

# Nicola's Childminding Child Minding

Girvan

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
12 January 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Nicola McCutcheon

**Service provider number:**  
SP2018989670

**Service no:**  
CS2018364362

## About the service

Nicola McCutcheon provides a childminding service from their family home in Girvan, South Ayrshire.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and no more than 1 is under 12 months. The numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own family.

The service is close to local primary schools and nurseries, parks, beaches, woodland areas and other amenities. Childminding takes place on the ground floor of the home with children having access to the living room and kitchen, and the upstairs family bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden, however there were safety issues with this area found during the inspection. Until cleaning measures are taken, we have asked the childminder not to use the back garden.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 January 2023 between 11:00 and 14:45. Feedback was provided virtually following the inspection visit. 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. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with three children in the service
- reviewed emails sent directly to us from two families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- The childminder provided a flexible service to meet the needs of children and families.
- Children engaged in play activities of their choice.
- The childminder was committed to supporting children in a warm and caring environment.
- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- We observed some warm, caring interactions with children.
- The childminder did not feel that paperwork was her strength, however through discussion we gave her advice and support to make the required paperwork easier to complete.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation systems should be developed to improve outcomes for children.
- Infection prevention and control measures require to be re-considered, particularly with regards to pets, outdoor areas and hand washing.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

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

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

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas needed to improve.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

The childminder was warm and nurturing with children in their care and interacted with them in respectful ways. They knew children well and could confidently talk about children's individual likes, dislikes and strengths. This meant children were cared for by someone who they had developed trusting and secure relationships with. One parent told us, "I am extremely happy with the care and support my daughter receives from Nicola. She is always happy to go to Nicola's and comes home excited to tell what she has been up to."

Children sat together at the dining table as they enjoyed their packed lunch. This created a positive social experience which supported children to maintain good social lifestyles. The childminder should consider sitting with the children and encouraging even more interactions.

Not all children had personal plans in place and there was an inconsistent approach to reviewing plans regularly. The childminder should ensure all children have personal plans and further develop the records being kept. For example, information should be kept on how children's needs, wishes and choices will be supported. Children and families should be included in the development of these plans. The childminder should take account of the wellbeing indicators to ensure children's overall development is considered. This would support all children to achieve their potential (see requirement 1).

The childminder had a medication policy and medication procedures in place. She advised us that one child had medication with them but administering consent had not been sought. We asked the childminder to update their policy to ensure that parents provide written permission before medication is administered (see area for improvement 1).

### 1.3 Play and learning

The childminder used the living room, kitchen and upstairs family bathroom to operate their childminding business. The enclosed back garden was also registered to be used, however at the time of inspection this was unclean and contaminated with dog dirt. The children would benefit from this area being available to them. We discussed this with the childminder and identified an approach for improving this. (See requirement 1 under How good is our setting?)

The childminder told us children regularly enjoyed outdoor play, and she used the local parks, beaches and woodland amenities. The childminder encouraged the children to walk to and from the local nursery and school. One parent told us, "My child has lots of opportunities to go outdoors. They are regularly taken on walks and to the park." Another parent told us, "They are always outdoors and doing extra activities, day trips to the zoo, the soft play and the cinema. Nicola also took the kids all down to the activities held in the summertime down at the beach every day."

Children were positively encouraged by the childminder and achievements were openly celebrated. Children enjoyed drawing pictures and playing with the marble run and the childminder supported their interests.

This promoted children's self-esteem and helped them develop a positive sense of self. The childminder should ensure children have access to a variety of toys, and stimulating play resources, which they can independently access. This would support children to follow their own interests and extend their play, learning and fun (see area for improvement 2).

## Requirements

1. By 28 February 2023, the provider must ensure that all children have a personal plan which sets out how their individual needs will be met, as well as their wishes and choices. To do this, the childminder must, at a minimum, ensure that personal plans are written and regularly reviewed with children and parents to ensure that information is up to date to reflect children's current needs, wishes and choices.

This is to comply with Regulation 5(1)(2)(b)(c) (Personal plans) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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).

## Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should update and implement their medication policy in line with current guidance. This should include but not limited to, developing clear procedures to ensure written parental consent is received prior to administering medication.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice" (HSCS 4.11).

2. To support children's learning and development, the childminder should ensure children have access to open-ended resources and toys appropriate for their age and stage of development. These should provide challenge as well as opportunities for children to be creative and develop their natural curiosity.

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

## How good is our setting?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas needed to improve.

#### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder's home was comfortable and warm. On the day of the inspection visit, the house was untidy, however the childminder told us this was not normal, and she had been rushing around that morning prior to taking the minded children to the local toddler group. Children were confident moving around which

showed they felt secure and valued.

