

Flexible Childcare Services - Dundee Day Care of Children

Fintry Mains Nursery
Fintry Road
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Dundee
DD4 9EZ

Telephone: 01382506629

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 August 2023

Service provided by:
Flexible Childcare Services Scotland
SCIO

Service provider number:
SP2019013370

Service no:
CS2019376978

About the service

Flexible Childcare Services - Dundee was registered 20 December 2019 as a day care service for children. Their conditions of registration state that they are to provide a care service to a maximum of 68 children at any one time. Of those 68: No more than 19 children may be under the age of 2 years. No more than 8 children of school age may be cared for in the outdoor space with the Eco Pod as a base.

Adult: Child ratios will be:

- Under two years of age - 1:3
- Two to under three years of age - 1:5
- Three years of age and over - 1:8 if the children attend more than four hours per day or 1:10 if the children attend for less than four hours per day.

The nursery operates from a two storey detached premises in the Fintry area of Dundee. The children are accommodated within four playrooms, designated for different age groups of children, and an outdoor Eco Pod for school aged children. There is an office, family room and a separate small staff room. The cook prepares meals and snacks in the nursery kitchen. The children have access to a large outdoor area that is solely accessible from the main entrance.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced follow up inspection which took place on 17 August 2023 between 08:30 and 18:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 staff and management
- Observed practice and children's experiences
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- A new manager had been recently recruited and was new in the post. She showed commitment and determination to improve outcomes for children. While small improvements had been made, significant areas of development remained. We have extended timescales of requirements to enable the new manager adequate time to implement changes needed to improve outcomes for children.
- Of the three requirements made at the previous inspection, none had been met. These have been reinstated with new timescales. The manager agreed to take priority action to improve children's outcomes.
- Of the four areas for improvement made at the previous inspection, none had been met. These have been continued within this report.
- Practice and procedures had improved to keep children safe during building works that were being carried out on the premises.
- The safety of the outdoor environment remained a concern. Children were not adequately supervised in the garden and, as a result, accessed areas that were cornered off for their safety.
- Quality assurance procedures were not carried out effectively. Areas for improvement within the service were not being identified or appropriately addressed by the management team.
- A robust induction was not in place to ensure new staff were well supported and children's care, play and learning needs were considered.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 30 June 2023, the provider must ensure children are kept safe, both indoors and when playing outside.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) All staff are vigilant of potential risks and implement effective risk assessments to ensure everyone's safety.
- b) The outdoor area is secure to keep children safe and protected at all times.

This is 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 (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).

This requirement was made on 5 May 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

a) Some improvements had been made inside of the service to reduce risks to children. Staff were more vigilant and responsive to hazards, and as a result, children's toys and environment were safe for them. Other improvements to children's environment included,

- The manager implemented regular meetings with the site manager of the construction work to ensure everyone's safety. This allowed for improved information sharing, as the nursery was able to prepare for changes to the site, such as access for large deliveries, which had minimal impact on children, families, and staff. Fire drills were also now being carried out in collaboration with the builders to ensure safe and effective procedures.
- The area of the nursery which was under demolition had been effectively blocked off to ensure no children, families or staff could access the space.

Whilst risk assessments had been updated, these were not always followed to ensure children's safety. For example, risk assessment stated that measures to reduce risks to children while in the garden included staff being vigilant and deploying themselves around the garden. Staff were often seen gathered in one or two areas close to the entrance, minimising their ability to monitor all children. As a result, a few children were able to access an area to the rear of the Eco Pod which was cornered off for their safety. Staff responded quickly to bring the children back, however, improved supervision and interactions would prevent future incidents from reoccurring.

b) Two areas of fencing were identified where children could potentially leave the service unattended. This included under the fence and gate. Risk assessments carried out by staff failed to identify these gaps as a risk to children. The manager acted promptly to cover the areas with materials such as wood and bamboo. We advised raising awareness to staff of the importance of being more vigilant in these areas to ensure children were kept safe.

