



ENTER AND VIEW REPORT: SPRING GROVE



Details of visit:

Service address	Spring Grove 214 Finchley Road, London, NW3 6DH
Service provider	Springdene Nursing And Care Homes Limited
Date and time	Thursday 3 November 3:30 - 5pm
Authorised representatives	Victoria Armitage (Healthwatch Camden staff), Joyce Amoateng (volunteer)
Contact details	(020) 7794 4455
Service provided	46 bed residential home for frail elderly residents.

1 Purpose of visit

Our visit to Spring Grove was conducted as part of a series of pre-arranged visits to residential care homes across Camden.

National charity, Independent Age, have been carrying out research looking at the things that older people and their families want to know when choosing a care home, as well as consulting care experts for their views on what are the most useful indicators of quality. They have developed a set of [10 Quality Indicators for care homes](#).

Independent Age intend to use these Quality Indicators to call for better reporting of key data by care homes. This will help older people and families make more informed decisions, while also helping the Care Quality Commission (CQC), local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to build up a comprehensive picture of quality in care homes - something that is currently difficult to do.

We used these Quality Indicators to talk to staff, residents and family members in each of the older people's residential care homes in Camden to see how they met the 10 Quality Indicators and to test how easy it was to gather the relevant information during our visits.

We have created a report of each care home. Through this work we aim to:

- **Provide a different type of information**, based on personal testimony, to help fill the gaps in what people can find out from the Care Quality Commission, the local authority and the care homes themselves.
- **Seek out and share best practice** and provide feedback to care home providers based on our observations.
- **Test both the content and practical application of the Independent Age 10 Quality Indicators** with a view to refining them for future wider use.

2 Key findings

- Spring Grove has a Registered Manager in post. We were told that the manager is easy to find and the manager was spoken of very highly by some of the staff and family members.
- We heard that staff have the skills to do their jobs well, that the workforce is reasonably stable and that there are generally enough staff on duty, though at times there may be some shortages.
- We were told that Spring Grove has a healthy culture of challenge and feedback which enables residents and family to influence how the home is run. Spring Grove has residents' meetings, which family members can attend, as well as a monthly meeting for family members. We heard that Spring Grove runs a regular satisfaction survey. Spring Grove could build on this strength by ensuring greater awareness of these meetings among all staff, residents and family.
- Spring Grove seems to have a full and varied activities programme, and we were particularly impressed with the residents' activity committee which has led to the introduction of new activities. We felt that the creation of residents' individual activity care plans is a strength.
- We heard that residents have regular access to healthcare professionals such as GPs, dentists etc.
- We heard that Spring Grove accommodates residents' lifestyle and cultural needs and were given several examples to demonstrate this.

3 Results of visit

Context of the visit

We visited Spring Grove on a Thursday afternoon by pre-arrangement with the manager. We spoke to residents and staff in the common area. At the time of our visit, music was being played and some staff and residents were dancing. An artist was also present and was helping some residents to take part in Christmas crafting activities.

A good care home should...

- 1. Have a registered manager in post. The registered manager is the most important staff member in a care home - and the one responsible for ensuring quality standards, and residents' needs, are met. They should be visible within the care home, provide good leadership to staff, have experience of working in care homes and qualifications to help them do their job.*

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that she is at the home every day apart from Wednesdays and Sundays and has been at Spring Grove for three years with significant previous experience in other care homes.

One **staff** member said that support from the manager is “very good” and staff get “whatever is needed”. Another staff member said the manager had visited them when they had been unwell and that whenever training is available staff are sent. Both staff members we asked said that the manager is on site five days a week.

All three **family** members know the manager and told us that she is “very easy” to find, or that “there has never been a problem - she rings back”. One family member added that they “admire” the manager and said, “She’s so lovely.”

One **resident** said that they know the manager and see her all the time. The other resident wasn't sure who the manager is.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, fully. Staff, family and one resident agreed that the manager is on site and provides support and is easy to locate. One family member made very positive comments.

- 2. Have a stable workforce. Care homes with knowledgeable, experienced staff who get to know residents can make the difference between an institution and a home. Where turnover of staff is very high, these qualities can be lost. It may also be a sign that staff are not happy working in the home.*

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that “generally people stay quite a while” but that recently a number of staff had left to pursue careers in nursing or to take further education and some had left for personal reasons.

One **staff** member said that the workforce is “stable” and another commented that longer term, staff tend to leave. Staff we spoke to had been in the service for 12 years and 15 years.

Family members agreed that staff turnover isn't absent but isn't high - “there is a core staff that stay”. One family member knew many staff by name and said they know some staff members “very well”. A second family member described speaking to staff as like “greeting friends”.

Two residents that we spoke to agreed that they see the same staff regularly.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, fully. Everyone we spoke to agreed that the workforce is stable.

