

Donna Long Childminding Child Minding

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 October 2025

Service provided by:
Donna Long

Service provider number:
SP2016988414

Service no:
CS2016350510

About the service

Donna Long Childminding is registered with the following conditions:

The childminder may care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age:

of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years;

of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and;

of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months.

Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

Where a childminder is working together with an assistant they may care for a maximum of 6 children up to 16 years of age:

of whom no more than 6 are not yet attending primary school and;

of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months.

Numbers include children of the childminder's family/household.

Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate. Cheyenne Bailey Yule is employed as an assistant.

The service is provided from the childminders home in the rural town of Greenlaw and is close to the local school and park. The children are cared for downstairs and a dedicated area within the open plan kitchen and dining area. Children have access to a downstairs toilet and can access the enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 October 2025 between 11:30 and 14:00. 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, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke with children using the service
- considered feedback from seven families through an online questionnaire
- considered feedback from staff through an online questionnaire
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to the care of children and the management of the service.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Children thrived through high-quality play, supported by skilled, responsive interactions from the childminder and their assistant.
- Children were happy, relaxed, and felt at ease in the childminder's home.
- Children led their own play, exploring and engaging with a wide range of toys and materials that captured their interest .
- Strong family partnerships built trust and supported shared understanding of learning and care.
- The childminder and assistant were experienced, knowledgeable, and reflective, which had a positive impact on the quality of care provided.

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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	6 - Excellent

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

Leadership 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspects of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The childminder's vision, values, and aims were clearly communicated to families, fostering a shared vision of the service. These values were reflected in daily practice and underpinned a nurturing, safe, and stimulating environment that supported each child's individual needs, interests, and development. A family commented, "I believe the childminder and assistant have my children's best interests at heart" and "They have a warm caring and inclusive environment". The assistant commented, "This setting is an incredible place to work, the love and care we provide to the children is invaluable. We care so deeply about the children and parents and this comes across every day".

Self-evaluation was embedded within the setting, with the childminder clearly identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. Reflective accounts were regularly undertaken and discussed collaboratively with the assistant, families, and children to drive continuous improvement. One key area of development was the integration of children's rights into the service. The childminder used the best practice guidance SIMOA - Safe, Inspect, Monitor, Observe and Act to support children's safety and wellbeing, and had plans to display this within the home environment. This visual reminder would reinforce to children that they are cared for and supported as unique individuals. A parent commented, "my child has always been accommodated in a safe manner".

Improvement planning was embedded and inclusive, taking account of the views of children, families and the childminding assistant. The assistant commented, "I contribute my observations and feedback on what is working well and where we can improve. I take part in staff meetings, discussions with parents and regular reviews of our policies and practice. I also help to implement action plans and monitor". This collaborative approach ensured that changes were purposeful and paced appropriately, with a clear focus on enhancing outcomes. The childminder and their assistant worked together to ensure that high-quality care and support in a home environment remained central to all improvement activity.

Quality assurance processes were well-established and had an evident positive impact on outcomes for children and families. For example, reflective discussions enabled the childminder and assistant to refine aspects of the service that led to responsive and meaningful engagement with families and children. Systems were in place to monitor progress of the improvement plan. Review meetings ensured that personal plans remained relevant and tailored to each child's needs. Policy and procedures were regularly reviewed, aligned with current guidance and supported good practice. Feedback from families was routinely gathered and used to inform improvements. Some comments from families suggested, "It would be interesting to take part in a stay and play to see my children in the setting but I know the logistics of that might be quite difficult" and "more flexibility if you need to change your day". Another commented, "With a lack of good, reliable childcare in the area, particularly that will take younger children, we are very glad to have the childminder in the village".

The childminding assistant was recruited following a safe and structured process, in line with a comprehensive recruitment pack. This included a clear and robust induction programme to ensure they were well-prepared for their role. Ongoing support was provided through regular team meetings, continuous

professional development opportunities, and one-to-one sessions. These measures contributed to the assistant feeling supported and valued, with their wellbeing actively promoted.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to professional development and actively engaged in opportunities to refresh and enhance their skills, knowledge, and understanding. This approach contributes to keeping up to date with best practice and supports children's health, safety, well-being, and their play and learning.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspects of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children attending were happy and having fun. The childminder and assistant demonstrated a strong understanding of how children develop, learn and progress. Their deep knowledge of child development informed high-quality practice. This responsive approach to children's interests and choices, actively supported their rights and empowered them to shape their own play and learning. This approach conveyed to children that they were valued, fostering a sense of respect.

