

# Douglas, Anne & Malcolm Child Minding

Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)  
Inspection completed on: 7 February 2017

**Service provided by:**  
Anne and Malcolm Douglas

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003907811

**Care service number:**  
CS2003008078

## The service

### Introduction

Anne and Malcolm Douglas provide the childminding service from their family home, which is a semi detached house within the harbour town of Ullapool in the Highlands. Their home is situated in a quiet neighbourhood with easy access to children's services and other amenities in the area, such as countryside walks

The current registration allows the childminders to care for a maximum of seven children at any one time under the age of 16 years, of whom a maximum of six are under 12, of whom no more than five are not yet attending primary school, and of whom no more than two is under 12 months. This is inclusive of children of the childminders' family. The childminders employ two assistants although intimated that they are now rarely used.

The childminders currently care for ten minded child, aged 1-5 years at various times between Tuesdays and Thursdays. Five children were present during the inspection visit. We were satisfied that the childminders adhered to the conditions of their registration.

The main aim of the service is to offer home-from-home care. It is very important to the childminders to provide continuity of family life and good interaction with parents/carers to create a safe, happy and stimulating environment in which children in their care can learn and develop confidence.

### What we did during our inspection

We wrote this report following a short announced inspection that took place on the afternoon of Tuesday 7 February 2017 between 2.00pm and 4.15pm. The inspection was carried out by an inspector from the Care Inspectorate. We gave feedback to the childminders on the same day.

During our visit we observed the care given by the childminders to the children present and sampled a range of other evidence, including the relevant sections of policies, procedures and records the childminders had collated about their service.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC); Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. GIRFEC supports children and their parents to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

### Views of people using the service

We met five of the children that used the service and observed that they were all comfortable, happy and content within the childminding environment. They showed us some of the things they liked to play with both indoors and in the garden and were keen to demonstrate their newly developed ball skills.

All three parents who responded to our questionnaires had taken time to add constructive comments about the childminders' service, which included:

"Anne tells us every day what they have been doing. When I enrolled (my child) to Anne we had a long conversation about how she runs things and asked if we wanted to add anything.

Anne treats our child like her own and is always asking us if we are happy with things. You couldn't get a better childminder. She treats our child like her own and is very kind. Our child is always annoyed when it's home time!"

"We truly value Anne's input and feel she teaches our children skills which they will value for the rest of their lives such as good sharing, road safety, politeness!"

Other views from parents have been incorporated in the relevant sections of this report.

## Self assessment

We received a fully completed self assessment document from the childminders. We were satisfied with the way they completed this and with the relevant information included for each theme that we grade services under.

The childminders identified what they thought the service did well, some areas for service development and any changes they had planned. The childminders told us how families had taken part in the self assessment process.

## What the service did well

The childminders communicated very openly with the families that used their service, which had resulted in meaningful relationships where children and parents felt listened to and respected. The childminders were very aware of children's individual needs and preferences and endeavoured to meet them, for example by accessing training to develop their practice.

## What the service could do better

The childminders should continue with plans to review their roles and responsibilities and that of their assistants. They should also continue to identify and participate in training that supports them in their roles. We have recommended that they prioritise child protection as this will ensure that everyone is up-to-date with the most recent guidelines for safeguarding children.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of environment	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

## Quality of care and support

## Findings from the inspection

We found, and parents confirmed, that the childminders had sustained their excellent standard of caring for and supporting children.

The lead childminder told us about how they got to know families initially through each child's settling in period. She demonstrated a good understanding of attachment theory and the need for very young children to develop a secure bond with familiar adults before exploring new relationships. As there were two childminders providing the service, with the occasional help of two assistants, they were able to offer places to service users in a way that maintained high adult to child ratios and the opportunity for one-to-one time when needed. The childminder gave very good examples of how the service was building the resilience of the youngest children in their care so that they could grow into confident individuals. The childminders took time to listen to all children to make sure they understood their perspective and involved them in decision making. Giving children quality conversation time helped them to develop their vocabulary and thinking skills.

Both children and their parents were encouraged to share information about children's individual routines, likes/dislikes and interests in 'all about me' templates. We encouraged the childminders to update this information with children more frequently so that they truly reflected each child's current preferences. This would give children a sense of responsibility and enable them to celebrate their achievements with their friends. There was informal sharing of information with parents on a daily basis when they dropped off or collected their children and the lead childminder kept notes of this in a diary so that the service could be responsive to changes in children's circumstances and make alterations to their routines or plans.