3. **With the skills to do their jobs.** *Well informed, skilled staff who are valued and developed as employees are vital to a smooth running care home. All care homes should have a clear, comprehensive training scheme to ensure staff have the knowledge they need.*

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that staff have mandatory training and NVQ level 2 and some have NVQ level 3. The manager said that one senior carer is pursuing a nursing qualification.

One **staff** member said that they had received “all the basic training”. Both staff members listed all or most of the following: safeguarding, manual handling, dementia, first aid, infection control and health and safety.

Family members agreed that the staff had the right skills and training with one family member saying “definitely” and explaining that staff wear badges to explain their role and training. Another family member commented that the staff “have the right attitude” which they felt to be as important as training. One family member commented very positively about the cooks at the home.

Both **residents** said that they think staff know how to care for people living in the home.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, fully. Everyone we spoke to agreed that the staff have the skills and training to do their jobs well.

4. **Have enough staff on duty during the day and night.** *Many homes have a lower proportion of staff on during the night, but if the ratio falls too low - at any time of day - response times can be too slow.*

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that staff to resident ratio in the day time it is about 1: 4 and approximately 1:7/8 at night.

One **staff** member told us that the staff to resident ratio is approximately 1: 5 in the day and 1:7 or 8 in the night. The other staff member said that they “don’t know”.

Two **family** members thought that the home had enough staff on duty or that they hadn’t noticed any problem: “They seem to manage.” A third family member said that in the mornings or at times of crisis they could perhaps do with some more staff, but generally staffing levels seemed fine.

When asked whether staff come quickly when they need help, one **resident** said that they did and the second said that they didn’t need help but they thought that staff would come quickly.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, but... There were some minor concerns that there could be more staff at certain times.

5. Be clear about how they will be able to meet your needs both now and in the future. *Many of us will develop more care needs as we get older - particularly if we have a condition like dementia. It is vital that homes can spot changes to residents' health and respond appropriately - consulting other health professionals where necessary - in order to provide the right level of care, and prevent you from having to move again.*

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that residents have six monthly reviews or more frequently if necessary and that they refer to different services such as physiotherapy and dietitians. The manager told us a consultant doctor comes in every month.

One **staff** member told us that if they notice changes in mood or behaviour then they report the change to the person in charge and that the doctor and family may be called if necessary.

Family members agreed that the home notices changes to their relatives' condition with one family member explaining that their relative's condition had recently changed and the home had "done very well" in responding to the change.

One **resident** said that they thought staff would notice if they needed extra help.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, fully. Staff we spoke to said that the residents are actively reviewed six monthly or more frequently if necessary and that any changes observed are noted. Family members agreed that the home notices changes in their relative's condition.

- 6. Actively involve residents, family, friends and their local community in the life of the home.** *Homes should have a clear way for residents, relatives and friends to get involved in decision-making in the home, if they choose to, such as a Residents and Relatives Committee. Homes should not have set visiting hours, or any other arrangements that make them feel more like a hospital than a home. They should have good links with the local community, for example by arranging visits from local schools.*

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that residents have a regular meeting chaired by a resident, which family members can attend, and that these take place every three months at the request of the residents. We were shown the minutes of the last meeting. The manager said that there is a “support group” for family members which meets on a monthly basis at a sister home; family members can come and voice any concerns or suggestions and they can also come and talk to the manager directly if they wish to. The manager told us that residents had requested more colour in the garden so the home had planted more colourful flowers.

The manager told us that the home creates a sense of community through having events such as a quiz for residents, family and friends and through hosting an annual music festival/ competition with local schools. The manager told us that schools come in to the home, as well as people who give talks, religious persons and local cultural organisations like the Wallis Collection who were at the home when we visited.

One **staff** member told us that they are “not sure how residents and family can get involved in the way the home is run and that “most residents don’t have the capacity” to influence services. The staff member told us that the Jewish Centre come in to create a sense of community and that school children come on to speak to the residents for an hour as well having “Jewish prayers”.

One **family** member told us that their relative doesn’t like to get involved in the running of the home but knew about a suggestions box that family can put ideas into. Two family members told us about the residents’ meetings and one said that their relative had been quite involved in it. One family member added that they had had two review meetings with the manager in nine months and that the home is “very keen to listen to desires and any problems.” Two family members weren’t able to provide an example of how residents or relatives had influenced the service and a third family member said that they had been very involved in activities that the activities’ coordinator was “very open to suggestions”.

Family members said that the home creates a sense of community through having big events like the music festival, through laying the tables for dinner and seating residents next to their friends. One family member commented that, “they try hard to involve everybody - which isn’t always so easy”. One family member said that the relatives are always welcome and that they told us that the home email a copy of the weekly activities plan out to relatives. Family members told us that the home has links to local schools, the Jewish centre, the parish church and people who come in to give talks.

