

Flexible Childcare Services (Aberdeenshire) – Peterhead Day Care of Children

Anna Ritchie School
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Flexible Childcare Services Scotland
SCIO

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2019376994

About the service

Flexible Childcare Services - Peterhead has been registered since 20 December 2019 to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of nine children with additional support needs of an age to attend primary school and secondary school. The service is accommodated within Anna Ritchie School in Peterhead who cater for children with additional support needs.

The manager is also the manager of:

- Flexible Childcare Services (Aberdeenshire) - Ellon and
- Flexible Childcare Services (Aberdeenshire) - Old Meldrum.

Aims of the service include being committed to:

- "provide high quality respite care for children aged 5-18 with additional support needs".

We carried out a site visit to the service on the 28 October 2021 and completed the inspection using telephone calls, virtual meetings, and the submission of documents. Feedback was given on the 18 November 2021 to the management team who acknowledged our findings. They agreed to take immediate action to improve the quality of the provision. This inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

As part of this inspection, we took into consideration: 'Key Question 5: Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19' with a specific focus on: 'Quality Indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff'. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator under the theme of: 'Quality of care and support'.

What people told us

We spoke with three parents. They were generally happy with the service and told us their children were happy to attend and like being outside. They felt that staff knew what their children liked to do at the club and fed back to them at the end of the session. Parents felt that communication could be better especially when there were staff changes.

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of this inspection. We reviewed the service quality assurance systems and improvement plan.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	2 - Weak
Quality of environment	3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing	2 - Weak
Quality of management and leadership	2 - Weak

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children were greeted warmly into the service and were keen to get to the playroom to find some of their favourite toys and activities. Some children had developed positive relationships with a core member of the staff team and a staff member who had previously worked in the service. This helped children feel comfortable about attending the service.

Children were not always nurtured and supported effectively. At times, there was little or no interaction between staff and some children. As a result, the quality of experiences for the children was poor. Some staff were not knowledgeable or confident enough about engaging and communicating effectively with children. This meant that children were not being supported to achieve their potential and get the best experiences during their time in the service (**see Recommendation 1**).

The personal plans we sampled didn't always reflect individual children's specific needs, interests and areas of support, and the anticipated outcomes for children. This made it difficult for staff to track children's progress and achievements and plan for ongoing support.

The provider and management now need to support staff to improve their systems for recording information. This needs to include detailed individualised strategies and techniques to help provide support that's right for each child using the service (**see Recommendation 2**).

Healthy snacks were provided by the service and parents provided packed lunches. For some children, snack and lunch time was a sociable, unhurried experience. For others the experience was not positive, because children were not familiar with some staff and were relying on the more established staff to provide comfort, and meet their needs. To support children to feel secure and comfortable staff should be familiar with children and be able to provide sensitive comfort and support at all times.

Detailed safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures were in place to help staff keep children safe and protect them from harm. Most staff were aware of their role and responsibility to safeguard children and had attended child protection training. Plans were in place for the most recently recruited staff to undertake training to ensure they become familiar with child protection procedures, and the action to take to keep children safe and well.

Systems and procedures were not effective to support the safe administration of medication. We found that medication care plans did not contain enough detail or vital information to support staff to effectively administer the medication at the right time. Information needs to be more detailed and recorded in a clear step-by-step basis. This will help staff be more knowledgeable and will contribute towards ensuring children requiring medication are kept safe and well (**see Recommendation 3**).

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children and staff. The areas used by children and staff were clean. We saw effective mask wearing and ventilation was good. Staff did their best to support handwashing. This proved difficult for some children who struggled to cope with the experience. Staff tried alternative measures such as using hand sanitiser.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 3

1. Children should be cared for by staff who have sufficient knowledge of the children's needs, interests and routines. This should include all permanent, temporary and sessional staff working within the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health & Social Care Standards which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19), 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15) 'I am supported and cared for by people I know so that I experience consistency and continuity' (HSCS 4.16).

2. Children's needs and wellbeing must be effectively supported through meaningful personal plans. In order to achieve this, the provider and manager need to ensure personal plans include:

- a) key information relating to the child and their personal circumstances;
- b) information about how children's needs, preferences and care will be met and include any individual strategies of support to be implemented.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health & Social Care Standards which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15) and 'My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected' (HSCS 1.23).

3. The provider must ensure children's medication needs are met, children are safe, and that medication is safely managed in line with best practice guidance.

To do this the provider must ensure:

- a) medication records include details of the action to be taken in the first instance, clear guidance as to any additional steps should the initial treatment fail, and timescales for contacting the emergency services and parents as necessary;
- b) staff must have a demonstrable understanding of the appropriate procedures to follow to ensure the safe administration of medication including the need for accurate, legible record keeping.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

Grade: 2 - weak

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The service operated within a school who cater for children with additional support needs. The service had the use of the school dining room where most of their play took place. A large cloak room area was available and used when children needed some quiet time. The home economics room was used for preparing snack and setting up lunch. We saw that these areas were visibly clean, well ventilated and benefited from natural light. At present the service did not have access to the hall which limited opportunities for children to be active and energetic indoors.

