

Charlene's Happy Hearts Childcare Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 18 March 2022

Service provided by:
Charlene Buchanan

Service provider number:
SP2019990797

Care service number:
CS2019377088

Introduction

This service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 27 January 2020.

Charlene's Happy Hearts is provided by Charlene Buchanan who is referred to as 'the childminder' in this report and is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than 3 may be of an age not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 may be less than 12 months old. Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family. Tiffany Buchanan may assist with the service for work experience and will be supervised by the childminder at all times. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons not named on the registration certificate. Overnight care will not be provided.

Charlene provides her childminding service from a terraced house close to Cowdenbeath town centre within a residential area. The designated areas used for childminding included the living room, hallway, kitchen/diner and bathroom, along with the rear garden area. The service is close to local amenities including the local primary school, shops and parks.

At the time of the inspection there were three minded children in attendance, aged five, two and one years old.

The aims of the service included;

- "indoor and supervised outdoor play at local venues
- play activities which meet the needs and abilities of children using the service
- a flexible service which meets the needs of families using the service
- meals/snacks (if required)
- access to community facilities and resources."

What we did during our inspection

We compiled this report following an unannounced inspection, which took place on 15 March 2022. The inspection was continued virtually, with documentation requested and communication with the childminder using digital technology. Feedback was given and evaluations confirmed on 18 March 2022. The inspection was carried out by an early years inspector.

As part of this inspection, we took into consideration Key Question 5 - 'Operating Learning and Childcare Settings (including out of school care and childminders)' during Covid-19 with a specific focus on Quality Indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices to support a safe environment for children and staff. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator under Theme 1, Quality of Care and Support.

We sent an email to families using the service, via the childminder, asking them to provide us with feedback about their experience of using the service. One family submitted a response.

During this inspection we gathered evidence from various sources:

We spoke to:

- the childminder
- the minded children present.

We looked at:

- observations of the childminder and her interaction with the children
- observations of the children at play
- discussions with the children
- a sample of children's records of learning
- a sample of other documentation relevant to this inspection
- Certificate of Registration
- examination of equipment, resources and the environment.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). This is 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 parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

Views of people using the service

The children present were happy, settled and secure. Children were comfortable enough to approach the inspector and ask questions and involved her in their play and told her about their interests, such as dinosaurs and windmills. Observations showed they enjoyed nurturing relationships with the childminder. They were supported well in their play and learning through positive interactions, ongoing consultation and the range of play resources available which they accessed freely.

No parents were present during the inspection, therefore we sent an email to request feedback in any format they preferred. One parent responded to this which demonstrated a very good level of satisfaction with the service. A sample of the comments received is shown below:

"I think we get a good service from our childminder and she shows care and compassion for our little one. Our child transitioned well and took to our childminder well. She gives us regular updates on our child and any unforeseen circumstances such as any outbreaks with Covid or other viruses are advised in plenty of time if any child in her care or herself are suffering from the above so we have time to organise alternative child care. We were advised about childminders Covid response and how she will keep it at bay within the household."

Self assessment

We did not request a self assessment prior to this inspection.

What the service did well

Children benefitted from loving and respectful relationships with the childminder who was responsive to their individual needs and knew the children well.

This was the first inspection and she demonstrated a commitment to further development of herself and her service.

Children enjoyed lots of outings linked to their current interests which were linked to their current interests.

Children's needs were met, as the childminder consulted with them and used her knowledge of their current preferences to plan appropriate experiences.

What the service could do better

We made one requirement and two recommendations for improved practice during this inspection. These focused on the following areas;

- ensuring a safe environment both indoors and outdoors by addressing hazards present
- developing systems for the maintenance of a clean and hygienic environment
- maintaining a register of children's attendance
- developing a system for continuous assessment of her service through familiarisation and use of key documents.

We also discussed other aspects to support improvement which included a review of toys to include more natural materials and development of loose parts play.

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

Physical comfort and reassurance was to given to children throughout the inspection and responsiveness to their needs was evident. The childminder's calm manner and approach ensured children felt relaxed and comfortable in the home.

