

Howie, Lyn Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 10 May 2019

Service provided by:
Howie, Lyn

Service provider number:
SP2007965181

Care service number:
CS2007151829

Introduction

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Prior to 1 April 2011, this function was carried out by the Care Commission. Information in relation to all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives. The Care Inspectorate has an important role to play in supporting this approach in inspecting care services for children.

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. It is a consistent way for people to work with all children and young people. The approach helps practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people and how they can act to deliver these improvements. Getting it Right for Every Child is being threaded through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and their families.

In Scotland, the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach puts wellbeing at the very heart of its approach. The eight 'indicators' of wellbeing that form the basis of GIRFEC are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included, often referred to as 'SHANARRI.' Information relating to this can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>

Lyn Howie, along with two assistants provide a childminding service from her home in Avonbridge. Children have access to the ground floor of her home, extensive grounds which include an enclosed field, forest area and cabin. There are outdoor toilets for children which supports the ethos of the service to be outdoors for the majority of the time.

This conditions of registration are:

1. When working alone, the care service may be provided to a maximum of eight children under 16 years, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is aged under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

When the childminder is working with one assistant the service may be provided to a maximum of 12 children under the age of 16 at any one time, of whom no more than six are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than two are under 12 months.

Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder and assistant.

When the childminder is working with two assistants, the service may be provided to a maximum of 18 children under the age of 16 at any one time, of whom no more than nine are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than three are under 12 months.

Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder and assistants.

Any other conditions unique to the service:

2. Stuart Howie and Amy Tyler are named assistants.

3. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

4. No overnight care can be provided.

The aims and objectives of the service include the following.

"To provide a happy and safe environment for the children to grow and develop into their own person. I also aim to make each process of learning fun and encourage each child to participate to the best of their ability."

What we did during our inspection

Two inspectors carried out an unannounced inspection on Friday 15 May 2019 between 09:45 and 15:00. Sixteen children of school age and pre-school age were present during the inspection.

During this inspection process we looked around the areas of the childminder's home and the outdoor areas used by minded children and gathered evidence from:

- The annual return documents which was submitted before the inspection.
- Parents questionnaires.
- Children's information folders.
- Observation of practice.
- Photographs of children participating in a range of activities
- Training/research undertaken by the childminder and her assistants.
- Certificate of registration and public liability insurance.
- Risk assessments
- We accompanied the childminder when she collected children from school
- We saw plans for the development of the service.
- Medication records
- Accident and incident records

Views of people using the service

Children we talked to were extremely happy and comfortable in the care of the childminder and her assistants. They spoke positively about the service and their involvement in it. They told us how they organised their games, planned outings and were involved in the development of the service. One child told us about being involved in the recruitment process for new assistants.

We received three questionnaires from parents and spoke with two parents at the inspection. All were highly complimentary about the service and told us of the positive outcomes for them and their children. They told us how their children had 'come along leaps and bounds' were 'incredibly confident' and 'I could not be happier with the activities my child gets to experience'.

Self assessment

The childminder completed this document with a range of information about the service that was provided for children. She told us how she communicated with parents, involved children and parents in her service and provided a safe environment for them. There was information about how the service had been developed since the last inspection and future plans for continued improvement.

What the service did well

The childminder and her assistants knew children extremely well. They worked very well together which meant the children received quality care and attention. They were encouraged to take an active role in organising their play and helping to develop the service.

A particular strength of the service was the vast outdoor environment which offered children a variety of stimulating opportunities for play and learning.

What the service could do better

The childminder has plans to expand and develop the service. She should review some of the record keeping to ensure it supports the work of the service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

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

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

The childminder and her assistants continued to provide an excellent service for children. Their well established ethos and values were so embedded that children thrived in the warm, caring and nurturing environment. Throughout the inspection we saw that all relationships were respectful, kind and affectionate. Partnership working was firmly embedded in practice and had been sustained over a number of years. This meant children felt included and knew their contributions were valued. They, therefore, confidently contributed to the daily running of the service. For example, they told us how they organised games and competitions, ensuring the teams were evenly balanced.

The pro-active approach to supporting children's health and well-being was exceptional. The introduction of mental health awareness had been a positive development within the service. The purpose of this initiative was discussed with parents and children which meant they had an input into how it was introduced. They decided how they could have opportunities to share their feelings. In addition to talking, children had made up questionnaires they could use. This initiative meant staff now had a deeper understanding of how children expressed themselves which helped them to support them more effectively. One parent was happy and reassured that her children would always 'have someone to talk to'.

The unique setting offered children exceptional opportunities to be involved in a range of activities which promoted their development and well-being. The challenging and exciting opportunities contributed to positive outcomes for children's all round development and resulted in them having confidence in their skills and abilities. For example we saw, even the youngest children were given time and space to complete a task rather than it being done for them.

Information about children was shared with parents regularly through a private Facebook page, diaries and discussion. Parents valued this level of communication as they saw the experiences offered supported their child's development and progress. Parents knew they could contribute to children's plans at any time and told us 'Everything I've asked of Lyn has been carried out, above and beyond my expectations'.

