

Alana's Childminding Child Minding

Annan

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 March 2023

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2013984737

Service no:
CS2013316288

About the service

Alana's Childminding is registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's own family.

The service operates from the childminder's family home in a residential area of Annan, Dumfries and Galloway. Shops, parks, schools and other amenities are nearby. Children were cared for on the ground floor of the property and had access to the front and rear gardens.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 March 2023 between 10:15 and 12:00. 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 previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed one child using the service
- sent out family questionnaires (four returned)
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children attending the setting were happy, comfortable and well cared for.
- Personal plans supported meeting children's needs.
- The home was clean, tidy, bright and well-ventilated, providing a welcoming environment for children and families.
- Children received care in a safe and secure environment.
- Self-evaluation helped promote positive outcomes for children.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing Care and Support

On the day of our visit, we found one-minded child present, they were happy, settled and had formed a close bond with the childminder. We observed the childminder responding to the child's verbal and non-verbal cues with lots of cuddles, smiles and warm words and gestures. This helps children feel safe, secure and loved.

The childminder knew the child well and had a very good understanding of their needs and wishes. Before attending the service, families were welcomed to attend settling-in visits, this provided opportunities for children to become familiar with their new surroundings. Families told us this made them feel at ease, one parent said, "As a first time mum I was really nervous about leaving my child in the care of a stranger on my return to work last year. However, Alana made this transition so much easier. She facilitated settling in days months ahead of my return to work - starting with half hour sessions and increasing this over time."

Personal plans were in place for each child, they detailed children and family preferences and specific needs. One parent said, "This form is quite detailed and asks for specific information such as what my child likes/dislikes with regards to food choices/activities and how much sleep my child requires. This approach helps maintain consistency and continuity of care between home and setting, we found these plans were regularly reviewed and updated with families.

Children's individual needs and family wishes were reflected in the childminder's practice, this included children sleeping with comforters and soothers from home. We discussed with the childminder using sleep mats in line with safe sleep guidance. The childminder acknowledged she would review guidance and purchase sleep mats and cellular blankets.

Families told us they enjoyed the updates they received about their child's day. They included details on their personal care, sleep routines, play and learning. One parent said, "Alana sends me daily updates on my child via text message. This includes basic information regarding how well and what they have eaten, how many nappy changes and the length and quality of her nap etc."

We reviewed the administration of medication procedure. We found the childminder followed the appropriate guidelines for safeguarding children, this included completing parent consent to administer medication forms. Documentation was signed, dated and regularly reviewed. The childminder had also completed Paediatric First Aid training.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and Learning

We found a range of resources were available and reflected children's stages of development. Children had access to a variety of arts and crafts, games, toys and books which they could easily access.

We did discuss with the childminder opportunities to develop children's imaginative play further, this included incorporating open-ended resources into their play and learning; this could include household items, pots, pans, and spoons.

Children had daily opportunities to explore their local community, they included visiting local venues and parks. Families told us they received regular updates about their children's outdoor activities, one parent said, "Alana provides my child with a wide variety of experiences/toys and activities including walks out in nature and arts and crafts.

We discussed with the childminder ways children's play and learning could be captured, this included using floor books to display photographs, pictures, mark making and next steps. This approach allows children to revisit their achievements, tracks progress and builds self-esteem.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The environment was clean, tidy and bright. The layout offered children spaces where they could relax and rest. Soft furnishings provided comfort and included sofas, cushions and rugs. The well-maintained environment was homely and supported children in feeling they belong.

Children had access to dedicated spaces; living room, kitchen, downstairs bathroom and secure back garden. We observed children's resources were of good quality, undamaged and easily accessible. The garden offered children a secure space to play and have fun, resources included small climbing frame/slide and basketball hoop and stand and summer house. The hoop supported the older children's interest in basketball and encouraged physical activity.

There was no direct access to the back garden, however, the childminder and families confirmed that children had access to outdoors daily, this included visits to the local park and community when picking children up from school.

A dining area offered children space to have meals and snacks and engage in play activities suitable for sitting at a table. The childminder told us older children used this area a lot and enjoyed painting and arts/crafts. One parent said, "Alana ensures all their needs are met and has activities tailored to their needs and interests."

Children were protected from harm through a variety of safety measures. These included safe storage of hazardous materials, assessing and addressing any potential risks. Risk assessments included outdoor excursions and walking to school. We found infection control measures were in place to reduce the potential spread of infection, regular handwashing and cleaning of toys and surfaces supported the wellbeing and safety of children. These practices followed best practice guidance.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Core assurances and self-evaluation processes were in place. We found the childminder undertook self-evaluation by asking families and older children for regular feedback on the service, this included family questionnaires. Recently completed questionnaires highlighted families were happy with the childminder's methods of communication. The childminder told us she used this feedback to improve the service for children and families; recently acquiring additional resources, trains, cars and books.

To support the ongoing development of the service the childminder also referred to guidance from the Scottish Child Minding Association (SCMA). Documentation including personal plans, risk assessments and medication administration reflected SCMA formats. We found a good range of policies that were well-presented and clear. The policies detailed how the childminder operated her service and had been shared with families. This meant that parents had a clear expectation of the service provision. Policies included, child protection, administration of medication and emergency contact.

Family welcome packs outlined the services policies and aims and objectives, and included, "I aim to be fair and responsive to the individual needs and preference of the individual child and their parents or carers." The childminder's friendly, warm and caring approach supported the development of positive relationships with children and families. This led to families feeling respected and included. Families told us the childminder was friendly and approachable, one parent said, "Alana has always been supportive of my child and any childcare requirements. Alana will always accommodate where she can. I've always felt supported and happy with everything Alana does."

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We found that the childminder supported children's wellbeing through compassionate and responsive care. We observed interactions which were full of warmth, kindness and compassion. Families told us the childminder knew them and their children very well, one parent said, "Being a lockdown baby, there was always a worry that they wouldn't be social, but now they have "best friends" and this is all down to Alana. She has the patience of a saint and has been a massive help in my child's progress."

The childminder was responsive to children's needs and understood the importance of building strong bonds and attachments. They worked in partnership with families which meant information was effectively shared about the wellbeing needs of children. Face-to-face chats, visits, text messages and phone calls supported these relationships. All families said they had regular communication with Alana either face-to-face or via text. This contributed to children feeling loved, safe and secure in the setting.

They had a clear understanding of their professional responsibilities. They worked within their conditions of registration and promoted children's safety by gaining insurance, keeping registers and maintaining the home to a high standard.

The childminder acknowledge the benefits of continually developing their practice and had undertaken additional training courses including paediatric first aid. We signposted the childminder to further development opportunities including at the Care Inspectorate Hub.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support the care needs and wellbeing of children, the childminder should ensure that children's personal plan information is fully completed. Personal plans should be reviewed a minimum of once every six months in consultation with parents and a record of this kept. Personal plan information should also be expanded upon to take into account SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) wellbeing indicators.

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

1.15 My personal plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.

This area for improvement was made on 25 August 2021.

Action taken since then

Personal plans in place for each child, reviewed every 3-6 months, families confirmed regular reviews take place.

The area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's health, welfare and safety, the childminder should complete training in relevant childcare areas.

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

3.14: 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.

This area for improvement was made on 21 August 2021.

Action taken since then

Childminder has undertaken additional training to support the wellbeing needs of children, this included paediatric first aid and accessing training from SCMA.

This area of improvement has been met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - 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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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