

Networking Key Services Limited (NKS) Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 November 2025

Service provided by:
Networking Key Services Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003002988

Service no:
CS2003012096

About the service

Networking Key Services Limited is a daycare of children service based in Tollcross, Edinburgh. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at any one time, aged from three months to 14 years of whom no more than nine are under two years.

During the inspection, the age range of children attending was three months to around four years. Older children did not use the daycare service. We have asked the service to consider reviewing the conditions of registration to reflect the children attending. There were 20 children currently registered with the service.

Children are cared for across two playrooms, one on the ground floor and one on the top floor of the building. During the inspection, children spent the majority of their time on the upper floor. There are toilets on the ground floor and nappy changing facilities located on both the ground and upper floor. There is an enclosed play space to the front the building.

The organisation also operates groups for members of the community and various other support services.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 11 November 2025 between 12:00 and 16:40. We returned to the service on Wednesday 12 November 2025 between 08:50 and 15:20. 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 children using the service and one parent onsite
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met.
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children were supported by warm and friendly staff.
- Improvements had been made to the nappy changing facilities, supporting the youngest children's needs.
- Most children were engaged and happy in their play.
- Improvements were needed to the staffing arrangements to ensure they were well planned, effective and in line with minimum staff to child ratio requirements.
- Improvements were needed to spaces, resources and facilities to ensure the environment and practice met the varying needs of all children.
- To consistently ensure children's wellbeing, quality assurance processes needed to improve.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

Leadership 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service had a clear vision, which included supporting families and promoting inclusion. Most of the time the practice of staff aligned with this vision. For example, staff were overall warm and supportive. However, to ensure parents are fully included in the life of the service, the management team should develop approaches that enable parents to come into the play spaces more often. To promote strong connections with families, this would include when dropping off and collecting their children.

The service improvement plan highlighted priority areas based on the requirements and areas for improvement made at the last inspection. As a result, some improvements had been made. For example, in relation to the nappy changing facilities. However, other improvements had been slower to progress and in some areas the quality of the service needed to improve. For example, personal planning still needed further development, the quality of children's play and learning opportunities were inconsistent and there remained continued issues with the use of the spaces. The provider should develop and strengthen the approach to improvement planning so that timely actions are taken to enable children to experience consistently positive outcomes. This is to ensure the service makes improvements that support children's overall wellbeing and development.

To ensure children's wellbeing needs were fully met, quality assurance processes needed to improve. For example, there was not a reliable system to manage children's attendance and effectively plan staffing. Also, further processes were needed to support and monitor the quality of staff skills, knowledge and practice. In the moment quality assurance was not robust. For example, staff were not fully alert to the risks of having mobile heaters within playrooms. This was addressed during the inspection, but staff need guided so they understand their role in supporting quality assurance within the service. Overall, quality assurance systems were not robust and effective in supporting and monitoring the quality of the service. We have continued an area for improvement at this inspection, (see area for improvement 1 in 'what the service has done to meet areas for improvement since the last inspection').

Regular team meetings enabled staff to raise issues, reflect on practice and discuss improvements. However, the staff and management team needed further opportunities to engage in ongoing learning and reflective practice to aid improvements. Further work was needed to ensure the pace of change met the needs of the service and improvements reflected current good practice.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces**3 - Satisfactory / Adequate**

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality Indicator: children experience high-quality spaces

Children of all ages used the well ventilated, bright upstairs play space most of the day. However, this space was mainly set up to reflect the needs and interests of older children. As a result, at times the youngest children's play was impacted by a lack of developmentally engaging resources and limited spaces related to their developmental needs. While equipment such as highchairs and soft furnishing met their safety and wellbeing needs, their play was at times restricted by the spaces and resourcing. For example, they could not access sand and water trays easily. While staff maintained children's safety by creating smaller designated play spaces, further work was needed to ensure children accessed nurturing and stimulating spaces. To promote all children's play choices and development needs, the provider should make improvements to the environment, experiences and resources. A previous area for improvement has been continued at this inspection (see area for improvement 2, in 'what the service has done to meet areas for improvement since the last inspection').

Overall, children experienced a clean and welcoming environment. Surfaces, equipment and resources were clean and in a good state of repair. Staff followed effective infection control measures. This included children and staff engaging in handwashing at appropriate times. These practices helped limit the spread of germs and supported cleanliness.

Maintenance arrangements were effective in supporting general upkeep. Since the last inspection, the service had taken action to address ineffective window locks. This helped keep children safe. In relation to children's security, access to the playroom was managed by staff, however, ongoing checks were needed to ensure the security of the whole building was effectively managed. The provider gave assurances that they would remind staff of the importance of this and ensure ongoing monitoring (see area for improvement 1).