The childminder knew the children well and their specific individual needs. This supported a joined up approach through regular discussions with parents, enabling children to feel included and be supported.

Relevant information was gathered on the children during settling in and through ongoing discussions with parents and ensured that information held was updated frequently. Regular consultation with children through ongoing discussions supported planned experiences such as an interest in windmills and visiting areas to look at these. This meant children's needs and interests were reflected in the planning of provision.

Children appeared happy and comfortable around the childminder and approached her easily for hugs and physical comfort, or when they required help or her inclusion in their play.

Children's language, literacy and numeracy were supported through relevant opportunities in the wider environment and within the home through provision of age appropriate books, songs and games.

Regular outings in the local and wider environment ensured children enjoyed frequent physical activity and became familiar with their local community. This increased their opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy fresh air and exercise.

Supporting children to understand and recognise their emotions using emoji's during their play and when planning experiences helped children express how they feel. This was building children's resilience and helping them to communicate.

Children were helped to keep themselves safe through discussions and activities in regard to stranger danger, road safety and bullying promoting children's resilience.

Snack time experiences should be reviewed as children were walking/crawling whilst eating a snack. This is to ensure children's safety, reduce choking risk and reduce the risk of cross infection. This also includes considering how children eat to support their development, for example, there were missed opportunities to feed themselves using a spoon. This would improve children's mealtime experiences and relationship with food. Reference should be made to the document 'Food matters' available on our Hub.

The childminder should consider the frequency when using terms of endearment in regard to children; this is to ensure they learn their names and develop a positive identity.

We found a number of control measures in regard to compliance with Covid-19 guidance for childminding settings were in place. The childminder made frequent use of the outdoors, kept the home well ventilated, suspended tooth brushing and managed handover of children at the door. However, some practice was not supportive of reduced infection control. This included limited hand washing for children, before leaving and before and after eating and after nappy changes. Hand gel was also available for use by children under 5 years: in line with current Covid-19 specific guidance this should only be used by children aged 5 years and over. The Covid-19 risk assessment had not been reviewed in some time and should now be updated and used to ensure practices fully support a reduced risk of infection.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Children were happy in the home and enjoyed comfortable spaces to rest and relax and played at different levels suitable for their age; for example, a small chair for toddlers and low level table and chairs for games and puzzles. Children were able to make choices about playing indoors or in the garden facilitating their freedom and enjoyment.

Within the garden, play opportunities supported children to be active with a range of interesting outdoor play equipment. There was frequent use of the local and wider community with visits to parks, woods, shops, soft play and plans to resume toddler group visits in light of changes to guidance regarding Covid-19. These promoted children's learning, social interaction and provided opportunities for fresh air and exercise.

There was a good range of books, toys and games available which were in good order and suitable for the age and stage of children currently attending. The storage of toys allowed children to access these freely and make informed choices, promoting their independence.

There was scope to now develop loose parts play within the home and garden and introduce more natural play materials. This would encourage creativity and curiosity in children and extend their play and learning experiences.

Systems for fire safety were in place including fire blanket, regular drills, evacuation policy and interconnected mains alarms. We reminded the childminder to maintain records of testing the alarms and to ensure she complied with her own fire safety policy in regard to clear exits.

Cleaning of high touch points and maintenance of a hygienic environment such as floors did not appear to be consistent practice, as some high touch points and areas of the floor were visibly grubby. This posed an infection control risk, especially where babies played. The childminder should take action to develop appropriate systems to help her to maintain a safe, hygienic and pleasant environment to support children's health and wellbeing. See recommendation one.

Although supervised at all times, the garden area and some aspects of indoor provision presented a risk of harm, limiting children's safe movement and impacting upon children's outdoor play. For example, a large hole in front of the entrance to the play house limited young children's access and presented a tripping hazard, a variety of old discarded items including decking strips with screws sticking out were accessible to children behind the shed which posed a risk of injury. A sand pit with approximately 10 inches of rain water at the rear of a shed posed a drowning and infection risk. The security of the garden was compromised as the gate was open and the fence was coming down at one end. Within the home, we noticed the heavy fireplace moved when children sat on the hearth. These hazards posed a high risk of injury and infection and compromised children's safety.