This requirement has not been met and the timescale has been extended to 3 November 2023.

Not met

Requirement 2

By 21 July 2023, the provider must ensure improved outcomes for children by implementing effective and robust quality assurance processes.

To do this the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) regular, effective, and focused monitoring is carried out across the setting
- b) robust audits are developed and implemented, and any actions are addressed promptly
- c) clear and effective plans are developed to maintain and improve the service
- d) the management team effectively monitors the work of each member of staff and the service as a whole.

This is to comply with the - Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing 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: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This requirement was made on 5 May 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

a) The manager had taken part in a few observations to evaluate staff practice and children's experience. Regular, effective, and focused monitoring was yet to be carried out across the whole service. A quality assurance calendar had been put in place to support regular monitoring, however, we recognised that as the manager was new in post more time was required to implement an effective system.

b) A few audits had been carried out by the manager. These included but were not limited to, reviews of medication, fire drills, and children's personal plans. Following the review of the fire drill, prompt action was taken to ensure children were able to evacuate the service safely. The review of care plans found that not all children had chronologies. Whilst they had since been added to all personal plans, the majority of them were not yet being used by staff to support children's wellbeing needs.

Whilst a few areas of development had been identified, the audits did not capture what actions were to be taken, by who, or evaluate the impact of any changes made. This impacted management and staff's ability to track changes and ensure they had a positive impact on children's outcomes.

c) An improvement had been recreated and shared with staff to promote shared vision and goals. An action plan for improvement was partially completed detailed actions to be taken and who was responsible. Timescales, progress, and next steps were yet to be completed. This risked achievements and areas for development being missed and as a result, potentially preventing improvement.

d) Staff told us they felt supported and more involved in the development of the service. This promoted an enabling attitude towards change and a more positive working environment.

Staff meetings took place monthly to share key messages and support improvement. Agendas were created to support staff in preparing for meetings and enable meetings to be focused. The minutes of such meetings were not recorded. This minimised opportunities to reflect on agreed actions and prevented those who did not attend the meeting from being well informed.

Effective monitoring of staff practice was yet to take place routinely. Staff reviews that had taken place did not include sufficient detail. Staff were not given adequate time to review and answer questions included within the review. This limited opportunities for reflective practice and collaborative approaches. The manager had planned support and supervision meetings and some peer review opportunities to take place within the quality assurance calendar.

This requirement has not been met and the timescale has been extended to 3 November 2023.

Not met

Requirement 3

By 21 July 2023, to improve children's outcomes, the provider must implement and embed a robust and effective induction that ensures consideration is given to children's care, play and learning needs.

This is to comply with the - Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing 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: '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).

This requirement was made on 5 May 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service's induction program was not robust or effective in ensuring that consideration is given to children's care, play, and learning needs. One induction we reviewed consisted of a comprehensive 12-week checklist of subjects that should be covered, such as improvement and values. It provided no detail on the contents of the subjects and how this supports high quality care, play, and learning. The staff member had dated the subject to indicate they were complete. There was no evidence of discussion, review, or future possibilities for professional development. No evaluation from the line manager was given to ensure staff were confident in their roles and responsibilities of meeting children's needs.

The manager shared plans to implement the Scottish Government National Induction Resource to support more robust and effective inductions of all staff.

This requirement has not been met and the timescale has been extended to 3 November 2023.

Not met

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 children's wellbeing, learning and development needs, the provider should ensure staff use up to date, relevant information to support children's care. This should include, but not be limited to, the use of personal plans to consistently support children's current care and support needs.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 5 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Children's personal plans did not support staff to stay up to date with information that was relevant to their care, play, and learning needs.

The majority of personal plans sampled were not reviewed by staff in partnership with parents within the last six months, in line with legislation. This prevented key information from being shared to ensure children's needs were met.

Clear strategies for support were not in place for all children. There were inconsistencies in how staff recorded how they would meet children's needs. As a result, children could receive inconsistent care that does not fully meet their needs.

