

# Graham, Helen Child Minding

Kilmarnock

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
7 August 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Helen Graham

**Service provider number:**  
SP2018989783

**Service no:**  
CS2018365592

## About the service

Helen Graham provides a childminding service from her home in Stewarton. The downstairs areas of the property is used for the purpose of childminding and includes a living room, kitchen/dining area and the fully enclosed garden. The children have access to an upstairs toilet.

The service is registered to provide a childminding service to care for a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16. Numbers are inclusive of the children in the childminder's family. The service is close to local schools, shops and other amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 1 August 23 between 11:30 and 14:00 and 3 August between 11:30 and 12:15. 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 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:

- spoke with three people using the service and two of their family
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

## Key messages

- Children experience warm nurturing approaches
- Children were supported in developing their skills in some aspects of their learning and development
- Children enjoyed eating in a relaxed, unhurried atmosphere
- Information was shared verbally and through a secure app with parents
- The childminder should develop their own professional development and skills and engage in further training specific to their role
- The childminder should implement appropriate self-evaluation processes to ensure the best possible outcomes for children
- The childminder should ensure they have robust risk assessments in place to minimise risks to children
- The childminder should ensure they follow the conditions of registration as stated within their registration certificate

## 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?	2 - Weak
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, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced nurturing approaches which supported their wellbeing. The childminder had built up positive relationships with families and intervened to support children to develop their skills in turn taking and sharing. The childminder offered reassurance enabling children to feel safe and secure. One parent commented: "My child has developed hugely with social skills given they interact with other children."

The childminder worked with parents ensuring effective communication sharing and responded to changes in children's life with compassion. This promoted consistency and continuity of care. Where children required support with personal care, interactions throughout were warm and caring. For example, the childminder supported a child who was toilet training. One parent commented: "We speak to Helen after every visit and we communicate via What's app also."

Children enjoyed eating in an unhurried relaxed atmosphere. The childminder interacted in a respectful manner as they respected children's choices at mealtimes, for example, the childminder asked the children "are you finished", "would you like a yoghurt". This enabled children to feel valued and respected. Children had access to water throughout the day and could refill their own water bottles. This enabled them to stay hydrated. The childminder supported the children while they ate and we discussed with the childminder being mindful of children sitting when eating to prevent the risk of choking. The childminder is in the process of registering as a food business to ensure effective safe procedures are followed when preparing and reheating food.

Information relating to children interests, likes, dislikes and routines had been recorded within an 'All About Me' within children's files. The childminder should ensure these are updated and reviewed appropriately.

Children's holistic wellbeing needs were not always met as the childminder had limited understanding of what should be included within a child's personal plan to support and sustain their wellbeing. The information should include links to children's learning, development, milestones and interests. This would enable the childminder to plan appropriately for children's learning. The childminder should implement a system to record and review children's interests and plan experiences to build on children's knowledge and skills. This would ensure all children's needs were met and they were receiving the right support at the right time (see area for improvement 1).

Appropriate administration of medication forms were in place to ensure medications was administered and stored effectively. This minimised risks to children and ensured their health needs were being met.

Children were given ownership of where they wanted to play and were able to independently select resources to play with. However, the childminder should ensure they are supervising children appropriately and supporting them in their learning and development. This would ensure the children were kept safe from harm and would enable the childminder to support and intervene where appropriate to enhance and challenge learning. (see requirement 1 within '3.1 Quality Assurance and improvements are well led').

Children's belongings were stored at the dining table and we discussed with the childminder looking for an alternative area to store these. This would ensure these are accessible for children and not near where food is being prepared or served therefore minimising the risk of cross contamination.

### 1.3 Play and Learning

Children had fun as they engaged in experiences and were able to choose from a range of resources. We discussed with the childminder the implementation of more natural resources and loose parts to develop children's creativity and imagination.

Children took part in local outings such as, soft play and could choose where to play indoors. However, they had limited opportunities to free flow outdoor play within the setting. There were some missed opportunities for children in their play and learning. For example, a child asked to play outdoors and was unable to engage in this until after lunch.

Children's play would have benefited from the childminders occasional involvement to extend experiences and learning. We discussed with the childminder implementing a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences for children incorporating children's interest. This would provide progression and challenge in children's learning and enable them to reach their potential.

