

Flexible Childcare Services - Dundee Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
3 March 2022

Service provided by:
Flexible Childcare Services Scotland
SCIO

Service provider number:
SP2019013370

Service no:
CS2019376978

About the service

Flexible Childcare Services - Dundee was registered 20 December 2019 as a day care service for children. Their conditions of registration state that they are able to provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 44 children at any one time. Of those 44 no more than 11 are under two years of age. Other conditions unique to the service include,

Adult: Child ratios will be:

- Under two years of age - 1:3
- Two to under three years of age - 1:5
- Three years of age and over - 1:8 if the children attend more than four hours per day or 1:10 if the children attend for less than four hours per day.

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 February 2022, onsite, between 09:30 and 17:30. Two inspectors carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children, parents and carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily operation of the club
- reviewed documents.

Feedback was given to the management team on the 3 March 2022. Representatives from the local authority also attended feedback.

What people told us

During the inspection, approximately 35 children were present, across four playrooms. Almost all children had formed relationships with staff and were happy and confident within the service.

Parents were positive about the flexibility of the service, sharing that this support them well. They told us that their children had formed good attachments with staff and looked forward to spending time in the service. We shared area that parents would like to see developed further to the manager, such a lunch time and communication about who their child's keyworker is. This has been reflected throughout the report.

Self assessment

We did not request a self-assessment prior to the inspection.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good

Quality of staffing

4 - Good

Quality of management and leadership

3 - Adequate

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme as good. We found strengths that had a significant positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes. However, improvements were identified to maximise wellbeing and ensure that children consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible.

Children benefitted from staff who knew them well. This contributed to children forming good attachments with staff and feeling happy within the service. Personal plans were in place for all children, they contained key information such as medical information and their likes and dislikes. This supported staff to form a good understanding of the child and how to support them. Staff were in the early stages of redeveloping children's personal plans to streamline information and improve consistency of care. We highlighted the benefits of staff using them as working documents that reflect a child's individual needs and wishes. This would enable staff to assess children's outcomes and anticipate any future care and support needs.

Most children were supported to achieve their full potential through a balance of play experiences and staff interactions. Children were enjoying activities such as blowing bubbles outside in the wind and creating artwork. Staff were open and responsive to children's cues and supported them when necessary, ensuring their needs were respected and acted upon. Parents told us they found that daily routines could appear repetitive. We shared this feedback with the manager, and she agreed to review this with staff to ensure children experience broad and balanced opportunities within their play.

Staff had a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities for protecting children. They were confident in identifying signs and symptoms of abuse and how to report concerns. We found that significant events in children's lives were not always recorded within meaningful chronologies. This could potentially put children at risk, as information was not able to be shared effectively with other working professionals who could protect children or support their needs. Children would benefit from staff improving how they record and share information that is necessary in promoting, supporting or safeguarding their wellbeing. The manager agreed to address this to strengthen staff's practice.

Children's lunch was seen to be calm and welcoming, which promoted a positive, social experience for children. Staff recognised the importance of sitting with children so that they could support attachments and respond immediately if a child required help. We found children had to wait for an extended period of time to receive their lunch. Children in the preschool room would benefit from more opportunities to be independent to support healthy eating habits and to develop their skills. Children in the baby room would benefit from staff being better organised to reduce the time babies wait for their food. The manager agreed to address this.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme as good. We found strengths that had a significant positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes. However, improvements were identified to maximise wellbeing and ensure that children consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible.

Children benefited from a clean and hygienic environment. Staff were seen working well together to complete essential cleaning tasks in a safe and effective way. This ensured potential risks of transmission were minimised and children felt safe. We also found that staff supported children well to understand the importance of personal hygiene, such as hand washing. This resulted in them being able to do this independently.

Children could access areas that encouraged them to relax, feel safe, content and cosy. Staff had made good use of soft lighting and furnishing to create areas that simulated warmth and a sense of enclosure. This promoted a calm and positive atmosphere where children could choose spaces to meet their needs and wishes.

Staff facilitated children's play and learning opportunities well. For example, staff responded to a child who was enjoying exploring numbers by providing activities that challenged and stimulated them. This respected the child's interests and promoted them to develop their skills. We asked the manager, while they redevelop their personal plans, to consider how they identify and record children's progression. This will enhance staff's ability to design a play and learning environment that promotes positive experiences and outcomes for all children.

