

Shelley Tait - Childminder Child Minding

Edinburgh

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 January 2026

Service provided by:
Shelley Tait

Service provider number:
SP2015987255

Service no:
CS2015340109

About the service

Shelley Tait is a childminding service registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate. Overnight care cannot be provided.

The service is provided from the childminder's home within a residential area of Edinburgh close to local schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The areas used to provide childminding were the lounge, kitchen and bathroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 8 January 2026 between 10:15 and 12:30. 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 the childminder
- spoke with children
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received feedback from four families.

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 under the headings, 'Leadership' and, 'Children are supported to achieve'.

Key messages

- The childminder engaged well with the inspection process and was keen to make positive changes.
- Children enjoyed playful, responsive interactions with the childminder, filled with fun, joy and laughter.
- To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the childminder should develop personal plans for each child.
- The childminder should develop a shared vision, values, and aims with children. They should also review and update policies to reflect their practice in relation to children's rights, needs, and interests.
- The childminder was at the early stages of planning for improvements using self-evaluation processes.

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 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 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 childminder had established warm and positive relationships with children and families. They demonstrated a commitment to providing a service where families felt valued. The service vision, values, and aims had not been reviewed for some time. As a result, the guiding direction and ethos of the service was not clear. For example, the childminder valued daily outdoor play, however, this important aspect was not represented within the written values. The childminder should develop a shared vision, values, and aims with children and families. This should help to ensure that decision making, and daily practice reflects children's rights, needs, and interests (**see area for improvement 1**).

There had been some recent improvements to the service, including introducing new toys that supported children's learning and development. However, self-evaluation was at an early stage. No planned strategies for improvement were in place to clearly evidence how changes enhanced the quality of care. This limited the childminder's ability to measure progress over time or evaluate the impact of actions taken.

The childminder should develop a simple, ongoing improvement plan. This would help them prioritise actions more clearly. It would also support meaningful review of progress made. Such an approach should show how improvements directly enhance outcomes for children. This should be done in partnership with parents to help them to feel included. It would also help to ensure that their views are taken into account when improvements are being considered. The childminder should strengthen their knowledge of best practice guidance to use self-evaluation more effectively. This would help to drive continuous improvement to deliver high quality care, play, and learning (**see area for improvement 2**).

There were a few quality assurance systems in place. These included policies and procedures that supported safe practice and helped maintain standards of care. However, some of these were in need of being updated to reflect what happened in daily practice. For example, the hygiene policy stated that a clean towel was provided daily. However, the childminder had improved this routine and now used disposable towels. Families would benefit from updated and more accessible policies and risk assessments. This would help them understand expected standards and expectations of the service.

Areas for improvement

1.
To ensure that decision making and daily practice reflects children's rights, needs, and interests, the childminder should develop a shared vision, values, and aims with 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 use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

2.

To support continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children, the childminder should formalise, quality assurance procedures. This should include but not be limited to using, 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding' (Scottish Government, 2025) to improve their understanding. The childminder should also develop improvement planning for the year to identify areas of strength and improvement.

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).

Children play and learn 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children enjoyed playful, responsive interactions with the childminder, filled with fun, joy and laughter. They were actively involved in leading their play and as a result, were happy and engaged. They learned at their own pace because the childminder recognised when to join in and when to step back. The childminder followed children's interests. For example, one child loved music, so the childminder joined in and pretended to play the toy guitar. To further enhance their play and learning experiences, there was scope to increase the range of open-ended materials and loose parts to promote curiosity, inquiry and problem solving.

Children had regular opportunities to learn in the community. This added depth to their play. Daily outdoor experiences kept them healthy and active. They built strong connections with their community. Trips to parks and a local woodland supported their understanding of the natural world and developed risk taking skills. Visits to the zoo extended interests in animals and supported speech and language development. A parent said, "Shelley takes our child out for many outdoor experiences, like the park, playgroups, and the zoo."

Observations of children's learning were mainly used to show parents what their child had been doing, for example when out at the park. These were shared through an online platform. The childminder recently introduced individual development plans. These outlined each child's needs, interests and stage of development. Clear goals and next steps were identified and learning strategies were beginning to be added. As the process was new, progress was not yet reviewed or recorded. Using best practice guidance would support the childminder to understand more about how children play and learn. The childminder should continue to develop their approach to observing, recording and reviewing children's learning. This would help them assess children's progress. It would also deepen their understanding of how to plan effectively to meet each child's unique needs and interests (**see area for improvement 1**).

Parents were not yet involved in reviewing their child's progress. Although next steps had been identified, involving families in this process and through review would strengthen the process. One parent said, "A weekly or daily update about my child's activities, routines, and progress would make the experience even better. It would help us stay connected with what they are learning and doing each day." The childminder was encouraged to review development plans with families. This would support shared understanding and joint planning. It would also help to celebrate progress and strengthen each child's learning journey (**see area for improvement 1**).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that future play experiences remain sufficiently challenging for young children as they grow and develop, the childminder should develop their skills in planning, observing, and recording children's development and learning through play. The childminder should then use their observations to reflect and plan new learning opportunities in consultation with children and parents. This should include, but not be limited to, using the best practice guidance to support them, such as: Realising the Ambition: Being me (Education Scotland, 2020) and, Growing my potential (Care Inspectorate, 2022).