Children were familiar with the well-being indicators and the older children compiled their own personal plan. They identified their own SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound) goals and reviewed their progress. Some of the children completed part of their Duke of Edinburgh award within the service which involved all the other children. This reinforced the inclusive ethos of the service as everyone was encouraged to work as a team.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 - excellent

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The key strength of the service was the rural setting which offered children a stimulating outdoor environment. Spending most of their time outdoors, children thrived as they explored the environment, developed their physical skills, learned about risk and had freedom for lots of fun. The various opportunities provided meant children were learning life skills. They had developed leadership skills as they took responsibility for organising their day, ensuring everyone could join in if they wanted. They also used the natural environment to enhance their play by making mud slides after it rained and feeding worms to the birds.

The local community was extremely well used to support children's learning. A highlight was learning about how a local farm worked. Children had observed aspects such as lambing. This experience had given children an insight into the life cycles of animals and the part they play in the food chain. In addition to this the well established practice of children organising outings and plans for school holidays continued.

The childminder involved parents and children in her vision to further develop the service. Plans were in place to add another cabin on the grounds. Children had drawn a plan of this and identified how the space should be used and what resources they would like. By giving children ownership for developing plans, it was clear what was important to them which ensured the service would continue to meet their needs.

Well established procedures were in place to promote children's safety. As this excellent practice had been sustained over the years, children were adept at keeping themselves and others safe. We accompanied the childminder when she collected children from school and saw this in practice.

The childminder and her assistants were pro-active about ensuring facilities fully supported children's outdoor experience. They had outdoor toilet and nappy changing facilities and had upgraded the water supply so warm water was available for hand washing which is in line with current best practice.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 - excellent

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

The childminder worked with two assistants who were present during the inspection. They were fully involved in the day to day running of the service and were clear about their role and responsibilities. Children benefited from the variety of skills and experience they brought to the service. For example, football training and other sports. As the assistants embraced the ethos of the service, children received consistent, high quality care.

We saw very effective team work and communication throughout the inspection. Well established practices meant that children's individual routines were supported. For example, not all children had to go when collecting children from school and nursery which meant their play was uninterrupted.

There was a range of formal and informal ways that information was shared and assistants were supported in their role. The childminder carried out 1:1 meetings with the assistants which gave them an opportunity to discuss their work and identify training. Both were starting a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Childhood Practice in August 2019. They also undertook a range of training that supported their continued personal development, which included First Aid and Child Protection. The childminder had completed her Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Childhood Studies and gave us examples of how this had helped her practice. For example, concentrating much more on children's learning and experiences from the process of doing something rather than the end product. In addition, we found that best practice guidance was extremely well used and implemented in practice to enhance the provision for children.

The childminder and assistants regularly reflected on their practice. These opportunities supported innovation as they shared ideas and initiatives for the continued development of the service. For example, the childminder's husband had obtained his Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator's driving licence so more children could be transported. This forward thinking meant the service was well prepared for the changes they planned.

The planned expansion of the service meant new staff would be employed. Children had been fully involved in the recruitment process, from setting questions, interviewing and deciding who the most appropriate person was.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 - excellent

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The childminder and her assistants were committed to providing a high quality service to families. They did this by promoting high quality partnership working with families using a range of formal and informal ways. Parents therefore had a variety of opportunities to give their views about the service as the childminder talked to them every day and had introduced a survey monkey. Children were also involved in this process as they chose and organised activities and outings to do, could give their views about what they had liked doing and make suggestions for future plans. As this ensured that children's and parents' opinions were valued, we saw from feedback that they were very happy with the service provided and felt involved in its development. This had led to children affectionately naming the service as HOP (Howie's outdoor play).

Evaluation of the service was firmly embedded so it was an ongoing-going process. Best practice guidance, training and research were used effectively to constantly develop and implement current thinking into the service. The childminder and her assistants talked passionately about the plans for the future which included adding another outdoor building and planting trees to further enhance the forest area. With the ambitious plans she has, we asked the childminder to compile an action plan so developments could be monitored.

We talked in depth with the childminder about the planned changes and how this would include a review of current roles and responsibilities. At present there was effective record keeping in place that supported the work of the service. However, with more staff, she recognised the need to review these systems. We made some suggestions that would help this process. In addition to this, the childminder advised of plans to increase the use of ICT so the high level of communication was maintained.

The service was currently talking to the local authority and the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) about the possibility of being involved in a pilot of delivering 1140 hours of childcare as part of the Scottish Government's expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to 1140 hours by 2020.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

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.

Enforcement

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

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
11 Jul 2017	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	6 - Excellent
		Management and leadership	6 - Excellent

Date	Type	Gradings	
25 Aug 2015	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent 5 - Very good 6 - Excellent 5 - Very good
14 Aug 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good Not assessed
25 Nov 2010	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed Not assessed Not assessed
5 Mar 2010	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed
27 Feb 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 4 - Good 4 - Good Not assessed

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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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