

# Fiona's Childcare Service Child Minding

Edinburgh

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
2 September 2022

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2019990951

**Service no:**  
CS2019378052

## About the service

Fiona's childcare service, is a childminding service which is provided from the childminder's home in a quiet residential area of Barnton, Edinburgh.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at anyone time up to the age of 16 years of age, of whom no more than three are not yet of an age to attend primary school, and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is close to parks, shops and other local amenities.

Childminding takes place on the ground floor with children having direct access to the enclosed rear garden.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 30 August 2022 between 10:45 to 13:15. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about this service. This included, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Observed children's play experiences.
- Observed interactions between the children and the childminder.
- Spoke with the childminder.
- Looked around the home and garden.
- Reviewed feedback from four parents.
- Reviewed service documents and records

**Key messages**

- The childminder was nurturing and caring, which enabled positive relationships between children and their families.
- Children took part in fun and engaging play experiences outdoors.
- Children benefited from the childminders commitment to outdoor play and community learning opportunities.
- The childminder had formed positive attachments with children, and were responsive to their needs.
- The childminder had taken part in a wide range of training which had supported her practice.

**From this inspection we evaluated this service as:**

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, nurturing interactions and care, and were happy and settled. The childminder understood children's emotional needs and provided sensitive responsive care to support individual children. This supported children to feel reassured, safe and secure in her care and her home.

The childminder was very attentive to the children's needs and interactions were warm, nurturing and respectful. The childminder knew children's personalities and routines and listened to children to ensure they felt valued and secure in their care. One parent told us, "Fiona provides a fantastic service to my children. She is always very supportive of their needs, wishes and choices".

Personal plans supported children's wellbeing and development and helped the childminder to meet children's needs. The childminder knew children well and confidently described their needs, preferences and stages of development. Children's experiences were recorded within learning journals and were shared and updated with parents regularly. Comments from parents included, "Fiona works with us as parents and with the children themselves to identify their needs and choices". These recognised children's achievements and recorded their developmental progress. There was photographic evidence, which was shared with parents, of the wide range of activities that children accessed. These showed the depth and sustained nature of play which some children took part in.

We provided the childminder with some information which could further improve children's personal plans and signposted them to 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning. Early Learning and Childcare' available on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

Snacks and mealtimes were calm, relaxed and unhurried. Children helped to prepare food, which developed their independence and life skills, whilst also supporting them to consider their safety. Their social development was supported as they chatted and ate with the childminder. They benefitted from healthy and varied choices which included fruit, vegetables and home cooked meals. The childminder was responsive to children's requests and preferences. For example, children actively chose lunch, they shopped for ingredients and helped prepare lunches. Parents told us, "She really takes into account what the children need and like so that they are included, respected, and enabled to try out new things, to challenge themselves and feel the satisfaction of achieving something new".

Families told us they had very good communication with the childminder, commenting, "Fiona goes above and beyond" and "communication is first class".

Communication with parents/carers was very effective and supported them to be fully involved in their child's care. One parent told us, "We talk via a range of methods, email, WhatsApp, in person and phone. I always know what is going on". This ensured good links between home and the childminding setting which supports continuity of care. Parents confirmed the childminder worked very effectively with them, to ensure their child's learning, development and wellbeing needs were being met.

Clear policies and procedures were in place to protect children from harm. The childminder understood the role they played in keeping children safe

### 1.3 Play and learning

There was a good balance of children's choice and adult led activities to support children's play and learning. Children were enabled to make the most of their time at the service. This included opportunities to play with a range of resources as well as being able to rest and relax when this was needed.

Children could lead their own play and were able to choose what they played with and where they spent their time in the childminders home. The childminder carefully observed children's play to enable them to provide responsive approaches to further extend children's imagination and learning. Their creative approaches supported children to develop skills in language, literacy and numeracy through their play.

The childminder provided care for a wide range of children and displayed knowledge and skills to ensure all children experienced play opportunities that reflected their current interests.

The childminder understood the importance of children having opportunities to play outdoors and promoted this very well in their service. One parent told us, "We very much appreciate that Fiona shares her love of the outdoors with the children". In addition to playing in the garden, children had opportunities to visit interesting and fun places in the local and wider community. This helped enrich children's learning, and formed strong links with their community.

We found children particularly enjoyed visiting local natural spaces where they took resources to re-enact stories, create nature sticks and build dens. As a result, children's health and wellbeing was well supported by participating in active, physical play outdoors where they benefited from engaging in challenging, risky play.

## How good is our setting?

4 - Good

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweigh areas for improvement.

A warm, welcoming and homely environment was provided for children, to take part in a wide range of play experiences. The childminders home was relaxed and safe for the children to explore and play, helping them feel secure and comfortable.

The playroom was set out with a range of resources to support current interest and stage of development. These resources were rotated and changed to support differing age of children who attended the service. Toys and resources were accessible for children to choose from. We discussed with the childminder how this could be further enhanced to create an enabling environment for all children.