The childminders modelled respectful relationships and we could see that special friendships had developed between some of the children present. Boundaries for acceptable behaviour were clear so that children understood why these were necessary, such as to keep them safe, and the consequences of their actions. The childminders had shared positive behaviour strategies with parents to make sure there was a consistent approach between the service and home. In this way children were more likely to feel secure and nurtured within the setting.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 6 - excellent

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

The accommodation used for the childminding service was maintained to a very high standard and consisted of a playroom, kitchen dining area, rear hallway and secure back garden. The minded children had sole use of the toilet at the back door where there was plenty of liquid soap and clean towels. During our visit children were encouraged to wash their hands when coming in from outdoors and after using the toilet.

These measures promoted children's independence and helped prevent any cross infection between children and the childminders' family.

The service was used by children ranging in age from one to five years and therefore with different abilities. The childminders were very vigilant about keeping their home safe and making appropriate adjustments for children's age and stage of development.

The childminders understood the benefits of supporting children to assess risks for themselves and we listened to them talking naturally to children about potential hazards, such as taking care on steps. This contributed to children learning life skills about personal safety. Children were encouraged to show respect for the childminders' home and to put toys back when they had finished so that they were taking responsibility for their environment.

The children enjoyed free flow access between the indoors and outdoors. We observed this made for a homely environment where children made their own choices about resources and activities but where childminders intervened to ensure fairness and turn taking. This contributed to everyone feeling included and respected. The childminders ensured that the children enjoyed a great variety of play opportunities which supported them to explore, be creative and learn independent skills while building positive relationships with their peers. The children were encouraged to spend time being active outdoors, exploring nature and staying healthy. Parents highly praised the childminders for their extensive use of the outdoors and community resources.

Their comments included:

"They are always outside playing, going for walks and the park. (Children access) Library and village hall - if there's ever anything special on for the kids Anne takes them. They never miss anything."

"Lots of outdoor play and nature walks. Good mix of craft activities and social play."

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 6 - excellent

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

There were two childminders providing the service but one took the lead. This was reflected in the questionnaire responses from parents that referred mainly to the lead childminder. The childminders' two adult children were the named assistants for the service on the registration certificate. The named assistants were members of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG).

The PVG scheme vets people who work with vulnerable groups and ensures that children are safeguarded when being cared for in the service. The assistants were also included within the employer's liability insurance.

The lead childminder was committed to her own professional development and we could see from training certificates that she had co-ordinated appropriate training for her partner and assistants. This meant everyone had a shared ethos of working together to support good outcomes for children.

Due to changes within their own circumstances the assistants rarely helped out therefore we talked about the future structure of the service and how this would best be represented within the conditions of registration. The childminder agreed to give this some consideration and keep us notified of any changes through the eForms system. In the meantime the lead childminder should continue to source relevant training opportunities to further develop the team's knowledge and skills and the overall improvement of their service.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 4 - good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

The lead childminder was a member of the Scottish Child Minding Association (SCMA) and had used their resources to regularly update her knowledge and understanding of best practice to support children's health, safety and wellbeing. SCMA is a national umbrella organisation whose main aim is to promote childminding as a quality childcare service.

The lead childminder took a methodical approach to organising the business and had involved both children and their parents in evaluating the quality of the service. In their responses to our questionnaires, parents emphasised the good communication they had with the childminders and the opportunities to share their views. We also looked at the questionnaires the service had used with families to take account of their views when making improvements. The childminders told us about how they used observations and discussions with children to inform their planning. Throughout our visit we observed children confidently talking to the childminders about their wishes and they were clearly accustomed to their contributions and ideas being listened to and valued.

The childminders gave parents access to their policies and procedures and invited comment on these in the interest of openness and working in partnership. For example, the service had a child protection statement which they had shared with families so that they could be reassured that the welfare and safety of children was paramount.

Both childminders were able to tell us about the appropriate action they would take if they had any child protection concerns. The lead childminder had undertaken child protection training recently, however we have made a recommendation that all of the assistants should participate in refresher training. (See recommendation 1).

The childminders had participated in other training to support them in their role such as child led planning, promoting children's self esteem and first aid training which meant they were well prepared to take appropriate action if any child had an accident. This gave parents confidence that their children would be well cared for by competent professionals that understood their needs.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 1

1. Both childminders and assistants should participate in child protection training. This is to ensure that they have an up-to-date understanding of their role in meeting children's needs and are alert to concerns about a child's wellbeing.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

**Grade:** 5 - very good

**What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection**

## Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

**What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection**

## Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
6 Mar 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	6 - Excellent
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
15 Dec 2010	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
21 Oct 2008	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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