

Benzie, Heather

Child Minding

Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 25 August 2021

Service provided by:
Heather Benzie

Service provider number:
SP2003900469

Care service number:
CS2003001847

Introduction

Heather Benzie has been registered since 1 April 2002. Current registration is to provide a care service to a maximum of 8 children at any one time under the age of 16 years, of whom a maximum of 6 may be under 12, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The numbers of children not yet attending primary school may on occasion be extended to 4, where this is necessary to promote continuity of care for children already minded by the childminder.

Claire Benzie is employed as an assistant. When working with the childminder the care service will be provided to a maximum of 8 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of 6 will be under 12, of whom no more than 5 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is provided from the childminder's home within a residential area of Portlethen, close to a local primary school, shops, parks and other amenities. The areas used by the children were the living room, kitchen and bathroom. There was also an enclosed rear garden which could be accessed directly from patio doors in the living room.

The aims and objectives of the service included:

- To create a 'home from home' for your child where they will be cared for in a friendly, welcoming environment while parents/carers are at work/study etc.
- To provide a friendly, welcoming, safe and secure environment for your child/children.
- To Get It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) by meeting the wellbeing indicators of the SHANARRI wheel (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included).
- To encourage your child to develop confidence and self-esteem by providing opportunity for individual, small and group activities.

What we did during our inspection

We carried out a short announced inspection. The inspection took place on 17 August 2021 between 09:30 and 12:30. During the inspection we observed the childminder working with three minded children and evaluated the quality of care, environment and management and leadership.

We also reviewed relevant documents and records including children's records and relevant policies virtually. Feedback was given to the childminder on 25 August 2021.

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 parents 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.

Views of people using the service

There were three minded children present during the inspection. The children indicated they enjoyed coming to the childminder.

We received email responses from four parents/carers who told us:

'Heather is very good with our child who loves going to Heather. We have never had any improvements that we have suggested to Heather as we are extremely happy with the service she provides and the care that she gives our child.'

'Heather has worked collaboratively with us on key areas such as naps and toileting to ensure that our parenting approaches are supported in her own home as far as reasonably possible.'

'Heather messages and emails regularly if there are any changes to her service. She usually follows this up with paper copies of things where applicable, but always ensures we have received the information when I next see her/lets me know in advance she will be sending information. She strongly encourages any questions or queries about anything.'

'She asks me particularly how they are, in order to establish if there is anything that might impact on their care that day such as poor night sleep etc. If this has been the case, Heather is fantastic at considering if she can alter her day to give them a longer nap, for example.'

'We have been involved in updating paperwork at regular intervals focusing on a range of topics such as their development/independence at tasks/likes and dislikes.'

'Heather is very approachable and should I have any suggestions, I am positive she would take these onboard and try. I am however, very happy with the care and support we receive.'

Self assessment

We did not ask the childminder to provide a self assessment prior to inspection.

What the service did well

The childminder provided a welcoming, nurturing and homely environment for children to enjoy. Positive relationships had been developed with children helping to build their confidence and self-esteem. The childminder demonstrated a very good knowledge of the children they cared for. Personal plans reflected children's interests and needs and identified next steps in learning and development.

The childminder had also developed positive relationships with parents which helped to ensure children experienced a continuity of care between home and in her care.

Children had daily opportunities to play outdoors and made good use of the community, offering a range of interesting experiences for children.

What the service could do better

The childminder should continue to use self evaluation processes to help develop her service further. This would ensure children benefit from a culture of continuous improvement.

The childminder should also consider how children can fully make choices and direct their own play.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children were happy, confident and relaxed in the care of the childminder who was attentive, responsive and caring in their interactions with children. The childminder role modelled manners and was respectful and as a result children were seen to be well mannered and considerate of each other. This told us children felt valued and included.

The childminder knew the children in her care well and confidently discussed children's individual personalities, likes/dislikes and preferences. Using their knowledge of the children and their developmental stages the childminder had set out resources and activities that were influenced by the children's interests.

Children's wellbeing needs were supported through clear individual personal plans which were completed with parents prior to children starting at the service. Information had been recently reviewed in these which ensured information remained relevant and up to date supporting children's current health needs. Where children required a care plan these were detailed and in place. Parents were encouraged to complete a 'day in the life of' routine sheet for their child. This supported the childminder to work collaboratively with parents on key areas such as naps and toileting. This provided an important link with home, helping to provide a continuity of care.

Training in child protection supported children to be safe. The childminder was clear about the process to follow if she had any concerns about a child in her care. Chronologies were being used to record significant information. This would assist her in assessing any necessary next steps that need to be taken to further support children's wellbeing needs.

The childminder was supporting children with their development through observations, assessment and planning. Observations were individual to each child and included next steps of learning. There were significant 'WOW' moments in children's folders celebrating their achievements such as counting and putting on their own socks.

