

Elphinstone Enterprises Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 December 2025

Service provided by:
Fiona Elphinstone

Service provider number:
SP2014986115

Service no:
CS2014328266

About the service

Elphinstone Enterprises provides a childminding service, delivered from the childminder's home in North Anderson Drive, Aberdeen.

The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than three are not yet of an age to attend primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months.

16 children were registered with the service, with two attending at the time of the inspection. Children are cared for in the downstairs of the property, with access to an upstairs bathroom and an enclosed garden. The service is on a bus route and is close to local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3 December 2025 between 13:00 and 16:10. 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with two children using the service
- reviewed seven completed feedback questionnaires from parents/ carers
- spoke with the childminder
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and children's experiences
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within 'Children are supported to achieve'.

During this inspection we 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 happy, settled and having fun.
- Children were cared for by an experienced childminder who was committed to ongoing professional development.
- Quality assurance practice was at an early stage and had already led to some planned improvements in experiences for children.
- We identified issues in the childminders practice relating to the safe storage, recording and administration of medication.
- The childminder interacted with children in positive and supportive ways which met their individual needs, rights and choices.
- Children experienced a range of opportunities in the wider community.

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	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

Leadership 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children experienced care from a childminder who demonstrated clear aims of providing a friendly, relaxed environment where children's play and learning were prioritised. These aims were evident in the childminder's nurturing approach and were communicated effectively to parents. This supported families to understand what to expect from the service. To strengthen inclusive practice, the childminder should involve children and families in reviewing the service's vision, values and aims. This would ensure that all views are considered and reflected in future developments.

Children were cared for by an experienced childminder who held a relevant professional qualification and demonstrated a commitment to ongoing professional development. They participated in initiatives designed to promote good practice, including collaboration with other professionals and a pilot scheme providing funded time for administrative and reflective tasks.

Quality assurance practice was at an early stage and had already led to some planned improvements. The childminder was familiar with key guidance, which they used to support their practice, self-evaluation and when developing policies. We encouraged them to build on this by using the Care Inspectorate's A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: Childminding quality indicators to further strengthen their approach to evaluating and improving practice and experiences for children.

Children were given opportunities to express their views, for example, by contributing ideas for snack menus. One child commented that the childminder, "asks what I want to play with and what I want for snacks. [They] gave us a whole bit of paper to write down what we wanted". Parents described positive relationships with the childminder and reported feeling able to contribute ideas and suggestions. One commented that the childminder, "asks us for our input regularly about different things and what we would like to see / improved on". We encouraged the childminder to further develop systems for gathering feedback from children and families. This should align with self-evaluation of the service to ensure that their views help inform change and remain central to the childminder's planning of future developments.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children were supported in their play by a childminder with a good understanding of child development. For example, when children showed interest in books, the childminder sat on the floor reading with them and encouraged exploration of the pictures. Language development was well supported through the childminder listening, giving children time to respond and mirroring language to build confidence.

Children enjoyed age-appropriate resources, including small world figures to promote imagination. Activities for older children such as, gluing and painting poppies for Remembrance Day and outdoor play were evidenced in photos and entries of planned activities in the childminder's diary. Outdoors, opportunities to explore included a mud kitchen and workbench. When asked for feedback, one child reported, "I like how [the childminder] always has toys to play with and there is never not any toys out and there is always stuff to do". We discussed adding more open-ended, natural resources to foster curiosity and creativity and the childminder agreed to consider this.

Children benefitted from regular community engagement, such as music and dance groups, toddler sessions, creative play and weekly lunches with another childminder. These experiences enriched learning and promoted belonging.

A mix of spontaneous and planned learning reflected children's interests and developmental stages. Planned learning currently focused on numeracy, supporting recognition of counting and numbers. Parents spoke positively about the variety of resources and learning opportunities indoors and outdoors.

Children's learning was supported by positive communication. Where children attended both the service and a local nursery, effective professional relationships promoted the sharing of observations of children's achievements. Successes were celebrated, with children choosing which items of their work to display in their learning journey scrapbooks. Parents valued regular conversations about next steps, which helped provide continuity in children's learning and one told us, "I have loved receiving the learning journey books that [the childminder] made with my child." The childminder had identified the need to further develop their practice by making more comprehensive use of observations of children's progress. We encouraged them to continue with these plans to strengthen individualised planning for learning for all children.

Children are supported to achieve 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

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

Children experienced nurturing care and support in an environment where they felt safe, loved and secure. Positive relationships with families were well established and transitions were managed effectively. When children were collected, the childminder spent time passing on important information to parents about their children's day. Parents described the childminder as approachable and compassionate, highlighting their friendly and approachable manner. This supported families to develop trust and confidence in the service.

Children's emotional wellbeing was supported through sensitive and responsive interactions. The childminder recognised and responded to children's cues, offering comfort and engaging them in activities they enjoyed. This contributed to children feeling happy, settled and listened to.

Practice in relation to the storage and recording of medication was not effective in ensuring children's safety and wellbeing. Records lacked sufficient information to support the childminder to meet children's medical needs and medication was not always stored appropriately. The childminder must implement effective systems for the safe storage, management and administration of medication. These must ensure that children's medical needs are safely and effectively met to protect their health and wellbeing. (See Requirement 1)

Personal plans were in place and generally contained relevant information to support children's wellbeing. Families were involved in sharing strategies to support individual needs and, as a result, felt informed and listened to. The childminder knew the children well and used varied approaches to gather 'all about me' information tailored to children's age and independence. To develop this further for school aged children, consideration should be given to including children's rights and supporting them to set personal goals.

Children benefitted from routines which were consistent and responsive to individual needs and personalities. Personal care procedures promoted privacy and dignity. While mealtimes were not observed during the inspection, the childminder described safe and supportive practice aligned with guidance. They provided snacks and meals for most children and were responsive to children's preferences. Parents shared that, "I regularly hear about new healthy snacks that [my child] has tried" and "[My child] then wants to try them at home too."

Requirements

1. By 15 January 2026 the provider must ensure that children's medical needs are safely and effectively met to protect their health and wellbeing. To achieve this the provider must ensure:

- a) information about children's medical needs and symptoms is fully recorded to support the childminder in the safe administration of medication
- b) all medication is stored and recorded in line with guidance
- c) review medication at least every 3 months, earlier if required, in line with guidance.

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: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

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

The childminder to develop a nappy changing guidance in line with best practice in order to minimise potential infection control issues.

NCS early education and childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 2: A safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 4 October 2016.

Action taken since then

The childminder had a nappy cage and toileting policy which detailed procedures for personal care in line with guidance. A changing mat and appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) were available. The childminder spoke confidently of how they promote dignity and respect during personal care.

This area for improvement has 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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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