The childminder and their assistant were skilful in their interactions and engagement with the children. They regularly used techniques such as sustained shared thinking, wondering aloud, and developmentally appropriate questioning to extend children's thinking and learning. The childminder and assistant were attuned to both verbal and non-verbal cues, demonstrating a clear understanding of when to engage and when to observe, allowing children's play to unfold naturally. The childminding assistant commented, "Our setting carefully plans to make sure there are always enough adults present to meet the legal ratios and, more importantly, the individual needs of each child".

Children were actively engaged in a wide variety of play experiences that supported the development of key skills in language, literacy, and numeracy. The home corner and dough area were particularly well used, encouraging creativity, sharing, and the development of fine motor skills. Resources were accessible, which enabled children to lead their own play and make independent choices based on their interests. Children also had opportunities to explore natural and open-ended materials both indoors and in the garden. These experiences fostered imagination, creativity, and problem-solving skills, and contributed to a stimulating learning environment. The childminding assistant commented, "I have access to a wide range of age-appropriate toys, books, equipment and creative materials, as well as planning tools and training resources. We ensure these resources are replenished and updated so that I can offer stimulating activities that support each child's care, play and learning".

Regular observations enabled the childminder to effectively identify next steps in learning for children. This proactive approach supported the tracking of individual progress and development, which ensured each child's learning journey was recognised and nurtured. The childminder could further develop and document both spontaneous and planned activities. This would provide clear evidence of how planning directly linked to learning outcomes and supports a responsive, child-centred approach.

Children are supported to achieve 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this Quality Indicator as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support.

Children received an exceptional level of nurturing care from the childminder and their assistant, who demonstrated a deep understanding of attachment and nurturing approaches. This knowledge was effectively used to support children's relationships and promote a strong sense of security. Interactions were consistently warm, kind, and responsive, supporting both emotional and physical wellbeing.

Individualised care routines were delivered with sensitivity and adapted thoughtfully to meet each child's evolving needs. The childminder and assistant were attentive to non-verbal cues, such as recognising when children needed comfort or rest. Children with additional support needs and medical conditions were supported with compassion and attentiveness. Families expressed high levels of trust and appreciation, describing the setting as "a home from home" and highlighting the comfort and reassurance they felt. One parent shared, "I really value the feeling of being able to leave my children with the childminder and assistant knowing that they're safe, cared for and I don't have to worry about them whilst I am at work. That is invaluable." Another added, "I have complete trust meaning when I drop my child off I can go to work and feel reassured that they are having the best time."

Transitions were thoughtfully planned that effectively supported children and ensured they felt secure and confident. Strong, trusting relationships between children, the childminder and assistant and families played a key role in helping children settle at their own pace. This approach fostered a nurturing environment where families felt reassured and confident, contributing positively to the overall transition experience. A family shared "Really friendly and welcoming staff and atmosphere. Nothing is too much trouble. Staff go over and above. My child was really happy to go after only having a few visits".

Personal planning was child-centred and developed collaboratively with families, ensuring each child's unique journey was reflected and supported. Plans were regularly reviewed to remain responsive to individual needs and circumstances. Families' views were actively sought, valued, and respected, with careful attention given to the individuality of each child and their home environment. Families commented "The service works holistically with us as a family, sharing and implementing information with the best interests of our child" and "We periodically contribute to the personal plans but can always engage in discussion around our children's care if we so wish".

The childminder and assistant had established warm, trusting relationships with families, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. Their understanding of each child and family supported meaningful connections and a sense of belonging. Regular communication was maintained through informal daily updates and the sharing of photographs and messages via private social media platforms. This approach helped families feel actively involved in their child's experiences and development and that they were safe, happy, and well cared for. Families parent commented "We get folders home to read through reports, there is a Facebook group where every day we get updated with pictures which is great!", "There is daily communication at drop off / pick off" and "Lots of opportunities for discussion everyday".

Mealtimes were a relaxed experience for children, food was provided by the childminder which was healthy and children enjoyed their meal. The childminder and assistant had worked in consultation with families and children to review and develop a menu that followed the most recent guidance and a comment from a family stated "The children enjoy the food at the childminder's and it takes a load of my mind to know that they are well fed there". Children sat comfortably at the table or in a high chair with adult supervision to promote safe eating. Water was readily available for children to access, helping them to remain hydrated.

Opportunities to support children's overall health, wellbeing and development included time outdoors in the garden, at local parks and going on walks within the local community. This contributed to children's social development and helped to develop children's awareness of the world around them. Parents all agreed and commented, "Weekly walks or playing in the garden with water, mud, anything a child should experience", "My child likes going on walks around the village and to pick up the bigger kids from school" and "playing out in Donna's garden".

Children's safety and wellbeing were promoted through the implementation of appropriate procedures, including safe sleeping practices, secure medication storage and administration, and robust safeguarding measures. Both the childminder and assistant had completed relevant training and demonstrated confidence in following these procedures, that contributed to a safe and nurturing environment for all children.

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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	6 - Excellent
Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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