Snack and lunchtime was a relaxed and sociable time. Children either sat outside in the garden or in the kitchen together at a child sized table. Children were offered home-cooked healthy meals and fruit. Good manners were encouraged throughout. The childminder used the guidance 'Setting the table' to ensure snack was nutritious and healthy. For children who had any allergies or intolerances these were taken into account. Children also had access to water throughout our visit. We discussed with the childminder how children may like to be involved in the preparation of snack or lunch when time allows. This would support children to feel included and responsible.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children throughout the pandemic.

Enhanced cleaning procedures were in place and children and the childminder were sanitising and washing their hands more often to minimise the risk of transmission. Children could choose their own coloured towels and at the end of day they were supported to put this in the washing basket.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The childminder's house provided a relaxed, warm and homely environment which contributed to children feeling safe and secure.

The childminder told us she promoted outdoor activities to support children's health and wellbeing. The children had daily opportunities to explore the local community including visits to parks and the beach. This supported children to be active and healthy. Trips in the wider community such as larger playparks, garden centres and farms supported children to develop their social skills as they mixed with other children.

During the inspection the children mainly played outdoors in the safe, enclosed garden. Children had access to a mud kitchen with several kitchen utensils and pots and pans. Children had lots of fun at the mud kitchen with the water available as they filled and emptied the containers.

A number of natural loose parts were available for children including a cable drum, planks of wood, shells and pebbles. We noted children having fun pouring water down pipes to see which would go faster. Children developed their skills in investigation and problem solving as they creatively played with the loose parts on offer.

Ride on toys, a balance board and buggies also supported children with their gross motor skills. We noted two children playing cooperatively as they pushed each other in the buggy around the garden.

Indoors a variety of good quality age and stage appropriate resources to support children's learning had been set out for children to choose from. Further resources were stored in another room, however, the childminder advised us that children were aware they could access other toys should they choose to. A box containing arts and crafts was always available to children to encourage their creativity.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The childminder had several years experience as a childminder. She had a professional and organised approach to childminding. She was committed to the development of the service and had taken suggestions on board from her previous inspection and had made improvements to the service.

We discussed with the childminder ways she kept up to date with any changes in guidance and legislation. She told us she accessed the Care Inspectorate website (the Hub) and Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA).

The childminder had established very good relationships with parents. She understood the importance of sharing information with parents and used a variety of different ways to do so. A welcome pack was shared with all families which contained important information. Emails, messages and daily discussions with parents as they dropped off and picked up their children were used by the childminder to share and update information. Parents felt respected and included.

The childminder had a childcare training award and attended training including food hygiene and first aid; supporting children to be safe and healthy. Additional training had been accessed to further support children's wellbeing needs, improve her knowledge and skills and promote positive outcomes for children.

The childminder had developed a way of monitoring and reflecting on their Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This documented the training she accessed and identified the knowledge gained from each course. We suggested that this should be more evaluative to support the childminder to recognise further training needs.

Covid-19 questionnaires had been shared with parents and children to gather feedback on areas such as communication, activities for children and feelings. This helped promote respectful relationships.

A development plan identified some targets that would support the childminder to improve her service and knowledge further. We suggested more specific areas for improvement with clearer actions, would support continuous improvements to the service. The childminder should continue to use self evaluation processes to help develop her service further. This would ensure children benefit from a culture of continuous improvement. **(See recommendation 1.)**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The childminder should systematically quality assure her service in consultation with parents/carers and children and best practice documents including 'The Health and Social Care Standards' and 'Your Childminding Journey.' These are available on our website <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/>. The childminder should continue to explore different ways to evaluate her service to support continuous improvements.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19)

Grade: 4 - 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

Recommendation 1

To support children to achieve their full potential the indoor and outdoor environment should be developed to create:

- Resources readily accessible to children to enable choice.
- More age appropriate stimulating learning experiences including natural and open-ended resources.

This is to that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage' (HSCS 2.27) and 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

This recommendation was made on 6 November 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The indoor and outdoor environment was significantly improved and a number of more stimulating experiences were set up for children including an animal tray, games, books and puzzles. Outdoors a mud kitchen with water and pine cones and ride on toys and balls ensured children could access a variety of different learning experiences.

This recommendation had been met.

Recommendation 2

The childminder should continue to improve the service by:

- a. developing her knowledge and skills through ongoing training and by reading and implementing relevant best practice guidance.
- b. identifying how new learning has been put into practice and review the impact on children's care and experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This recommendation was made on 6 November 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The childminder had attended several training courses to update her practice since the previous inspection.

She has put a process in place to support her to identify how training has impacted on her practice and identify any further training required.

This recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 3

The childminder should systematically quality assure her service in consultation with parents/carers and children using best practice documents including 'The Health and Social Care Standards' and 'Your Childminding Journey.' These are available on our website <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/>

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This recommendation was made on 6 November 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The childminder had started to address this recommendation and had involved parents and children in self evaluation. We felt that self evaluation was still an area for improvement and this recommendation will be reinstated under 'Quality of Management and Leadership' of this report.

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
6 Sep 2019	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 3 - Adequate
28 Mar 2017	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
20 Jan 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
14 Feb 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	6 - Excellent
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
3 Nov 2010	Announced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
10 Aug 2009	Announced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
28 Oct 2008	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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