ofsted of the effectiveness of the leadership of this home.

Managers and staff do not maintain accurate case record. For example, information about where children lived before and after they moved into the home are not known or not recorded. This typifies how disorganised management oversight is.

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 |
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| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;</p> <p>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff provide good-quality care.</p> | 18 June 2021 |

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| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi)(vii)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff take the necessary action to protect children from harm.</p> | <p>18 June 2021</p> |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(d)(e))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff are suitably trained, experienced and qualified to</p> | <p>18 June 2021</p> |

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| deliver care that is consistent with the home's statement of purpose. | |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff provide effective planned care moving in and out of the home.</p> | 18 June 2021 |
| <p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.</p> <p>(Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the staff list is kept up to date.</p> | 18 June 2021 |
| <p>A responsible individual must—</p> <p>have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered provider ensuring that the responsible individual oversees the management of the home and takes action to ensure that children are safe and protected.</p> | 18 June 2021 |
| <p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered provider ensuring that a manager is appointed to the home.</p> | 18 June 2021 |
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> | 18 June 2021 |

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| <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(3)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that gaps in employment history are explored.</p> | |
| <p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that staff follow the safeguarding policy in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect.</p> | 18 June 2021 |
| <p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that the address of the child prior to admission and upon leaving the home including the statutory provision is recorded.</p> | 18 June 2021 |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that significant event notifications are sent without delay and include factual information.</p> | 18 June 2021 |

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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 B23 7YX

Responsible individual: Blessing Manyara

Registered manager: Vacant post

Inspectors

Michelle Spruce, Social Care Inspector

Lydia Isaac, Social Care Inspector

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