

The Steading Childminding Child Minding

Inverurie

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 June 2021

Service provided by:
Norma-Jean Brice-Bruce

Service provider number:
SP2016988186

Service no:
CS2016348380

About the service

The Steading Childminding service registered with the Care Inspectorate on the 19 September 2016 to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under 16 years, of whom no more than three are not yet of an age to attend primary school, and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

When the childminder is working with an assistant, the childminder may care for a maximum of nine children under 16, 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 the children of the childminder's family as well as assistant's children on the premises.

Any other conditions unique to the service:

- The service may only operate between the hours of 07:15 and 18:00, Monday to Friday.
- Sharon Henderson is employed as an assistant.
- Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.
- Overnight care will not be provided.

The childminder provides her service from her own home in a rural location, situated close to the village of Kemnay, Aberdeenshire. Indoors the children have access to a spacious lounge/playroom, dining area and cloakroom. Outdoors there is a fully enclosed garden and a cabin for exploration and play activities.

Aims of the service include being committed to:

"promote and respect children's independence and provide for the health and welfare of the children".

This was a focused inspection to evaluate how well children were being supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We evaluated the service based on key areas that are vital to the support and wellbeing of children experiencing care during the pandemic. Feedback was given to the childminder on 15 June 2021.

What people told us

We contacted two parents who used the childminder to care for their children; they expressed that they were happy with the service provided.

Parents said the childminder was in contact during lockdown. One parent said: "she was really supportive and suggested lots of tasks and crafts that I could do with my daughter whilst she was at home".

Parents felt communication with the childminder was good. A parent commented: "the childminder messages through Facebook messenger and calls if needed, and received photos of the children in the garden or on walks".

Parents indicated they were happy with the measures put in place around COVID-19. One parent said: "I think she has done a brilliant job and I feel perfectly safe. I haven't been inside the setting, however, she has explained clearly the measures that she has taken and I am happy with this".

Both parents were very happy with the childminding service. One said: "it is like a home-from-home for my daughter, and the other said: "she is the best childminder I have had and I think she has responded brilliantly to all the changes and made us all feel safe and informed".

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	2 - Weak
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Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2 - Weak

Quality indicator 5.1: Children's Health and Wellbeing are supported and safeguarded during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Children are nurtured and supported throughout their changed experience in their early learning and childcare setting.
- Effective communication with families enables responsive care to support children through changing circumstances.

Throughout the inspection, children were supported in a warm and caring way. The childminder and their assistant had developed positive relationships with children, making them feel nurtured by giving cuddles and support. Reassurance was given by getting down to the children's level, exploring plants while having fun outdoors. Spending time outdoors supported children's learning experiences and also helped to reduce the spread of COVID-19 infection.

The childminder and assistant knew the children well and were able to tell us about how they cared for them, including how best to support their individual needs. During the various stages of the pandemic the childminder had maintained connections with existing children and families who had been unable to attend the service.

Regular communication meant the childminder was aware of changes in children's needs and individual circumstances. This helped to ensure children felt secure and settled when they returned. The childminder told us that children's personal plans had been updated on the 'Cheqdin App', which records and stores all the relevant information held on the children. However, we were not able to access these during inspection (refer to quality indicator 5.3 Requirement 1).

The parents felt communication was good. The childminder shared information about children's experiences using digital technology including the 'Cheqdin App' and Facebook messenger. This gave parents an insight into their children's time with the childminder which helped support the childminder to continue to meet the children's needs and maintain their partnership with parents.

The childminder and their assistant were able to discuss their responsibilities to safeguard children and how they had reviewed their approaches in line with COVID-19. This helped keep children safe from harm and abuse.

Quality indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff.

- Children are protected as staff take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection.

Appropriate procedures were in place to manage illness during COVID-19. The childminder and their assistant were clear about the signs and symptoms relating to COVID-19 and when children should not attend the service. Information had been shared with parents about COVID-19 symptoms and isolation periods. The childminder was reminded to notify us through eforms of suspected COVID-19 cases as well as confirmed cases.

