

Aimee Helps Childminder Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 22 April 2022

Service provided by:
Aimee Helps

Service provider number:
SP2019990946

Care service number:
CS2019378035

Introduction

Aimee Helps provides a childminding service from their property in a quiet residential area of Winchburgh, West Lothian. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own children.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks, and other amenities. The children are cared for in the kitchen/diner and living room and have access to the childminder's own children's bedrooms. Children can use toilet facilities downstairs and upstairs. Children also benefit from a spacious enclosed rear garden.

What we did during our inspection

We carried out an unannounced inspection on Tuesday 19 April 2022 between 12:15 and 14:15. This was the first inspection for the service. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included the record of registration, complaints, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with the childminder and children present
- reviewed documents in the service
- observed practice, daily routines, and children's experiences.

Feedback was given via video call on Friday 22 April 2022.

Views of people using the service

Children were settled and relaxed in the service. They were keen to show us around the childminder's home and showed us the books on the bookcase.

We asked the childminder to distribute information about the inspection to parents, inviting them to offer feedback. We received feedback from four parents who were happy with the service provided. Parents comments included:

"Aimee tells me at the end of each day what my child has done and progress they have made, and I let her know if there's something they seem particularly keen to practice."

"Aimee is so open and always making sure we are happy."

"We visited Aimee prior to my child starting and they are quite happy at drop off and enjoy their 'Aimee day's' immensely. Having a mix of ages of children that they can interact with helped for when they started at nursery, and they have conversations about starting school in August."

Self assessment

We did not ask the childminder to submit a self assessment. We spoke to them during the inspection about how to evaluate and improve their service.

What the service did well

The childminder's skills resulted in the following strengths of the service:

- the childminder was friendly and loving
- children benefited from being regularly outdoors
- systems in place were organised
- the childminder had developed warm and trusting relationships with children.

What the service could do better

To improve the service further, the childminder should consider:

- developing their knowledge about child development and how children learn through play, through accessing online development opportunities to stay abreast of best practice current guidance and legislation
- developing their understanding of the purpose of personal plans
- introducing a self-evaluation approach to support the journey of improvements recommended to enhance children's care, learning and development needs
- introducing a broader range of age and stage appropriate toys and play materials to stimulate children's natural curiosity and creativity.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	3 - Adequate
Quality of environment	3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme as adequate. Whilst we identified strengths, these just outweighed areas to be improved.

Children present appeared to be comfortable and contented in the childminders care. The childminder told us that establishing good relationships with children and families had been their priority as they developed the new service. As a result, it was clear that the childminder had developed warm and trusting relationships with children.

All children had a personal plan which was written when they joined the service. Plans detailed the appropriate information to inform the childminder about children's individual health needs and personal preferences. However, this information had not been reviewed with parents and children. This meant that some information was out of date and did not reflect children's current needs and preferences. All children's plans should be up to date so that the childminder can use appropriate information to fully support children.

We asked the childminder to develop their understanding of the purpose of personal plans. To do this they should become familiar with Care Inspectorate guidance 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning, Early Learning and Childcare', available on the Care Inspectorate 'Hub.' This would support the childminder to use personal plans effectively to ensure that children's needs were met, as well as their wishes and choices (see recommendation 1).

For children to experience a broad range of challenging and exciting play opportunities, we suggested to the childminder that they could develop their knowledge about child development and how children learn through play. Observing and recording children's learning through play would support them to plan appropriate play experiences. We explained how this could link to children's individual development plans, which would make up part of the child's personal plan, to support progress. We discussed the benefits of keeping a book with photographs of children at play when in the childminders care. This would allow children to revisit and reflect on their learning, develop language skills, and support them to become involved in planning future play experiences. We suggested that they could add text to explain learning opportunities provided for children and link these to the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators (See recommendation 2).

The childminder provided meals and snacks for the children and carefully managed food intolerances to keep children safe. Fruit and healthy snacks were provided, alongside some not so healthy alternatives such as juice and chocolate biscuits. We signposted the childminder to the best practice guidance 'Setting the Table'. This would guide them to further consider the food being offered to ensure children are receiving a healthy diet. This would support children to develop healthy eating habits. Unhealthy snacks and drinks should be kept for an occasional treat.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. To ensure that all children's health, welfare, and safety needs are met, sufficient information should be gathered and recorded about all children as part of their personal plan. This will ensure children's care is based on up to date and reliable information. This should include, but not limited to the childminder developing an understanding of the purpose of personal planning. Personal plans being reviewed at least once every six months or sooner with children and parents to make sure that information is up to date

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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).