Children attending the after-school care were seen to be very happy and supported well by staff. They particularly enjoyed playing dominoes as a group and preparing their own snack. Some children were able to pick from a good selection of drawing materials which supported them to relax and feel settled. We advised that the older children would benefit from more age-appropriate equipment and furnishings to support their comfort and suit their needs.

Children were supported to consider risks within their environment. Staff included them in the risk assessing process before going outside to play. This enabled them to think about any possible dangers and explore how these could be reduced or managed. This promoted inclusion and safety. Children would benefit from spaces both indoor and outdoor, that encourage them to test their sense of risk. We signposted staff to good practice documents, such as Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide, to inform their practice and support them to develop this further.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme as good. We found strengths that had a significant positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes. However, improvements were identified to maximise wellbeing and ensure that children consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible.

Children benefitted from the friendly and welcoming atmosphere within the service. Staff told us they felt well supported by their manager and found good communication enabled them to work effectively as a team. Parents supported this, commenting that the staff are happy, and their child was supported well. This resulted in children receiving warm and compassionate care. Staff were often seen down at the children's level, providing comfort and support when needed. This enabled children to feel safe, secure and cared for. At times, staff were task driven and enabled the end goal to overshadow the learning experience. This resulted in missed opportunities to extend children's learning or interests. By listening to the child and using effective questioning, staff would be able to focus more on the child's voice and recognise them as experts in their own experiences.

Staff's professional development was promoted within the service. We found that, although staff engaged in an extensive number of online courses, it was not always clear what impact this had on their practice or children's outcomes. Deeper evaluations of professional development would enable staff to effectively reflect on how their learning has supported improvement and the needs of the children. This would provide focused development opportunities and support the manager to continually raise standards.

The induction process that was in place focused on policies and procedures and could be limited to a one-off event. This resulted in some staff not being given sufficient time to understand all of the information and what is expected of them. We highlighted the importance of a clear mentoring programme to support new staff into their roles. We signposted the manager to guidance, such as Early Learning and Children National Induction Resource and Scottish Social Services Council Guidance for Mentoring in Childhood Practice to support a robust and effective induction that ensures consideration is given to the care, play and learning needs of children.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme as adequate. We found that there were some strengths, but these just outweighed weaknesses. This resulted in key areas of performance being identified to improve children's outcomes. A recommendation has been made.

Some quality assurance procedures had improved, which impacted positively on children's outcomes. For example, peer reviews highlighted some areas of development required within staff's handwashing practice. This process encouraged staff to improve their reflective practice and develop their skills. However, we found that some of the areas for development, such as inconsistencies with medication paperwork, could have been identified and addressed through better auditing and monitoring procedures. The manager had taken our comments forward and made changes to procedures by the time of writing this report. The manager should ensure these practices are embedded and sustained to ensure children benefit from a culture of continuous improvement. **See recommendation 1.**

The improvement plan did not support children, families and staff to follow and understand changes made to the service. Although the manager had identified strengths and areas for development within the service, these were vague and did not include realistic timescales. We provided support on creating a manageable improvement plan, which could reflect the changes and needs within the service. This would ensure children benefit from a well led service, where everyone is working towards a shared vision that promotes their needs and interests.

Staff deployment did not always meet the individual needs of children attending the service. The manager followed current staffing guidance to ensure that children were cared for within the correct adult to child ratios. However, they should always consider the needs of the children when deploying staff to ensure their needs are met and staff's wellbeing is supported. For example, a few babies required one to one attention as well as intimate care, such as nappy changing. Although staff were caring and supportive, some children's quality of care was compromised as a result. Children would benefit from the manager assessing children's needs alongside staff's abilities to carry out their duties safely. This would ensure children's needs are met by the right number of people.

Children's care was not always shared well with parents. Parents told us that the flexibility of the service supported them well, however there were often changes to their child's keyworker and this was not always communicated to them. This resulted in challenges in sharing information between parents and staff. We asked the manager to consider consistency of care for children when planning staff deployment. Furthermore, staff should be transparent with parents about who is caring for their child on the day they attend to support effective communication.

Staff sought feedback from parents and carers. However, we found little evidence of how staff used feedback to improve children's outcomes. Those using the service would benefit from the manager sharing what they have done in response to feedback. This would support inclusion and respect people using the service as key contributors.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. Children's experiences and staff practice should be continually reviewed to ensure children receive high quality care and support, the provider should implement effective and robust quality assurance processes to ensure improvements are embedded and sustained.

