

# Fiona's Childminding Service

## Child Minding

Newport-on-Tay

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
26 November 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Fiona Gowans

**Service provider number:**  
SP2014985925

**Service no:**  
CS2014325864

## About the service

Fiona Gowans provides a childminding service from their home in Newport on Tay, Fife. The service is registered to care for a maximum of six children under the age of 16 years, of whom a maximum of six will be under 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Children have access to a dedicated playroom, kitchen, a toilet and a safe enclosed garden. The service is within easy reach of local facilities including shops, parks and schools.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 25 November 2025 between 11:00-12:00 and 15:30-16:30. We gave feedback by telephone on Wednesday 26 November 2025. 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 one child using the service
- received feedback from seven families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

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 benefitted from warm, responsive support that helped them to feel safe, secure and loved.

Children experienced a wide range of engaging activities indoors and outdoors, with outdoor play being a particular strength that promoted exploration and independence.

Personal plans were tailored to each child's needs and interests, developed in partnership with families, and regularly reviewed.

The service was well organised with clear values and a wide range of policies.

Self-evaluation and feedback from families supported meaningful changes. Quality assurance processes were clear, and ongoing training supported reflective practice.

Communication with families was open and meaningful and families told us they felt included and valued.

## 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	5 - Very Good

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 aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

### Leadership and management of staff and resources

Children and families benefitted from a childminding service which showed strong leadership and effective organisation. The childminder had a clear vision for their service, and this guided their everyday practice. This was shared with families when they joined, and this approach supported a shared understanding of what was important.

Communication was a key strength, with open and consistent updates provided through WhatsApp and well-maintained records. Families who responded to our MS forms questionnaire told us:

"Fiona is very approachable and always listens to any concerns or updates."

"Her communication is flawless, and she always gets back to us very quickly when we have a question."

The service was very well organised, with policies, plans and daily records kept up to date and easy to access. This helped everything run smoothly and gave more time for meaningful interactions with children. Families appreciated this approach and commented:

"Fiona kept detailed records of our child's progress and development and updated us regularly."

The childminder actively used the document 'Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding' to evaluate their service. Self-evaluation was embedded into practice, with feedback from families and children actively shaping improvements. One parent told us, "Fiona regularly seeks feedback and takes all on board."

The improvement plan focused on enhancing play and learning opportunities across the service, with a strong commitment to providing children with the best possible experiences and supporting them to achieve and thrive. A key priority within the plan was the development of the outdoor space to create an environment that promoted active, imaginative and exploratory play.

Effective quality assurance processes were in place, this ensured that the service was safe, secure and well managed.

The childminder was dedicated to improving their skills and regularly attended training courses. This approach contributed to keeping up to date with best practice and supported children's health, safety and wellbeing. They also worked closely with other local childminders and shared ideas. By sharing ideas and learning together, they were able to meet each child's individual needs and make use of the local and wider community. This helped enhance care, play and learning experiences for all children.

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

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

### Playing, learning and developing

Children experienced a wide range of rich and varied play opportunities indoors and outdoors, with outdoor play being a particular strength. Families highlighted this:

"Extensive outdoor play and activities as well as a lovely child-safe enclosed garden at Fiona's with fairy trails, slides, and a Wendy house."

"Fiona makes sure to take them to different parks and playparks"

The childminder had transformed the garden into a rich learning environment by introducing natural elements such as sensory planting, encouraging children to connect with nature and develop curiosity. Loose parts were added to inspire creativity and problem-solving while supporting physical development.

To further enrich outdoor learning, a mud kitchen had been developed; it offered opportunities for imaginative play and early science exploration. Shaded areas and a wooden playhouse ensured that all children could enjoy the space safely and inclusively. The family's chickens offered rich learning experiences, helping children develop responsibility and empathy through feeding and collecting eggs. These activities introduced concepts like life cycles and food origins, while also supporting early numeracy through counting and weighing eggs.

Age-appropriate climbing and balancing equipment was installed to build confidence and gross motor skills. These improvements ensured that outdoor play was purposeful, stimulating and inclusive, offering children opportunities to learn through exploration, physical activity and social interaction. Families told us that:

"My child is involved in many varied opportunities and activities with Fiona, for example visiting wildlife parks, rearing butterflies, making arts and crafts, and attending play parks."

Planning was child-centred and based on observations of play and development. Activities reflected children's interests and next steps, and regular reviews ensured learning was meaningful and appropriately challenging.

## Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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

### Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from interactions which were warm, caring and responsive. These positive interactions reflected the childminder's strong knowledge of each child and their family. By understanding individual personalities, interests and home routines, the childminder was able to provide tailored support that met children's wellbeing needs. These close relationships have built trust and security, enabling children to feel valued and confident in their environment.

Families commented:

"Fiona is like a member of our extended family. My child is so happy going to Fiona's and often asks to go on her days off."

"It's like home from home. I never need to worry when Fiona has them."

Nutrition and hydration were well managed, with healthy homemade meals provided. Menus were developed in partnership with children and families, this approach considered children's likes, dislikes and any dietary requirements. Families told us:

"My children would rather have Fiona's food than mine."

"Fiona always provides an extensive range of healthy homemade meals - she regularly involves the children in home baking, teaching them about food hygiene and measuring and mixing."

Personal plans reflected each child's strengths, interests, and needs and were developed in partnership with families and reviewed regularly. One parent shared:

"I love seeing Fiona's folder and care/personal plans. Seeing photos and learning about activities my child is taking part in and seeing my child develop and grow."

Strong, respectful relationships with families were evident. Families felt welcomed and valued, saying:

"Fiona has been an amazing childminder to my children, frequently going above and beyond."

"We love Fiona and would highly recommend her to others."

Interactions were warm, caring, and responsive. Families described Fiona as:

"She is amazing and so nurturing and caring."

"Fiona interacts with the children all the time... involving them in community activities and outings to the beach, park, or soft play."

This approach strengthened children's confidence and sense of achievement, whilst supporting positive relationships with families. By ensuring families felt respected, involved and included in their child's learning journey.

## 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

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	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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