We found that play areas did not feel warm and welcoming. Rooms appeared functional and did not support children to develop their natural creativity, curiosity, and learning. An established staff member told us that the room had been set up with the interests of the children in mind. We saw tables set up with resources such as musical instruments, 'Lego', wooden toys, small world play, drawing materials, books and games.

The children did not show much interest in the resources available other than one child who spent considerable time building 'Lego' while another spent some time drawing. We expect children to have the opportunity to be able to participate in fun, imaginative and active experiences, which was not on offer to the children when we visited. There were limited opportunities for them to make choices.

Children had no access to a quiet area and cosy spaces with soft furnishings during our visit. We discussed providing a comfortable, quiet area which may offer more opportunities for children to shape their play and activities throughout the day (**see Recommendation 1**).

Staff told us that children spent time outdoors on a daily basis. We saw the service had access to an enclosed outdoor area within the school grounds. However, some children's access to the outdoors was restricted at times. This was mainly due to the mix of staff skills and qualifications which required all children to remain indoors or all going outdoors together. This reduced the opportunities to make independent choices about where they played, and limited some children's opportunities to benefit from enriching outdoor experiences **(see Recommendation 1)**.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1.

The provider and manager need to:

- a) support children's choice, including when to spend time outdoors and provide quality resources to help children to reach their full potential;
- b) develop the environment to make it more warm and welcoming.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices' (HSCS 5.21).

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

We noted that the required recruitment checks had been undertaken and returned prior to new staff starting in the service. Some staff told us that their induction had not provided them with the support they needed to carry out their role effectively. There was insufficient time taken to ensure that staff understood all the information and what was expected of them.

The induction process now needs to be reviewed to ensure that applicants have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake their role. We signposted the manager to the national induction resource to develop the service induction process, to ensure it is robust and supports staff to reflect on their practice **(see Recommendation 1)**.

During our inspection we found that staff were not effectively deployed to ensure the right mix of skills and knowledge were available to provide high quality care for all the children. We found that whilst some children had a consistent staff member to support them, others experiences were compromised due to the lack of staff knowledge and skills. we found that staff were not effectively deployed to ensure the right mix of skills and knowledge were available to provide high quality care for all the children **(see Requirement 1)**.

Effective procedures were not in place to evaluate the quality of staff practice. The management team failed to identify and address staff development needs. This meant some children were not getting the support they needed to benefit from their time at the group.

Some staff had limited skills and poor practice which was observed during the inspection - this demonstrated the need for effective training and support to improve outcomes for children - **(see Requirement 1 in the Quality of management and leadership section of this report)**.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. The provider must ensure children's care and wellbeing needs are met, and that they get the right support at the right time, by 20 January 2022.

To do this the provider must, at a minimum:

a) ensure that staff are deployed effectively throughout the sessions.

This is to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for (Services) Regulations 2011(SSI 2011/10) Regulation 4 (1)(a) Welfare of users.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that: 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15).

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The provider must ensure that all staff employed in the provision of care have the qualifications, skills and experience that is necessary to meet the health, welfare, safety and development needs of all children.

In addition, management should ensure all staff, including relief staff undertake a robust induction to the service to ensure staff are fully aware of the service policies and procedures. When staff move to a promoted post they should also receive an induction to their new role and responsibilities.

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

Grade: 2 - weak

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We found that there had been a lack of effective leadership in the setting resulting in inconsistencies in practice. There was little evidence that staff were supported to become confident to be able to use their initiative to improve the quality of experiences for children. Furthermore, management had not provided the managerial support and leadership skills training that senior staff had requested to allow them to more effectively run the sessions. As a matter of priority, the provider and management team need to provide support and training for staff to improve outcomes for children to ensure their needs are effectively met **(see Requirement 1)**.

We found that there were ineffective quality assurance processes in place. A lack of monitoring of staff interactions had resulted in the manager being unaware of the inconsistencies in practice and the poor practice we identified. Monitoring undertaken did not focus on outcomes for children, as a result it did not impact on improving children's experiences. Where areas for improvement were identified these were not effectively followed up to ensure continued improvements **(see Requirement 1)**.

The current improvement plan did not highlight priorities that would make the greatest difference to children's wellbeing and ability to achieve. As a result of the practice observed, we have advised the manager to review the service's improvement priorities taking account of the areas identified for improvement within this report **(see Requirement 1)**.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. The provider must ensure effective and robust quality assurance processes are developed and implemented, in order to keep children safe and benefit from a culture of continuous improvement by 20 January 2022.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

a) include monitoring of staff practice to ensure staff skills and knowledge is improved.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/10) Regulation 4 (1)(a) Welfare of Users.

This is to ensure 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).

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 2 - weak

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

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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