The manager had carried out an audit of children's personal plans and was aware of some areas for improvement that would support the accurate recording of children's care, play, and learning needs.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children's health, safety and welfare, the provider should, at a minimum,

- a) improve the recording of chronologies to ensure the information held is accurate
- b) ensure relevant staff have the information they need to keep children safe and protected.

My future care and support needs are anticipated as part of my assessment' (HSCS, 1.14) and 'I am protected from harm because people are alert and respond to signs of significant deterioration in my health and wellbeing, that I may be unhappy or may be at risk of harm' (HSCS, 3.21).

This area for improvement was made on 5 May 2023.

Action taken since then

a) Following an audit of children's personal plans, a chronologies folder had been created, within which each child had their own chronologies. The majority of these had yet to be added to. Some information related to children's wellbeing was recorded in different forms. This limited the staff's ability to identify emerging patterns and ensure children were fully supported.

b) Staff knew children well, they spoke confidently when describing children's needs and how they were supported. This information was not included in personal plans, resulting in new or temporary staff not having access to key information about children. The folder of children's chronologies was kept in the office. We advised that these should be easily accessible for staff to refer to and add information to, as and when required. This would ensure those caring for children had all the necessary information to provide consistent care.

Staff were confident in who their child protection officer was. They knew procedures to follow to ensure concerns for children's health and wellbeing were acted on. Records of child protection concerns did not include all the necessary information to ensure the safety of those involved, such as action taken and timescales for review. We signposted the manager to Practice guide to Chronologies and National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland to support improvement.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children to achieve their full potential, the provider, at a minimum, should ensure that:

- a) staff are knowledgeable and trained in supporting children's play and learning
- b) the tracking and recording of children's development informs purposeful and meaningful play and learning experiences
- c) children experience high quality play and learning, which is relevant to their age and stage of development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me'. (HSCS, 1.27)

This area for improvement was made on 5 May 2023.

Action taken since then

a) Staff were developing their knowledge of how to best support children's play and learning. A training plan had been created to promote diversity within the professional learning of staff. This included, but was not limited to child protection, pedagogy and infection prevention and control, which most staff had completed. The manager was developing folders for staff to record, evaluate and reflect on their career long professional learning (CLPL).

b) As part of their improvement plan, staff were carrying out a test of change with new planning systems. This trial aimed to implement responsive planning that better tracked and recorded children's development. This was in the early stages of development, therefore it was too soon to measure its impact on children's play and learning experiences. Staff did reflect that it was more manageable for them and they felt children were beginning to experience more meaningful experiences as a result. This requires more time to be fully implemented and embedded into staff practice to ensure positive outcomes for children.

c) Children experienced warm and kind interactions from staff. Activities such as painting, jigsaws and construction engaged children and supported them to have fun. Some staff were responsive to their needs, for example creating play dough for children and adding interesting scents to spark curiosity and discussion. At times, staff interactions were neutral, such as statements or questions that neither enhanced nor detracted from children's experiences. We shared the value of encouraging staff to use effective questioning to enrich children's play and learning experiences. This would support children to reach their full potential.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure children experience high quality experiences, the provide should improve the deployment of staff to ensure stability and consistency for children and families.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: I am supported and cared for by people I know so that I experience consistency and continuity' (HSCS, 4.16) and my care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well. (HSCS, 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 5 May 2023.

Action taken since then

The consistency of staff was improving as a result of core staff having been allocated to each room. Some staff moved between rooms throughout the day to cover or support when needed. This was in the early stages of implementation so impact on children could not be measured.

Photographs of staff were hung outside rooms to inform parents and carers who were caring for their child, however, these were not always accurate. This made it challenging for parents to form positive relationships with staff, therefore minimising opportunities to promote inclusion and effective information sharing.

The deployment of staff outside risked children's safety. Staff were not effectively placed throughout the space to ensure children were adequately supervised. As a result, children were not fully supported or were at risk of harm. The management team was aware of these risks and was working with staff to improve staff practice while in the garden.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Complaints

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

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