

Sitters Child Care Agency

288 House
1 Aston Way
Poole
BH12 4FE

Telephone: 01202 711 432

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 9 March 2018

Service provided by:
288 Group Ltd T/A Sitters

Service provider number:
SP2003003857

Care service number:
CS2004080457

About the service

Sitters is a childcare agency providing babysitting services to parents in their homes. We refer to them as the agency in this report. There are elements of the service which the Care Inspectorate do not regulate and a full description of the service can be found on their website.

Sitters is registered with the Care Inspectorate with the following conditions:

- Facility to be provided: The introduction or supply of childminders.
- Operating hours: As arranged with service users.
- Staffing: The agency is responsible for ensuring that staff have the necessary skills and experience for the work that they are to perform, and are vetted in accordance with regulatory requirements.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as 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. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it right for every child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

What people told us

We issued care standard questionnaires to six parents currently receiving a service from Sitters. At the time of issuing this report as draft none of these had been returned.

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We spoke to the manager about the organisations improvement plan. There were some priorities for development. We comment on this in the theme for management and leadership.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 – Good
Quality of staffing	4 – Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 – Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

In order to assess the quality of care and support offered for children we were given access to the organisation website. This enabled us to see what information was collected about each child and information for parents. We also talked to six people who were checked by the organisation and then introduced to parents to carry out the sitting engagement, we refer to these people as sitters.

We assessed the information gathered as part of the registration process. Names, addresses, contact numbers and emergency contacts were collected. We have asked the agency to expand this to ensure that if a child has an additional need, allergy or medical condition that this is also noted to enable the sitter to ask parents key questions about a child's care needs.

Sitters we spoke to were experienced childcarers. They described some of the questions they would ask parents to gain enough information about each child in order for them to meet a child's care and support needs. We assessed that the use of knowledgeable childcare enabled the agency to ensure that care and support needs could be met.

The agency had some processes in place to ensure that those who undertook sitting engagements had information on safety and conduct. The agency gave guidance regarding how they expected sitters to present and conduct themselves when undertaking an engagement. Parents were reminded what was reasonable to ask a sitter to do and sitters were told how they should respond to parents regarding sitting arrangements. They had been issued with identity card to ensure that they were known to parents on arrival at an engagement.

We have asked the agency to make the process of reporting of accidents, which happen when they are responsible for a child, clear to sitters. This will enable the agency to fulfil their obligation to notify the Care Inspectorate of serious accidents. (See recommendation one.)

The agency website included a Blog which had been used to share some good practice guidance and fun activities to offer children. The Care Inspectorate have, in previous inspections, asked the agency to signpost their sitters in Scotland to relevant guidance and legislation. This was still to be achieved but we were assured by the manager of the agency that this was making good progress. We asked that Scottish sitters were directed to guidance of the administration of medication and child protection guidance for their local area.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. To ensure that there are procedures to promote the health and welfare of children the provider should develop a system for the recording of accidents which may happen to a child when a sitter is responsible for that child.

National Care Standards for Childcare Agencies. Standard 1.

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

The recruitment of sitters was a strength of the service. A new electronic system had been developed. We spoke to one of the recruitment executives in Scotland. She felt that the new system was more consistent and provided parents with a very good level of reassurance.

Sitters were recruited through an online application form. It was an expectation of the agency that all sitters would have some childcare experience and provide at least two childcare references. If the application was of a suitable standard it was then passed to a recruitment executive to carry out a telephone interview. This followed a set pattern to enable the recruitment executive to gather as much information as possible about skills, experience and knowledge. The references were followed up by the organisation and suitable candidates were asked to complete a Protection of Vulnerable Group (PVG) scheme membership or scheme update. We have asked that, where a potential sitter is in a position which requires them to be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council, that this is checked at the point of application to ensure that there is no reason why the sitter should not work with children.

The childcare agency had ensured that staff who had been in post for several years were still fit to work with vulnerable groups by ensuring that they completed a PVG. This ensures that the provider receives updates and alerts and that sitters are not barred from working with vulnerable groups.

Each sitter had a short profile which gave parents information on the sitter and areas of expertise. This enabled parents to share information with their children before the sitter arrived and helped them make a choice if there were a number of sitters available to them.

Sitters were able to make comments to the manager and deputy manager about issues they may have about the organisation. The agency needed to develop a whistle blowing policy to inform sitters of their responsibility to report poor practice to their employer or an external body. (See recommendation one.)

The main part of the childcare agency is an introductory agency introducing sitters to families. The Care Inspectorate does not have an expectation of on going training for staff. However there were areas of the service where sitters need more information to enable them to be effective in their roles within a family. We comment on this in the theme for management and leadership.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The provider should develop a whistle blowing procedure for sitters in Scotland to use. The procedure should outline what constitutes whistle blowing and what the investigation process might look like.

National Care Standards for Childcare Agencies. Standard 1.

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

This was the first inspection after a change of management in the agency. The Care Inspectorate have outlined to the agency that there was still some work to do in order to fully meet the expectations of regulated services in Scotland but that progress has been positive.