Systems and procedures to support the safe arrival and departure of the children were in place. Children were dropped off outside the gate or outside the house limiting the potential risk of transmission of infection.

The masks that the childminder used did not always fit well, and were not always readily available for the childminder to wear when not able to social distance from the assistant and parents. We discussed the importance of these being easily accessible and ensuring that they were fitted well as this contributes towards minimising the risk of the spread of infection.

The childminder's cleaning regime was not effective to support children's safety and health and wellbeing. Children were not experiencing a clean and safe environment. Touch points on door handles, windows and light switches were not clean during the inspection and appeared marked and dirty. In the cabin, outdoor clothing, shoes and towels were not stored appropriately and there were dirty drinking glasses and other sundry items left on worksurfaces.

Outdoor handwashing facilities were not sufficient as there was no access to hot water and soap. Frequency of handwashing was not sufficient and handwashing was not observed when moving from outdoor to indoor areas. This put the children at risk of spread of infection. Due to the serious concerns, we issued a letter to the childminder on 7 May 2021 making the following requirements:

1. To reduce the risk of transmission of infection , the childminder, must by Monday 10 May 2021 ensure that the environment is clean and safe.
2. The childminder, must by Monday 10 May 2021 ensure that:
 - a) appropriate outdoor handwashing facilities are provided to minimise the potential for spread of infection and keep children safe.
 - b) the childminder and assistant are aware of and follow Scottish Government COVID-19 handwashing guidance.

We returned to the service on Thursday 13 May 2021 to assess if the requirements had been met. We found glass and touch points were visibly clean and items were hung individually on pegs. The area of the cabin used by the family had been sectioned off with a stairgate to prevent access to minded children.

Outdoor hand washing facilities had been improved. A water dispenser with warm water was hung up along with soap and paper towels. We saw that one child washed their hands well with the help of the childminder before going into the cabin to play. Hand sanitiser was now available at the gate and front door and we saw parents physically distancing. It was noted that the childminder wiped down touch points after the inspectors entered the premises.

Therefore, the requirements had been met. These improved measures, contributed towards minimising the risk of the spread of infection and must be fully embedded into practice and sustained.

Quality indicator 5.3 : Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19.

-Children received supportive and responsive care as a result of the service being appropriately staffed.

The childminder and their assistant appeared to work well together. The assistant told us she felt supported and could ask the childminder for support if necessary. Staff were observing social distancing guidance when appropriate and spent most of their time outdoors.

The assistant was clear about COVID-19 symptoms to look out for, and to refrain from attending the service should they experience symptoms. They also knew about the need to book a test.

The assistant told us that they had attended some infection prevention and control training. They were able to discuss some basic measures such as hand washing, social distancing, and enhanced cleaning. However, we did not see the impact of this during our inspection. We did not observe handwashing or enhanced cleaning during our time at the setting. (refer to quality indicator 5.2)

The childminder did not provide us with access to children's personal plans, COVID-19 risk assessments or some training certificates. Further requests and other suggestions on how the childminder could provide this information were not met. This meant we were not able to fully assess the information that the childminder had in relation to the health, wellbeing and safety of children (Requirement 1).

The Care Inspectorate requested a self-evaluation on several occasions prior to our inspection, however we did not receive this. Self-evaluation is central to continuous improvement. It enables services to reflect on how they are performing and identify areas for further development.

Requirements

1.
By 13 August 2021 - in order to ensure children's health, wellbeing and safety, the childminder must submit the required information in relation to children's personal plans, risk assessments and training records.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

It also complies with section 53(6) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, SCSWIS may at any time require a person providing any social service to supply it with any information relating to the service which it considers necessary or expedient to have for the purposes of its functions under this part.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	2 - Weak
5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	2 - Weak
5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	2 - Weak
5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19	2 - Weak

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