

# Karen's Childminding Service

## Child Minding

Ellon

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
14 July 2021

**Service provided by:**  
Karen Watson

**Service provider number:**  
SP2019990569

**Service no:**  
CS2019375373

## About the service

The childminder is registered to operate from their own home in Ellon, Aberdeenshire. The children can access the dining area, living room, and downstairs cloakroom. The rear garden with upper patio and lower grassed area provides opportunities for outdoor play.

Karen's Childminding Service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family. Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the certificate and no overnight care will be provided. The childminder must supervise the children when using the garden.

The aims of the service include "to provide a happy, warm home from home, safe and stimulating environment for children".

This service has been registered since 9 July 2019.

This was a focussed 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.

We carried out a site visit of the service on 13 July 2021 and completed the inspection using information received from parents. Feedback was given on 14 July 2021.

This inspection was carried out by an inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

## What people told us

Two parents provided us with feedback. They spoke very positively about the level of care that their child received and felt that the childminder kept them well informed during the pandemic. They felt the childminder had responded very well to the Covid-19 guidance and that changes to systems and procedures helped keep their child safe and well. Their comments included:

- "Karen has made my children feel settled in her service. My children just love going to Karen's. My children also get on so well with her children and the other children in her service. I feel my kids are safe at Karen's house and when they are in her care."
- "Karen has been so brilliant with my children. My children just love going to Karen's and playing with the other children. She has been fantastic childminder."
- "Karen is a wonderful childminder and we really have no concerns with the care provided. My child is always happy to go to Karen's and was even putting her arms out to Karen at drop off within two weeks of starting. We enjoy the update she sends about what they do and my child loves their friends at Karen's. We've also noticed a huge leap in their development since they started. Both sets of grandparents are equally impressed, despite never having been near Karen. Definitely five star."

Three minded children were present during the inspection. They had fun making flour gloop and drawing pictures. The older children had a good understanding of Covid-19 and were able to discuss the impact of the pandemic on their lives. The younger children looked contented and comfortable.

## 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?	4 - Good
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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?

4 - Good

**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

The childminder provided a flexible service that met the needs of the families in their care. They continued to provide a service for key workers to support and help families during the pandemic. Emails, text messages, and telephone calls were used to inform parents of current guidance and to support families facing anxieties and changing circumstances.

Individualised settling in approaches helped children feel more confident to leave their parents during the pandemic and cope with the change in their routines. Garden visits for parents prior to children starting and reassuring photographs sent during the day meant parents were confident their child was happy and looked after. The computer application, Minding Kids, was used successfully to share children's daily routines and help ensure a continuity of care.

Information within personal plans was specific to individual children and detailed their routines, likes, and wishes. The progress of some children had been recorded using the wellbeing indicators and photographs. This helped the childminder plan activities to support their development. However, not all personal plans had been recently reviewed with parents to ensure the children's information was up to date and reflective of their current needs. The childminder should fully discuss children's changing needs with parents and update their personal plans as a priority.

Children were at ease and happy in the childminder's care. We saw a very positive relationship between the minded children and the childminder's family, and they played well together. Older children were keen to chat and discuss their activities and younger children were settled and comfortable.

To help busy parents and to reduce the risk of transmission of infection, the childminder provided healthy and nutritious snacks and lunches. Snacks and lunches were eaten at the table to promote good manners and develop social skills. Children's food preferences were well catered for and the children were encouraged to try new foods to support a healthy diet.

Sleep patterns from home were well supported and a travel cot was available for use. Bedding was changed between individual children and washed weekly to prevent the spread of cross contamination.

The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of safeguarding children and their families. They were aware of the potential risks to children and when to report concerns to the relevant agencies. We discussed the benefits of using chronologies to record significant events in children's lives to help keep them safe from harm or abuse. The childminder was not familiar with this means of recording and should access the document 'Practice guide to Chronologies', which can be found at <https://www.careinspectorate.com>.

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

The childminder's home looked homely and clean. The childminder was aware of the Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance and had introduced enhanced cleaning to keep children and their families safe and well. A covid-19 risk assessment had been undertaken to help identify possible dangers and prevent the spread of infection.

Drop off and pick up procedures had been changed to meet Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance. Parents were encouraged to wear face coverings and to stay outside and not enter the childminder's home. Children's temperatures were taken upon arrival and their hands washed when entering. Children displaying any signs or symptoms were not able to attend. This helped keep everyone safe and well.

Children were able to pick from a selection of toys and games. However, these were not stored to look attractive or inviting. Young children did not find it easy to make independent choices from cluttered storage areas. We suggested to the childminder that they reduce the quantity of toys on offer to increase the opportunities for independent play. The introduction of loose parts and treasure baskets for young children would be beneficial to encourage more imaginative and creative play.

The kitchen/play area was well ventilated and there were increased opportunities for children to play in the garden. Good use was made of the local parks and opportunities were available for children to visit local attractions during the holidays. This contributed to children's mental and physical wellbeing as well as helping to keep them safe and free from infection.

Children were encouraged to frequently wash their hands and were provided with paper towels. Young children were well supported during handwashing and the older children were able to tell us the importance of washing their hands to get rid of germs. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) was available for nappy changing and when dealing with other bodily fluids. This helped keep children free from infection and cross contamination.

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4 - Good
5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	4 - Good
5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	4 - Good

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