We also reminded the childminder about the importance of storing personal items safely, following one child accessing items within the childminder's handbag. The risk assessment for the home and garden should be revised to ensure that all hazards are identified and appropriate control measures put in place to reduce risks. This is to support children's continued safety and wellbeing. See requirement one.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. In order to ensure children's safety and wellbeing and reduce the risk of harm, the childminder must review the storage of household items and hazardous materials within the home and garden by 1 June 2022. This includes ensuring; the fireplace is secured, personal items are out of reach and the garden area is safe for children to use at all times - hazardous materials must be stored out of children's reach at all times. Practices should reflect risk assessments to maintain a safe environment.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard 5.19 which states that "My environment is secure and safe." (HSCS 5.19).

It is also necessary to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of Users) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011/210.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The childminder should put in place systems to ensure the cleanliness of the environment and ensure it is hygienically maintained to ensure that children are not at risk from cross infection.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 5.24 "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment." (HSCS 5.24)

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Up to date information was held as children's records were reviewed by parents every six months and safe storage ensured confidentiality. The childminder identified her plan to review 'all about me' information at more frequent intervals, especially for younger children where needs and preferences can change quickly. This would enable her to better meet their changing needs.

Systems for the recording and administration of medication were in place ensuring children's continued wellbeing. We reminded the childminder to review this slightly to allow parents to confirm that they have given the first ever dose of any new medication without adverse reaction.

Children's safety and wellbeing was supported by the childminder's knowledge and understanding of her role in recognising and addressing child protection issues. The childminder was confident in discussing factors which may affect a child's wellbeing and how she could support children at these times. To support accurate recording and information sharing, the childminder should consider the use of chronologies. Further information can be found in the document 'Practice Guide to Chronologies' available on our Hub.

The childminder was committed to undertaking regular training and development. Future training opportunities had been found to support provision for children. Core training in food hygiene, child protection and first aid had been undertaken since registration. Further training covered Covid-19, health and safety and diversity. This supported her to understand the theory behind her practice which helped meet children's needs. A reflective account of training undertaken should now be developed to help reflect on the impact of any learning on children's outcomes and service provision.

The Certificate of Registration was not displayed. We reminded the childminder that this must be displayed during minding hours. This is to allow parents to check that she is operating within the terms of her registration.

Some policies required further review to ensure they are in line with current best practice and legislation. For example, the behaviour policy mentions a time out approach which is not restorative practice and should be reviewed. The complaints policy should include the contact details of the Care Inspectorate and the emergency plan should identify the place of safety in case of an emergency.

Records of children's daily attendance were inconsistent, as the times children started and finished were not recorded. This is required to evidence that the childminder was operating legally in regard to ratio of children. See recommendation one.

The childminder evaluated her service using verbal feedback from children and parents, along with basic questionnaires with closed questions. A floor book was capturing some lovely experiences which could now be developed further by making links to relevant documents to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Familiarisation of and reference to documents such as the 'Quality Framework', 'Health and Social Care Standards', 'Realising the Ambition' and 'Your Childminding Journey', along with the bite size sessions on our Hub within the improvement section should be used to support quality assurance. This would support continuous improvement in the service and have a positive impact on the experiences for children. See recommendation two.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The childminder should maintain a record of children's attendance to show the total number of children in the premises at any one time. This would provide confirmation that she was working within the terms of registration and help account for children in the event of an emergency.

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

2. The childminder should develop opportunities to assess her service and enhance positive outcomes for children. This should include accessing and familiarising herself with the range of best practice documents available such as 'Building the Ambition', 'My World Outdoors' and 'My Childminding Journey'.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard 3.14, which states 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: 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

There have been no complaints upheld since registration.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since registration.

Inspection and grading history

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

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