In our discussions with sitters, parents and from looking at the agency website it is still not clear that the service provided by the agency in Scotland is regulated. We have asked that the service makes this clear to parents and have suggested an additional page to the website for Scottish parents and sitters. Under a heading of information there was information regarding child protection and how a parent could make a complaint to the Care Inspectorate but this needed to be easier to find and include information such as the new Health and Social Care Standards. (See recommendation one.)

There were opportunities for parents to make comments and give evaluations about sitters they employed and the agency. Most of these comments were for the purpose of evaluating the quality of sitter provided to parents.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The provider should develop a clear link on website registration and information pages for parents using the agency in Scotland. This link should provide:
Information that the service is registered and regulated in Scotland
Where to find the latest Care Inspectorate report
Information about complaints
Policies and procedures that sitters in Scotland are expected to follow.

National Care Standards for Childcare Agencies. Standard 1 - Information about the childcare agency.

Grade: 4 - good

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

Previous requirements

Requirement 1

- To ensure that children are protected and that those working on behalf of the provider have the information, skills and knowledge to ensure that protection the provider must:
- Develop a written procedure for sitters regarding child protection. Which takes account of the document

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014.

- The child protection procedure must include links to the local area interagency child protection procedures.
- The procedure will be added to the provider website as a full procedure for sitters and parents, not a child protection statement.

This is in order to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. SSI 210/2011 Regulation 4(1)(a) - to make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

Timescale: A written copy of the child protection procedure will be sent to the Care Inspectorate two weeks from the report being made final.

This requirement was made on 28 February 2017.

Action taken on previous requirement

There was information provided for parents regarding child protection in Scotland. We have deemed that this requirement has been met. However we have asked the provider to improve the information that sitters are given regarding child protection and have made a recommendation about this.

Met - outwith timescales

Requirement 2

To ensure that there are procedures to promote the health and welfare of children the provider must:

- Develop a system for the recording of accidents which may happen to a child when a sitter is responsible for that child.
- The procedure must include what constitutes an accident or incident who it will be reported to and expected action of those working on behalf of the provider.
- This record must be signed by parents to confirm that the information about the accident has been shared with them.
- The procedure will be added to the provider website as a full accident policy and procedure for parents and sitter information.

This is in order to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. SSI 210/2011 Regulation 4(1)(a) - to make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

Timescale: A written copy of the accident procedure will be sent to the Care Inspectorate two weeks from the report being made final.

This requirement was made on 28 February 2017.

Action taken on previous requirement

Work was still being carried out with regard to this requirement. The provider and care Inspectorate were working to develop a workable system for sitters to follow. We have assessed that the capacity to meet this requirement is present and have made a recommendation with regard to accidents.

Met - outwith timescales

Requirement 3

The provider must make available information to parents using the registered service in Scotland. This must include:

- That the service is a regulated service in Scotland.
 - Where inspection reports can be obtained from.
 - How to access full policies and procedures as stated in the National Care Standards for childcare agencies.
- This can be done via the service website or written information for parents using the service in Scotland but must be clear and obvious to parents in Scotland that the service they use is regulated by the Care Inspectorate.

This is in order to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. SSI 210/2011 Regulation 4(1)(a) - to make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

Timescale: 01 June 2017.

This requirement was made on 28 February 2017.

Action taken on previous requirement

Although some information could be found regarding child protection in Scotland it was not made clear to parents using the service in Scotland that this was a regulated service, where reports could be found or where procedures could be accessed. We have assessed that the capacity to meet this requirement is present and have made a recommendation with regard to information for parents.

Met - outwith timescales

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The newly developed policy on the administration of medication should be added to the parent and sitter section of the childcare agency website. National Care Standards for Childcare Agencies. Standard 1 - Information about the childcare agency.

This recommendation was made on 21 April 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The provider had given information to sitters that they should not administer medication. However the information for parents indicated that it was acceptable for parents to request the administration of medication. This recommendation was met however we have asked that parents are given the same information as sitters.

Recommendation 2

The provider should develop a whistle blowing procedure for staff. National Care Standards for Childcare Agencies. Standard 1 - Information about the childcare agency.

This recommendation was made on 21 April 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

There was information for sitters regarding making a complaint. However it was not clear who the sitter would complaint to if they felt that employees or the organisation itself followed unsafe or unprofessional practices. This recommendation was not met.

Recommendation 3

The provider should develop a method of sharing legislative and good practice information with sitters to give them the full range of policies and procedures used in the service. Information should be updated as necessary. National Care Standards for Childcare Agencies. Standard 1 - Information about the childcare agency.

This recommendation was made on 21 April 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The provider is in the process of changing and improving the computer system. We are assured that this will include a section clearly marked for Scottish parents and carers where good practice, reports and further information about the Care Inspectorate would be found. This recommendation was not met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at 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
28 Feb 2017	Unannounced	Care and support
		3 - Adequate
		Environment
		Not assessed
		Staffing
		3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership
		3 - Adequate

Date	Type	Gradings	
22 Jan 2016	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	2 - Weak Not assessed 2 - Weak 1 - Unsatisfactory
23 Sep 2014	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	3 - Adequate Not assessed 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate
30 Mar 2012	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
17 Nov 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 5 - Very good 4 - Good
26 Mar 2009	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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