The childminder had two family dogs. They were friendly and the children interacted with them. However, the childminder's outdoor environment was contaminated with dog dirt, which had not been cleaned up recently. The family pets also enjoyed playing with the children's toys, accessing the bar stools and the kitchen island where the children were playing and eating. This meant that the children were exposed to infection risks and cross contamination of the environment. We spoke with the childminder and requested that the assessment of risk for the pets must be re-considered, and further steps taken to prevent infection risk and to ensure that the children are kept safe and healthy (see requirement 1).

Whilst the home had enough space for children to play and express themselves freely, the childminder should further consider how they ensure the outdoor area is available to the children. This would offer children more choice to follow their own interest in their play. Allowing children to access this outdoor play space, would enhance their feeling of belonging and give a strong message to children that they matter.

Parents told us they "felt Nicola kept their children safe." Some written risk assessments had been completed which showed certain considerations of risks in the home and garden. Whilst these were in place, they were not always followed by the childminder. Children should be fully included in this process to ensure they feel safe, secure and confident. All risk assessments should be regularly reviewed and updated. This would ensure any potential risks were identified and minimised to keep children safe and protected.

Children were encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet. However, children were not requested to wash their hands after nursery or before eating. The childminder should ensure they encourage and reinforce the need for good hand hygiene. This would reduce the risk of infection and protect children's health and wellbeing (see area for improvement 1).

## Requirements

1. By 10 February 2023, the provider must ensure that the garden is safe for children. In order to do this, they must:

- Ensure the garden is tidied and is safe for children to use.
- Ensure the family's dogs' dirt is cleaned up immediately and areas that the dogs use is washed down in order that contamination cannot be brought in on doggy feet to the indoor environment that the children access.
- Complete and maintain a thorough risk assessment of the garden, which demonstrates how potential hazards are managed.

We advised that the garden should not be used by children until these issues are addressed.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(b) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.19).

## Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should ensure that hand hygiene measures are in place for children. They should ensure that handwashing is carried out at appropriate times in the day, such as when arriving in the service, before and after eating, and before going home.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.19).

### How good is our leadership?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas needed to improve.

#### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had not undertaken any self-evaluation to recognise what they do well and identify areas for improvement in practice and experiences for children.

Children's personal plans contained child and parental questionnaire templates, however, the childminder had not consistently asked for these to be completed.

Regular and meaningful evaluations should take place with opportunities for children and families to formally feedback on how well the childminder meets their needs, wishes and choices. Following the pandemic, parents should now be encouraged to come in to the environment. This would enable children to benefit from a service focussed on delivering high quality care and support that meets their individual needs (see area for improvement 1).

The childminder had developed relevant policies related to the running of the service. We discussed the importance of reviewing these regularly to ensure they reflect best practice and up to date guidance. Any updates should be shared with parents and families. This would support parents to understand what to expect from the service.

To support the childminder, we signposted them to a range of resources available on the Care Inspectorate Hub. Expectations in relation to children's care and support in early learning and childcare are set out in the Health and Social Care Standards and the Care Inspectorate's A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare. These provide robust quality frameworks to support critical reflection and continuous improvement for childminder settings. Regularly accessing resources and best practice documents, would enable children to receive care from a service committed to continuous improvement.

The childminder no longer kept a formal record of children attending the service. The childminder should ensure children's attendance in the setting is being recorded accurately. This would comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements and ensure children's safety and wellbeing was being fully considered (see area for improvement 2).

## Areas for improvement

1. To improve practice and outcomes for children, the childminder should develop ways to include parents and children in the development of the service. Parents should be encouraged to come in to the service. Information received should be recorded and used to make positive changes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "I am supported to give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support and the organisation uses learning from this to improve" (HSCS 4.8).

2. To support children's safety, the childminder should ensure appropriate records are kept. This should include, but is not limited to, a record of children's attendance to show the total number of children in the childminder's setting at any one time, record of fire safety checks and records to show cupboards containing hazardous materials are locked.

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

## How good is our staff team?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas needed to improve.

#### 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder had developed positive relationships with children. We observed kind and caring interactions between the childminder and children, which supported them to feel comfortable and secure. Children's rights were promoted through the childminder's nurturing and calm approach. Further awareness of children's rights and how they can adopt a rights-based approach, will support the childminder to ensure they provide an inclusive service. For example, finding ways to ensure all children's voices are considered and equal opportunities are provided.

We signposted the childminder to further information on heuristic play, loose parts play, medication guidance, Safe Sleep Scotland guidance and the Realising the Ambition document. The childminder should source and undertake professional development opportunities to support and extend their knowledge. This would help them to build a clear understanding of how they can effectively support children to develop and learn. We discussed ways the childminder could keep detailed records of any training, to support them to develop their own learning action plan. This would further support the childminder to reflect on their own practice and the development of their service (see area for improvement 1).

## Areas for improvement

1. To promote positive outcomes for children, the childminder should develop their knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities. This should include, but not limited to, becoming familiar with best practice documents to support high quality play experiences and outcomes for children.



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

## 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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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