Some improvements had been made to the facilities for children's personal care as the service had installed a nappy changing facility to the upper floor. This improvement enabled children to be changed promptly and with dignity. However, further consideration was needed to ensure children could access toilet facilities easily. When children were upstairs they had to access toilets on the lower floor, at times having to go outside and then back into the building through another entrance. Further improvements should be made to ensure children experience consistently high quality facilities and spaces that meet their varying needs (see area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure the overall security of the building, the provider should improve the systems and practices in place for managing exits and entry points.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS, 5.19).

2. To improve the quality of facilities, the provider should ensure the facilities align with good practice guidance. This would include but not be limited to, taking action to address the lack of access to toilets for children on the upper floor; and improving the downstairs nappy changing facilities to reflect current good practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes' (HSCS 5.18).

This is to ensure facilities are consistent with guidance documents, 'Space to Grow and Thrive', (Care Inspectorate, 2024) and 'Nappy changing for early learning and childcare settings (excluding childminders)' (Care Inspectorate, updated 2025).

Children play and learn 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Most children were busy and engaged as they enjoyed sensory and creative play with paint, playdough, sand and water. Construction materials such as wooden bricks supported children to have fun and problem solve. Children's communication and social skills were promoted as they used a large home corner area for role play. As a result, most older children made independent choices about where and how they played. Outdoors, bikes, play equipment and balls promoted children's physical confidence. A well-resourced mud kitchen further enhanced children's creativity and imagination. However, children's access to outdoor play was limited by the layout of the building and access to the garden centred around specific times of the day. The service should develop the approach to experiences and routines to ensure they are flexible and supportive of children's needs and play preferences.

Overall, staff interacted positively with children, showing them that their play and ideas were valued. Songs and stories created opportunities for connection and promoted children's communication and language development. Some staff extended children's play by making helpful suggestions and offering encouragement. However, at times some staff adopted a more supervisory role, missing opportunities to engage and deepen children's play and learning. To improve the quality of children's play and to support their overall development, the provider should enable the management team and staff to access further training and learning opportunities related to provocations, play, and skilful questioning techniques.

Children's play was supported as staff provided interactions and added resources based on children's interests. For example, staff knew children had been enjoying role play in the home corner, so tried to spend time there playing together. Although core resources and experiences provided children with some positive play opportunities, there was a lack of child-centred planning approaches. This meant staff missed opportunities to plan engaging and high quality play and learning. Improvements should be made to planning approaches to ensure planned and responsive experiences both indoors and outdoors are rich and challenging for children's individual stages of play and development.

Overall, the quality of observations and assessments of children's learning and development were infrequent and inconsistent. Staff used an online platform to record observations, and some of these did reflect children's learning and development. However, some were more narrative and did not highlight children's specific stages of play and learning. Limited next steps in planning records and observations meant opportunities to support children's learning and development were not well planned or monitored. To enable all children are supported to make progress, the provider should ensure the staff team are supported to develop their understanding and skills in relation to assessing, planning for and monitoring children's learning and development over time.

Children are supported to achieve **3 - Satisfactory / Adequate**

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

Children were cared for by familiar adults, promoting positive attachments that supported their wellbeing. For example, on arrival children were excited to see staff and often sought them out for a cuddle. Most interactions from staff were warm and supportive. However, on a few occasions staff were directive in their approach or missed opportunities to provide greater levels of nurture. To enhance staff practice, the provider should support them to develop their understanding of nurture and attachment. This could enable staff to maintain consistently positive interactions.

Inconsistency in staffing arrangements had the potential to impact on children's wellbeing. During the inspection, we found there were gaps in meeting required staff-to-child ratios. This included a gap caused by an unplanned absence on the first day. This left staff stretched and reduced their ability to provide engaging, responsive interactions. Although extra staff were brought in, the systems for planning, implementing, and recording staffing and attendance were inconsistent. Records showed a few previous occasions when staff-to-child ratios were not met. While the management team gave assurances that cover would have been provided, the approach to planning, recording and delivering effective staffing arrangements must improve. Following the inspection, the management team provided evidence and assurances that showed staff to child ratios would be maintained. The provider must ensure, the service always has enough staff to keep children safe and sensitively meet their needs (see requirement 1).

Snacks were healthy and balanced supporting children's wellbeing. Staff ensured children stayed hydrated by providing drinks throughout the session. This promoted their health and wellbeing. Overall, mealtimes were safe as staff supervised children as they ate. Children were familiar with the routines and enjoyed washing their hands and pouring their drinks with support from staff. Some staff chatted with children resulting in a social experience for most children. To further enhance the mealtime experience, the provider should ensure staff develop their understanding of attachment to ensure the youngest children have meaningful connections and communication throughout the mealtime experiences.

Since the last inspection, the service had further developed personal planning approaches, but plans still needed more detail and clear support strategies to fully meet children's needs. The current plans gathered information from parents, which helped staff to understand children's needs. This included details about medical conditions, food preferences, and personal care routines. Plans were then reviewed with parents to help keep information up to date. However, for some children information was missing, and some plans were not detailed enough as they did not outline meaningful support strategies. For example, strategies of support should include how staff will deliver care and any additional supports children may need. The service should continue to develop personal plans to ensure they clearly outline how each child's needs will be met (see area for improvement 4 in 'what the service has done to meet areas for improvement since the last inspection').