Two **residents** thought that they could make suggestions about the home. One resident said that they are asked for their opinion and the other said that they didn’t know. One resident told us “this is home”.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, but... Spring Grove has a residents' committee which meets regularly, and provides ways for family members to make suggestions and provided examples of relatives and residents influencing services. However, it was not clear to us that all staff and family members know that this meeting takes place. Two family members were not able to name a way in which residents or relatives had influenced the service but family all thought that the home is "very open" to suggestions.

- 7. Offer meaningful activity and enjoyment to suit all tastes. Care homes should not be boring places - they should offer an interesting range of activities and entertainment that match the tastes and preferences of their residents, including support for individual activity. Homes should take steps to stop residents from becoming isolated or lonely while respecting their privacy and choice.*

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that the home has activities every day and two activities coordinators on two floors. The manager told us that residents sing hymns and popular songs on Saturday mornings and that they are trying to form a choir. The manager told us that they had had a residents' activity forum where residents had suggested activities they would like to do. Some suggestions had already taken place and some were planned to happen in the future. Suggested activities included, cheese and wine tasting and a "mini Antiques Roadshow" event. The manager told us that each resident has a character sheet so that staff can quickly understand their likes and preferences and life history. The manager showed us a memory box created for a resident with dementia which contained their favourite photos, music and other items. The manager told us that the home had recently started using memory boxes with some residents. The manager told us that all individuals have an activity care plan.

One **staff** member told us that activities include music, exercise, quizzes, flower planting, baking, painting and dominos. The staff member told us that residents “are free to have a say in what they want” and that they “encourage residents” to get involved. The activities coordinator said that there are activities seven days a week and that on 15 Sundays a year they have special events; they told us about the music festival which lasts for three months. The activities coordinator told us about the residents’ activity forum where residents can make suggestions about what they want to do, and said that residents had requested a London tour guide and wine-tasting. We also spoke to the artist who visits the home several times a week and was creating Christmas crafts with the residents. The artist told us that residents had “been very busy” and that when she is planning what arts and crafts to bring in she “always has a plan A, B, C and D” to make sure the residents have a choice.

Family members listed a number of activities that happened in the home and told us that there’s “always something happening” and “it’s like a family”. One family member commented that staff “often stop in and chat” to their relative. Another family member added that they had been disappointed about the lack of day trips out of the home. Two family members said that they weren’t sure how residents could make suggestions but both felt that they would be able to and thought that residents are probably asked at the residents’ meetings or by the coordinator. A third family member said that residents are involved in the decision making “a lot” and “{Spring Grove} like very much for the residents to discuss activities and say what they want”.

One **resident** said that they didn’t really have any hobbies and another resident said they liked to paint. One resident said they would like to go on a day trip and another said that it’s been a long time since they had been on a day trip.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age’s indicator?



Yes, fully. We were told that Spring Grove has a varied and full programme of activities. We were particularly pleased to see that residents’ views on which

activities should take place were actively sought and being implemented. We were pleased to see that residents have individual activity care plans.

- 8. Make sure that you can see a GP or other health professional like a dentist, optician or chiropodist, whenever you need to. *You have the same rights to see a health professional promptly if you are living in a care home as you would if you were living in your own home. Ask the care home about the relationship they have with their local NHS services - does a GP visit regularly? Can they call a GP out in an emergency? How easy is it for residents to see a dentist, optician, chiropodist or physiotherapist, either for a check-up or in an emergency?***

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that the GP visits the home every week and that the home has access to a private GP if needed. The manager told us that the residents visit one of a few local dentists in the area and the optician comes into the home or residents can go out to see an optician if they prefer.

The manager also mentioned that a low vision clinic had been called in to assess a resident with sight loss although ultimately the resident didn't want to have the assessment. The manager also told us that consultant geriatrician visits the home monthly.

Staff told us that the GP comes in once a week, or more if needed. They also told us that the chiropodist comes in once a month, and residents are taken out to the dentist.

Family members agreed that their relatives have regular access to healthcare professionals; two family members specifically mentioned that the GP comes in weekly and one family member said that residents go across the road to the dentist and that their relative makes their own appointments.

One **resident** said that they had seen the GP and dentist recently and another said that they didn't need to see the GP.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age's indicator?



Yes, fully. Everyone we spoke to agreed that the GP and/ or other healthcare professionals visit the home regularly.