Not all children experienced learning that was relevant, personalised, or sufficiently challenging for their stage of development. Conversations with children lacked structure and challenge and missed opportunities to build on children's interests. The childminder should implement outcome focused personal plans for all of the children in their care. This would ensure children are supported in their learning and development **(see area for improvement 1 within 'Nurturing care and support')**

### Areas for improvement

1. To ensure all aspects of children's care was planned. The childminder should develop outcome focused personal plans for all of the children in their care. These should be reviewed, with input from parents and children (where appropriate), at least every six months. Children's plans should be individual and follow the GIRFEC principles and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

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

## How good is our setting?

**3 - Adequate**

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Spaces reflected children's stages of development and children had appropriate resources to support learning. The childminder had identified areas within the garden to improve and had recently incorporated a range of new resources including a sand pit and kitchen with gazebo. This enabled children to select resources of their choice and of interest to them.

The environment was homely and welcoming with lots of natural light but limited ventilation. The children had ample space for their needs within the living room area. However, the children had access to a playroom which was cluttered and posed a risk as large resources were stored on top of a unit where children selected resources. We discussed with the childminder decluttering this area making it safe and more accessible for children to access resources of their choice safely.

The childminder had implemented some risk assessments relating to minimising risks indoors, outdoors and on outings. However these did not contain all the relevant information or mitigations in keeping children safe. The childminder should add more detail to these and implement risk assessments more specific to outings and resources used within the setting (see area for improvement 1).

The childminder used wipes to wash children's hands before lunch. We discussed with the childminder ensuring children are supported to wash their hands with soap and water at transitions throughout the day including mealtimes.

The childminder had taken measures throughout the environment to keep children safe, such as, keys high up on hooks out of reach of children, a high lock on the outdoor garden gate and blind cords up on hooks making them shorter and limiting access and risks to children.

Children's information was securely stored and some information was shared with parents, however these were not well managed. We discussed ways of effectively sharing information with parents to ensure important information was still accessible to the childminder within the setting.

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure the wellbeing and safety of children using the service. The childminder should further review and update the service risk assessments and procedures to identify possible and actual hazards. This should include, but is not limited to, a daily checklist and appropriate risk-assessments.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

## How good is our leadership?

2 - Weak

### 3.1 Quality Assurance and Improvements are well led

We made an evaluation of weak for this key question. Whilst we identified some strengths, these were compromised by significant weaknesses.

Children and families were not meaningfully involved in influencing change within the setting. The childminder should use self-evaluation processes and input from families to support and sustain improvements. When changes were implemented, they were done in isolation and were not underpinned by current thinking and best practice. We discussed with the childminder evaluating aspects of the setting and practice and identifying areas to improve through self-evaluation and improvement planning. This would promote a shared vision for the setting with positive outcomes for all (**see area for improvement 1**).

The childminder had policies in place however these were not reviewed regularly. We discussed with the childminder the importance of reviewing these to ensure relevant up to date information in contained in them.

The childminder had systems in place for logging accidents and incidents although these were not consistently recorded. We discussed the importance of recording any accidents and incidents which occur and any actions taken to support children. This would ensure the children were kept safe and an appropriate account of the event was recorded and passed onto parents.

The childminder should ensure they are at all times working to the conditions of their registration. This includes maintaining and logging appropriate numbers of children attending and ensuring full supervision of the children in their care. This would ensure all children were kept safe, accounted for at all times and had the appropriate supervision and intervention when required (**see requirement 1**).

## Requirements

1. By 4 September 2023, the childminder must ensure they are working to the conditions of their registration and keeping children safe within their care.

To do this, the childminder must, at a minimum:

- a) complete registers of children who attend the service daily
- b) ensure minded children are not cared for anyone else other than the childminder
- c) ensure appropriate supervision of children at all times

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of the 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:

'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27); and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19)

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure a high-quality service for children and families. The childminder should review their own quality assurance processes to raise standards, drive, and sustain improvement. This should include, but is not limited to, on-going participation and involvement of children and their families, an improvement plan and self-evaluation system to support and sustain improvements.