2. The childminder should consider how to support learning at an appropriate pace for each child, whilst challenging them to reach their full potential. The childminder should consider specifically but not exclusively, developing a sound knowledge of:

- child development and how children learn through play
- how to observe and record children's development and learning to plan further play experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: '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).

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme as adequate. Whilst we identified strengths, these just outweighed areas to be improved.

Children were relaxed and happy in the childminder's home, which was comfortable, homely, and welcoming. Children were kept safe and protected because the service was well maintained and clean. Consideration had been made to reduce risks within the home, for example, we saw that there was a child proof gate at the top of the stairs to prevent children from falling down. Improvements had been made to the landscape of the garden to create different spaces for the children to engage in physical play or to choose less active activities, such as drawing.

The range of play resources within the service was minimal and were mainly the childminder's own children's toys, which were kept in their bedrooms. Minded children would benefit from a broader range of age and stage appropriate toys and play materials to stimulate their natural curiosity and creativity. We suggested that such resources could include different types of creative materials, to create more choice to meet interests and needs for all children (See recommendation 1).

We suggested to the childminder that the storage of toys limited opportunities for children to independently make choices about what they would like to play with. Children would benefit from having toys which were easy to access. We discussed with the childminder that they could consider having a pictorial book of toys and equipment for both indoors and out. This would support children to be able to make choices about what they wanted to play with and where.

Regular community outings to places of interest, such as nearby parks and woodlands supported children to be active and have fun. This contributed to their good health and to engage in risk benefit play experiences.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The childminder should introduce a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for children's age and stage, to stimulate their natural curiosity, learning and creativity.

This is to ensure 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, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme as adequate. Whilst we identified strengths, these just outweighed areas to be improved.

The childminder started their business in March 2020 and is still establishing the service. We found that they were organised and records were to hand. They were a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). We suggested that they could contact the SCMA development worker to request support to further establish systems to enhance outcomes for children.

We recommended to the childminder that they should access online development opportunities to stay abreast of best practice, current guidance, and legislation to ensure best outcomes for children. We signposted them to the range of best practice documents available on the Care Inspectorate 'Hub' to enhance her knowledge. These included, but not limited to Realising the Ambition, My Childminding Journey, The GIRFEC Wellbeing Indicators, and the Health and Social Care Standards. We advised that they could record their learning to support them to reflect and plan how they will take forward improvements (See recommendation 1).

The childminder had an appropriate range of policies and procedures for their service. We advised them that information on some policies was limited and did not reflect current best practice. For example, the promoting positive behaviour policy should inform how they support children who display unwanted or distressed behaviours. Similarly, the childminder should ensure that their aims, policies, and risk assessments are used in practice. For example, the infection control policy stated that children were supported to wash hands after mealtimes, which was not yet embedded in practice.

The childminder should consider introducing a self-evaluation approach to support the journey of improvement recommended to enhance children's care, learning and development needs. We reminded them to make use of The Care Inspectorate 'A quality framework for daycare, childminding and school aged children', which can be found on the Care Inspectorate Hub. This would support the childminder to see what is working well to support children and what needs changed.

We discussed that the childminder could record changes made as a result of self-evaluation and how these changes resulted in improved quality outcomes for children. For example, they could explore the possibility of capturing the success of improvements and plans for continuous improvement in a journal with recorded

outcomes and photographs. This could be shared with children and families to include their views about improvements made.

There was scope for families to be more involved in and influence change in the service. We advised that the childminder could introduce participation questionnaires to ensure that children and parents influenced decisions about play and learning experiences in the service.

The childminder kept children's information records safely stored. We suggested that they should familiarise themselves with general data protection requirements (GDPR) to ensure that they complied with relevant best practice. Similarly, they could develop a policy to inform parents about their practice and their rights in relation to using and protecting children's data. We signposted the childminder to the website of the Information Commissioners Office at <https://ico.org.uk/>

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. To ensure that children are given the best opportunities the childminder should demonstrate a commitment to participate in professional learning opportunities. This would improve their practice and outcomes for children. This should include, but not limited to the childminder familiarising themselves with the range of best practice documents. The childminder should record their learning to support them to reflect and plan how they will improve their practice as a result of their learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: '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).

This is to ensure the childminder's skills and knowledge is consistent with best practice guidance documents; Realising the Ambition, My Childminding Journey, The GIRFEC Wellbeing Indicators, and the Health and Social Care Standards.

Grade: 3 - adequate

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

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

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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