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

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem, and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1:31).

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

The childminder had positive relationships with children and knew them well. One parent told us, " My child has a really lovely bond with Shelley and often speaks about them and asks to see them." Another parent said, "Shelley is kind and makes us feel at ease and cares greatly for my child." Children sought comfort and cuddles from the childminder. This helped them feel safe and secure. However, the behaviour policy did not match the childminder's positive practice. The childminder should research supporting young children's emotional wellbeing, and as previously recommended they should create a policy to reflect best practice. This should focus on helping children to understand expectations, while also considering their needs when supporting them to regulate emotions (**see area for improvement 1**).

Children's routines met their individual needs, and personal care supported privacy and dignity. Food was healthy and matched children's preferences. They enjoyed relaxed, sociable mealtimes. The childminder had current first aid and food hygiene training, which helped them keep children safe during mealtimes.

Sleep routines reflected family's wishes. The childminder checked sleeping children regularly to ensure they were safe. Moving forward, recording sleep checks would show best practice. Children usually slept in pushchairs, and occasionally in a travel cot. The childminder could consider introducing consistent, lie-flat sleeping arrangements so that children can move freely and rest safely. Developing a Safe Sleep policy would help families understand the expected standards as practice improves.

The childminder knew all children well. However, not all children had a personal plan, and some were outdated. This meant plans were not reviewed in line with guidance. All children should have a current, meaningful personal plan. They should be created with parents to ensure a consistent approach to caring for individual children. Personal plans should show how needs, wishes, and choices will be met. The childminder should develop their understanding of personal planning in line with best practice guidance (**see area for improvement 2**).

Areas for improvement

1. To fully reflect the childminder's positive practice, they should review and improve the 'behaviour management' policy. This should include but not be limited to, focusing on helping children to understand expectations, while also considering their needs when supporting them to manage their emotions.

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

'I experience care and support where all people are respected and valued' (HSCS 4.3).

2. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the childminder should develop personal plans for each child to show how their needs are being identified and met. This should include, but is not limited to, consulting with parents to review plans in line with legislation. To understand the purpose of personal plans, the childminder should refer to the best practice guidance, 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning, Early Learning and Childcare' (Care Inspectorate, 2021).

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).

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

We recommend that the childminder keep more detailed records of the children in her care.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard: 3 - Health and Well-being

This area for improvement was made on 30 September 2016.

Action taken since then

Development plans were introduced, noting needs and interests with goals and strategies. These were at an early stage, with no recorded progress or parent reviews. The process needs to be embedded for consistent planning to support children to progress and achieve at a pace that is right for them.

This recommendation has not been met and will be reworded and set as an area for improvement (see area for improvement 1 under the heading, 'Children play and learn').

Previous area for improvement 2

We recommend that the childminder review her behaviour management policy to make it clear to parents that 'time out' will not be used within her service.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard: 7 - A Caring Environment.

This area for improvement was made on 30 September 2016.

Action taken since then

The policy still included 'time out', which was not used in the childminder's practice. This approach is considered ineffective and inappropriate for younger children. The childminder should research emotional wellbeing and create a balanced policy. This should focus on supporting children to understand expectations, while also considering their needs to support them to regulate emotions.

This recommendation has not been met and will be reworded and set as an area for improvement (see area for improvement 1 under the heading, 'Children are supported to achieve').

Previous area for improvement 3

We recommend that the provider ensure children's personal information is reviewed in line with the current legislation.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard: 3 - Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 30 September 2016.

Action taken since then

Not all children had personal plans, and some existing plans were outdated and not reviewed in line with the current legislation. As a result, plans were not effective in supporting children's care, learning, and development.

This recommendation has not been met and will be reworded and set as an area for improvement (see area for improvement 2 under the heading, 'Children are supported to achieve').

Previous area for improvement 4

We recommend that the childminder keeps herself up to date with new guidance and best practice to ensure that she can continue to provide children and families with a good quality service.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard: 13 - Improving the Service.

This area for improvement was made on 30 September 2016.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection, the childminder had completed food safety, child protection, and training to support additional support needs.

However, the childminder did not yet engage with current frameworks or best practice guidance such as; A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding' (Scottish Government, 2025), Realising the Ambition: Being me (Education Scotland, 2020) and, Growing my potential (Care Inspectorate, 2022).

This recommendation has not been met, and aspects have been incorporated into reworded areas for improvement (see area for improvement 2 under the heading, 'Leadership', and area for improvement 1 under the heading, 'Children play and learn').

Previous area for improvement 5

We recommend that the childminder review the aims and objectives of the service.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard: 13 - Improving the Service.

This area for improvement was made on 30 September 2016.

Action taken since then

Vision, values, and aims had not been updated. Families were not involved in reviews, and values were not embedded in practice. Values should reflect the ethos of the service. For example, the childminder valued daily outdoor play opportunities which was not reflected in service values.

This recommendation has not been met and will be reworded and set as an area for improvement (see area for improvement 2 under the heading, 'Leadership').

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 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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