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

Grade: 3 - adequate

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

Requirement 1

Children must be kept safe, and have their health and wellbeing supported in line with COVID-19 guidance. The service must review the measures in place and ensure they take account of the challenges and impact of COVID-19 on children's needs by 14 May 2021.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, 'I experience stability in my care and support from people who know my needs, choices and wishes, even if there are changes in the service or organisation.' (HSCS 4.15).

It is also necessary to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210) Regulation 4(1)(a) – Health, welfare and safety of service users.

This requirement was made on 6 April 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

Children's personal plans included a section that encouraged parents and children to share how Covid-19 has impacted them. Staff were able to use this to tailor the service to meet their needs. This requirement has been met.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

In order that the service develops and improves outcomes for children attending the service, the provider must ensure that there are effective and robust quality assurance processes in place and that an

improvement plan is implemented. Self-evaluation of the standard of care provided should be developed to reflect on, and evidence, positive outcomes for children. This must be completed by 7 May 2021.

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 is in order to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210) Regulation 4 (1)(a) A provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

This requirement was made on 6 April 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

An improvement plan was in place. The manager worked with the local authority to create a plan that reflected areas of improvement within the service. We advised including more detail within the plan, to support children and families' understanding of changes, including why they are made and what impact they have had.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

In order to ensure children's needs are met, the provider must ensure personal plans are in place for every child attending the service by 14 May 2021. In order to achieve this, the provider must,

- i. Ensure every child has a fully completed personal plan, created in partnership with children and parents / carers.
- ii. Record the child's full name, address, carer details and medical information.
- iii. Identify the child's needs and wishes and set out how these will be met.
- iv. Review at least once every six months whilst the child is attending the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, 'My personal plans (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).

It is also necessary to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210) Regulation 5 (1) and (2)(a)(b) – Personal Plans.

This requirement was made on 6 April 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

All personal plans we requested were available to us on inspection. All of which contained key information of the child's needs. Able plans were in place when necessary, detailing how needs would be met. This promoted consistency of care. We advised that further developments with personal plans, which the manager was already aware of. This has been explored further within the report.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 4

Children should experience a high quality of care and support. The provider must ensure policies and procedures are robust to ensure that children are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19. Staff should be comfortable and confident with how they implement these in practice. This must be implemented 14 May 2021.

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

It is also necessary to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210) Regulation 4(1)(a) & 15(a) – Health, welfare and safety of service users.

This requirement was made on 6 April 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

Policies and procedures for Covid-19 were in place. Reviews were carried out regularly to ensure they remained in line with current guidance. Staff were comfortable with procedures and we saw that staff worked well together to fulfil their duties, such as enhanced cleaning.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 5

Children must be cared for in an environment which is safe. The provider must ensure that the service's risk assessments are detailed and include effective risk management procedures that reflect current COVID-19 guidance by 7 May 2021.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, 'My environment is secure and safe.' (HSCS 5.17).

It is also necessary to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210) Regulation 4(1)(a) – Health, welfare and safety of service users.

This requirement was made on 6 April 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

Risk assessments were in place and found to provide adequate detail. Management should continue to use quality assurance processes to review risk assessment and ensure that they are effective in reduce risk.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 6

Children must be cared for in a safe and hygienic environment. The provider must ensure that sufficient measures, such as enhanced hygiene and cleaning practices are carried out to protect those using the service. Effective monitoring of staff practice must be carried out to ensure staff are implementing procedures in line with COVID-19 guidance. This must be implemented by 7 May 2021.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.' (HSCS 5.22).

It is also necessary to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210) Regulation 4(1)(a)(d) – Welfare of users.

This requirement was made on 6 April 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

The environment was clean and tidy for children and staff. Staff worked effectively as a team to complete essential cleaning tasks. Clear roles and responsibilities had been identified to ensure procedures such as opening windows for ventilation were carried out. This promoted a safe and healthy environment for children.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 7

Children's care and support must be well planned for in the event of staff absences. The provider must develop a contingency plan to ensure children's care is consistent and safe. This must be completed by 7 May 2021.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, 'My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way including if there is an emergency or an unexpected event.' (HSCS 4.14).

It is also necessary to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210) Regulation 4(1)(a) & 15(a) – Health, welfare and safety of service users and staff.

This requirement was made on 6 April 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

A contingency plan was in place. The new booking system continued to be developed by the management team to ensure accuracy of information. We supported this as it would ensure the manager could plan children's care safely.

Met - within timescales

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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