An inviting playroom offered a range of experiences, including stories, construction, creative play and games. Children had space to play and a cosy sofa where they could relax. The childminder had started to introduce natural materials to promote children curiosity, creativity and imagination. For example, children created their own kitchen with a cardboard box, using real pots and pans within their role play. We suggested she should continue to develop opportunities for loose parts play both indoors and outdoors to

further enhance opportunities for children explore their natural creativity and curiosity.

Children benefitted from an enclosed garden which they were able to access freely. They had access to climbing equipment, sit and ride resources and played with sand. We observed children explore and experiment with some open-ended resources, creating balancing beams using planks of wood and tyres. This supported their stage of development and encouraged them to be curious and creative. One parent told us, "Fiona has high quality toys and equipment, and involves children in real-life tasks where safe and appropriate".

Outdoor play and learning were a priority for the service and good use was made of the garden and a wide range of parks, woodland spaces as well as occasional beach visits. The childminder told us that children enjoyed being outdoors in all weathers, thus supporting them to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Within the garden the childminder had developed a growing area, providing opportunities for children to plant and grow a range of fruit and vegetables. These foods were then picked by the children and were used at mealtimes.

The childminders home was clean and infection prevention control measures were in place. We asked the childminder to review the good practice for nappy changing facilities, for example, to ensure they are following guidance for the type of space to be used for nappy changing and how supplies, if being stored, should be stored. - storage of nappies, handwashing and storage of changing mat.

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweigh areas for improvement.

The childminder had developed positive relationships with everyone within the service, ensuring families felt included. Children and families were invited to share their views and suggestions for improving the service through questionnaires and informal discussions. Parents told us, "She regularly asks us for feedback on her service and is happy to accommodate changes as required".

The childminder regularly consulted with children to seek their thoughts and feelings and used this information to make relevant changes within her service. For example, the recent introduction of the cosy spaces for older children to self-regulate.

We encouraged the childminder to continue to develop ways to involve children and their families in improving the service and further strengthen self-evaluation. We highlighted a range of best practice guidance which could help with this. For example: 'Realising the Ambition,' and 'A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare'. This will support the childminder to reflect on what is working well in the service and what could be improved. While also ensuring children and families continue to have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the service, ensuring they feel valued and respected.

Successes and achievements were communicated with families, strengthening partnership working that met children's needs.

The childminder was reflective in their practice and used good practice documents to support this process. For example, a loose parts toolkit had been used to develop loose part play and in using materials that otherwise may have been discarded.

Policies and procedures were in place to support practice within the service. The childminder should ensure review dates are clearly shown on all policies. We discussed with the childminder the benefits of developing further policies such as safe sleep and missing child policy to further enhance the safety measures already in place to keep children safe. Further information to support this can be found on SIMOA - Keeping Children safe, Look, Think Act campaign on the hub.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

### 4.1 staff skills, knowledge and values

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

The childminder understood the importance of nurturing, warm and positive relationships. She had an enabling attitude, which supported children to achieve their potential. The childminder knew the minded children well and was intuitive to their individual needs, providing personalised care. We observed that they skilfully interacted with children during play, understanding when to stand back or offer more challenge. This helped children to explore confidently, develop new skills and build their resilience.

Children were supported in their play and development of social skills and showed enthusiasm when she joined in with their play. The childminder recognised and valued the importance of play and this was evident through her active, experiential play opportunities. Recognising the importance of fun in children's play enables their learning to be taken forward in a way that is meaningful to them.

The childminder had a good understanding of how children develop and learn. For example, she followed children's interests and offered experiences which supported children to develop through schematic play (individual repeated pattern of play).

Relationships with children and their parents were positive, caring and nurturing. The childminder spent time getting to know children and worked closely with parents to meet children's needs. This was reflected during conversations with parents. Comments from parents included, "As parents we are immensely grateful to have found a childminder who cares deeply about the children in her care" and "Each child is valued and respected and they have become so content and confident with her".

Children benefitted from the childminder's commitment to ensuring their knowledge was current. They were a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and were aware of the Care Inspectorate's Hub to access learning documents. This ensured they were well informed of updated guidance to support their practice.

The childminder was committed and motivated to learn and improve her practice, whilst also promoting positive outcomes for children and their families. To ensure a secure knowledge in child development the childminder had completed her SVQ level 3 qualification in childhood practice and actively sought professional development opportunities to support and extend her knowledge. One parent told us, "Fiona puts in a lot of thought and hard work into getting it right for children".

Recent training included child protection and first aid training. The childminder also maintained a log of professional reading and learning. We have suggested that the childminder should now record post training evaluations to include a reflection of learning. Reflections of learning would enabled the childminder to revisit and reflect on how learning opportunities has supported them to develop their practice, support children's wellbeing or further enhance children's outcomes.

The childminder had a very good understanding of her professional responsibilities. She worked within her conditions of registration and ensured children's safety by gaining insurance, keeping registers, and maintaining the premises to a high standard.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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