9. **Accommodate your cultural and lifestyle needs.** *Care homes should be set up to meet your cultural and lifestyle needs as well as your care needs, and shouldn't make you feel uncomfortable if you do things differently to other residents. They should also be proactive in finding out what your needs are, so they can accommodate them.*

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that the home has Jewish events every week, the Church of England come in once a month and that two residents go out to specific religious services. The manager told us that the home can provide vegetarian meals. The manager gave examples of how the home accommodates residents' preferences: one resident prefers to have goats' milk rather than cows' milk; another resident prefers their main meal in the evening rather than at lunch time, a third resident likes to have sandwiches at 4AM.

One **staff** member told us that the home makes provision for Jewish residents and provides vegetarian meals.

Family members told us that the home has religious services and helps a resident to attend church on a Sunday. One family member also told us that the home respects their relative's preferences for healthcare.

Neither **resident** we spoke to felt they needed any additional help to keep up with religious or lifestyle needs.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age’s indicator?



Yes, fully. Staff and family agreed that Spring Grove meets resident’s cultural and lifestyle needs.

10. **Show that they’re always looking to improve.** *You should be able to find out what current residents, their families and friends think about the home. The care home should be happy to help you do this - for example, by putting you in touch with a residents and relatives group, or allowing you to speak to residents and visitors in private. They should also have support in place for people who wish to make a complaint at any time, and there should be a healthy culture of challenge and feedback between residents, relatives and staff.*

At Spring Grove.....

The **manager** told us that if a resident or their family came to her with a suggestion then she “would listen and give it a whirl if it was a reasonable idea. We all want what’s right for the residents. If families know you are listening it creates an open culture, which is what you want.” The manager said that there is a notice up about how to make complaints and that if anyone one makes a complaint then she reports it to the directors and then the home creates an action plan about how to rectify it. The manager told us that the home has a regular satisfaction questionnaire that residents and their family are encouraged to come to the home and have lunch before they decide to move in as well as to have a trial period in the home.

One **staff** member told us that they would tell a resident or relative to “talk to the manager” if they had a suggestion and that if someone had a complaint then they would document it and pass it to the manager. The staff member told us that potential residents and their family can visit the home and talk to residents and family before they move in.

Family members told us that the home is “very open” to suggestions and they “never find any resistance” and that the home would be “very open”. Family members felt that they would be supported to make a complaint and two family members said they would go to the manager with any complaints. All family members said they had visited the home before their relative moved in but hadn’t really spoke to any residents or family. One family member said, “they were very keen that we came to have a good look”.

We asked two **residents** how they would like to improve the home, one said that “there’s not much room for improvement” and the other said they had “no complaints” and that “everyone is nice”.

Does Spring Grove meet Independent Age’s indicator?



Yes, fully. Everyone we spoke to agreed that Spring Grove is happy to receive feedback and that a complaint would be dealt with through a procedure. Potential residents and their family are encouraged to visit the home and a satisfaction survey is carried out regularly.

4 Service provider response

Spring Grove contacted us to provide clarification on two points which have been incorporated above. Spring Grove commented:

Thank you very much for the report, it is very helpful and any recommendations would obviously be looked into and dealt with appropriately. I am already looking at ways and means to build on the Satisfaction Survey as we speak and more than happy to keep reviewing those sort of things.

5 Background

5.1 What is enter and view?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out enter and view visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

5.2 Strategic drivers

As part of our work, we aim to seek out the voices of those people who can be least heard: which includes people living in residential care homes. Many elderly people who are not able to live independently are residents of either nursing homes or residential care homes. In Camden there are currently seven residential care homes for older people. A total of approximately 400 people are resident in these homes. Residents of care homes are, almost by definition, seldom heard with little choice and control. They live in an environment that is often isolated from the wider community and any expression of their needs, wants, preferences and experience is likely to be mediated by a third party - whether care home staff or relatives. Local people have told Healthwatch Camden that they want us to do some work ensuring that the voices of people in residential care are heard.

5.3 Methodology

One Healthwatch volunteer authorised representatives and one member of Healthwatch Camden staff spoke to staff, residents and their relatives using a set of pre-prepared questions which follow the theme of the ten Quality Indicators drawn up by Independent Age (see "Purpose of visit"). The questions have been designed to draw out information on the ten key topics and have been tailored according to the audience. We spoke to four members of staff (including the Manager and two staff involved in activities rather than care), three family members and two residents. We spoke to all family members over the phone either on the day of the visit or four days after the visit. Not all individuals were asked or

responded to each question. Authorised representatives made notes of their conversations. These notes form the basis of this report.

We agreed the visit with this service in advance and sent posters to be displayed to advertise our visit to residents, their relatives and staff. Authorised representatives wore ID name badges and made sure to gain individuals' agreement before asking the questions and verbally explain the role of Healthwatch Camden and the purpose of the visit. We have discussed our findings with the provider and they have been given opportunity to add context to what was observed and contributed at the time.

5.4 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Camden would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors, staff and volunteers for their contribution to the enter and view programme.

5.5 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.