Children's wellbeing was supported as staff followed their rest cues, understanding when children were tired. Staff supervised children within a comfortable sleep room. However, improvements were needed to ensure consistently safe sleep practices. For example, where a parent has requested a child sleep in equipment that is not suitable such as a bouncy chair, the service should collaborate with them to find a safe solution. Personal plans must clearly reflect safe sleep practices and where needed should outline the actions staff will take to ensure children's safety and comfort (see area for improvement 1).

Requirements

1. By 19 January 2026, to ensure that children's needs are met effectively and sensitively by the right number of staff, the provider must ensure staffing arrangements are well planned.

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

- a) Ensure staffing arrangements are planned based on the needs of the children attending each day,
- b) develop robust and effective systems for planning, implementing and recording staffing arrangements,
- c) implement effective quality assurance processes that enable any staffing issues to be identified and effectively managed.

This is in order to comply with section 7(1)(a) of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state: 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (3.15).

Areas for improvement

1. To maintain children's safety and wellbeing, the provider should ensure staff follow safe sleep practices for all children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (4.11).

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 25 November 2024, the provider must demonstrate how they will ensure nappy changing and toilet facilities protect children from the risk of infection and support children's comfort and independence.

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

- a) submit a plan to the Care Inspectorate of how they intend to improve nappy changing and toilet facilities for children and meet best practice guidance; and
- b) The provider must detail a reasonable timescale within which the improvements will be made.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) and (d) (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: 'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed (HSCS 5.4) and 'The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes' (HSCS 5.18).

This requirement was made on 30 October 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service had started to take action to address the nappy changing facilities. This included installing nappy changing facilities on the upper floor. The provider was aware that ongoing work was needed to improve the nappy changing arrangements on the ground floor. Furthermore, the provider was aware that children needed to have more accessible toilets. We discussed that this could include relocating children to an area where toilets are within easy access.

To support ongoing improvements, we have made an area for improvement to address the outstanding issues (see area for improvement 2 in 'Children thrive and develop in quality spaces').

Met - within timescales

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 high quality outcomes for children and families, the service should improve and embed effective quality assurance processes that monitor the quality of the service and support improvements to be made.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 30 October 2024.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance processes still needed to improve to ensure children were safe and well supported. There were gaps in key areas of the service with limited quality assurance in place to address the issues and make improvements. The provider should ensure that the management team and staff develop effective quality assurance processes to secure consistently positive outcomes for children and families.

This area for improvement has not been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure all children have access to developmentally appropriate spaces that promote their play and learning, the service should review and improve the provision for younger children and babies.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices' (HSCS, 5.23) and 'I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors' (HSCS, 1.25).

This area for improvement was made on 30 October 2024.

Action taken since then

Similar issues remained at this inspection and improvements were needed to ensure children of all ages, including the youngest babies were cared for in spaces that met their varying play and development needs. While staff kept children safe by ensuring they used specific spaces, the layout of playrooms and management of the provision, at times limited the youngest children's access to varied and stimulating experiences and resources.

During the inspection, we discussed with the staff and management team how this ongoing issue could be addressed.

This area for improvement has not been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children are safe, improvements should be made to the security of the building. This would include but not be limited to:

- reviewing entry and exits points and liaising with external agencies to ensure these meet good practice,
- ensuring doors are secured so that unauthorised visitors cannot enter the property,
- ensuring the repair and upkeep of window locks.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS, 5.19).

This area for improvement was made on 30 October 2024.

Action taken since then

Some improvements had been made to the safety and security of the building. For example, window locks had been replaced and the playroom door was secured. However, ongoing monitoring of the overall security of the building should continue to ensure exit and entry points are fully secure. The provider must ensure other functions of the organisation do not adversely impact on the security of the nursery area.

To support ongoing improvement a new area for improvement has been made to address the outstanding issues (see area for improvement 1 in 'Children thrive and develop in high quality spaces').

Previous area for improvement 4

To consistently meet children's needs and plan responsive care, personal planning approaches should be improved. This would include but not be limited to:

- ensuring plans are reviewed and updated with parents every six months or sooner if required,
- ensuring staff regularly consult children's plan and record information that helps them to understand children's varied and changing needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: '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 30 October 2024.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection, the service had started to develop personal planning approaches. However, further work was needed to ensure plans held enough information to help staff children's needs. Also, personal plans should include strategies of support for children. For example, staff should ensure information is kept up to date and consider and record any additional supports children may need. The service should continue to develop personal planning approaches to ensure they clearly outline how each child's needs will be met.

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.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children experience high quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Playing, learning and developing	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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