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

## How good is our staff team?

**3 - Adequate**

### 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

The childminder created a warm welcoming environment and atmosphere for children and families. They had kind and warm interactions with children enabling them to feel valued, loved and secure. One parent

commented: "She treats the children as if they are part of her family and she supports us as parents in any way she can."

The childminder had not kept up to date with their continuous professional development and had not sourced relevant training to develop their skills and knowledge. This resulted in gaps in their knowledge and skills in areas such as, child protection. It also meant, at times, children's playful learning opportunities were limited because the childminder did not always know when to intervene to maximise experiences or offer further challenge. The childminder should look to make good use of professional development opportunities that link directly to enhance the quality of children's care and support **(see area for improvement 1 and 2)**.

The childminder knew children in her care well and had developed positive relationships with children and families. The childminder had built up positive relationships with parents and regularly shared information about their child through what's app. This ensured ongoing consistent communication. One parent commented: "Helen is an amazing person who treats the children as if they were her own."

## Areas for improvement

1.

To effectively develop quality play and learning experiences for children. The childminder should access professional childcare practice reading and training opportunities. This should include, but is not limited to, accessing resources in the Care Inspectorate hub and becoming familiar with childcare practice documents to support children's care, play and learning.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled' (HSCS 3.14).

2.

To ensure children's health, welfare, and safety are maintained. The childminder should access training appropriate to their role and apply their training in practice. This should include but is not limited to first aid and child protection training.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled' (HSCS 3.14).



## 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 ensure all aspects of children's care was planned. The childminder should develop outcome focused personal plans for all of the children in their care. These should be reviewed, with input from parents and children (where appropriate), at least every six months. Children's plans should be individual and follow the GIRFEC principles and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

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

**This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

Children's plans were in place with completed 'All about Me' sheets detailing children's routines, likes, dislikes etc from parental input. Children's plans had not been developed to support their overall wellbeing and had not been regularly reviewed with parents and children. This area should be further developed to record children's learning and development and provide a holistic view of children's supporting children's overall wellbeing.

**Therefore, this has been made as a further area for improvement.**

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To effectively develop quality play and learning experiences for children. The childminder should access professional childcare practice reading and training opportunities. This should include, but is not limited to, accessing resources in the Care Inspectorate hub and SCMA website.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled' (HSCS 3.14).

**This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder had not accessed any further training since the last inspection including to develop or enhance their skills. They had not accessed training through the recommended sources, Care Inspectorate Hub, SCMA website.

**Therefore, this has been made as a further area for improvement.**

## Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure the wellbeing and safety of children using the service. The childminder should further review and update the service risk assessments and procedures to identify possible and actual hazards. This should include, but is not limited to, a daily checklist and appropriate risk-assessments.

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

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

**This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2022.**

### Action taken since then

Some risk assessments had been implemented however these need to include more robust information, be more specific to proposed outings, resources and include appropriate areas/action highlighted to minimise risks.

**Therefore, this has been made as a further area for improvement.**

## Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure a high-quality service for children and families. The childminder should review their own quality assurance processes to raise standards, drive, and sustain improvement. This should include, but is not limited to, a track record of on-going participation and involvement of children and their families. Risk assessments. Children's personal files. An improvement plan and self-evaluation system.

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

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2022.**

### Action taken since then

No quality assurance or self-evaluation processes were in place however the childminder had recently added resources to the outdoor area to enhance learning for children. The childminder should review practice, policy and procedures on a regular basis relating these to supporting documentation. This will support the childminder to highlight aspects of practice to develop and support in informing practice.

**This area requires further development, therefore this area for improvement has not been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 5

To ensure children's health, welfare, and safety are maintained. The childminder should access training appropriate to their role and apply their training in practice. This should include but is not limited to first aid and child protection training and becoming familiar with childcare practice documents to support children's care, play and learning and own professional development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2022.

#### Action taken since then

The childminder had not accessed any training relevant to their role and had not completed and kept up to date with Child Protection or First Aid training. This was further discussed with the childminder and should be a priority to complete Child Protection and First Aid training as soon as possible.

Therefore, this area for improvement has not 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](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?	2 - Weak
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	2 - Weak
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

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

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.