

# Gilah's Childminding Services

## Child Minding

Aberdeen

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
12 February 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Gilah Cheesewright

**Service provider number:**  
SP2016988462

**Service no:**  
CS2016350761

## About the service

Gilah's Childminding Services provides a childminding service from their home in Aberdeen. Children are cared for in the living room, conservatory and dining kitchen. They have access to a toilet and a fully enclosed garden.

When the childminder is working alone the care service may be provided to a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than six are under 12 years; of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and; of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family household.

When the childminder is working with the assistant the care service may be provided to a maximum of 10 children at any one time under the age of 16: of whom no more than six are not yet attending primary school; of whom no more than two are under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family/household.

Three children were present at the time of the inspection.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 February 2026 between 08:40 and 13:30. 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- received seven responses to our request for feedback from families
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- spoke with the childminder
- 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, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

## Key messages

- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- Children experienced very warm and caring interactions from the childminder.
- The childminder made good use of the outdoors, at their home and in the wider community.
- The childminder should now take time to evaluate improvements, documenting the impact of these on outcomes for children.

## 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	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 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.

The childminder had established visions, values, and aims, with a focus on providing a safe and happy learning environment, something that was evident during the inspection. While these aims were in place, some elements would benefit from being updated. Involving children and families in reviewing and refreshing these statements would help ensure they reflected the shared aspirations of everyone using the service, and considering ways to visibly promote them within the setting would further strengthen their impact.

Children's and families' views were considered by the childminder, who listened carefully to older children and incorporated their ideas into the activities and experiences offered. Families were invited to complete regular questionnaires through the Baby's Days app. Recent feedback had been positive, with parents and carers reporting that their children were happy, settled, well supported in their development, and that communication was strong. Although no suggestions were provided, the childminder expressed an openness to feedback and a willingness to act on ideas shared by families.

Families told us they were meaningfully involved in shaping the setting, with the childminder actively seeking children's preferences and feedback to enhance resources and support smooth transitions. Parents described the childminder as consistently open, responsive, and committed to partnership working, demonstrating a strong ethos of collaboration that positively impacted on children's experiences.

The childminder had been actively engaging with the new quality improvement framework to identify and prioritise areas for development. They were making effective use of reflective, meaningful questions to guide their improvement journey and had begun evaluating the impact of changes using an improvement plan. For example, a recent focus on outdoor learning, supported by relevant training, had strengthened the childminder's confidence and skills. This enabled them to offer richer, more purposeful outdoor experiences. This had a clear positive impact on outcomes for children, who were observed to be more engaged in outdoor play. We discussed the importance of keeping improvements manageable. The childminder should now consider how to involve children and families more actively in this process, exploring effective ways to share progress and gather their views.

The childminder was using a monthly planner to support the smooth running of their service and found this an effective tool for organising training and reviews for example. Policies were in place, had been regularly reviewed and shared with families through the Baby's Days app. The childminder's training was relevant to the needs of the service and the children, and they reflected purposefully on learning to strengthen practice and outcomes. For instance, recent child protection training had improved the childminder's confidence in identifying signs of concern, understanding shared professional responsibilities, and maintaining clear chronologies. The childminder also kept up to date with best practice guidance and used this to inform developments, such as referring to the updated Setting the Table guidance to involve children more actively in mealtime routines through tasks like cleaning, tidying, and chopping. The childminder demonstrated a proactive and reflective approach to quality assurance.

There had been no new assistants since the last inspection, and the existing assistant, now works full time and only provides cover when needed. However, they have maintained up to date child protection and first aid training. The childminder also shared any relevant training with them and kept notes and reflections to support their understanding and practice. Appropriate arrangements were in place to ensure the assistant remained informed and compliant.

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Play, learning and developing

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**.

The childminder had recently gained a relevant qualification, achieving this within a short period and finding the process enjoyable and valuable. They felt it brought together key aspects of theory and practice, strengthening their skills and supporting their work with community childminding. As a result, the childminder reported feeling more confident and better equipped, which had enabled them to support new childminders as they established their own services. The childminder was continuing to develop professionally, with their learning having a positive impact on both their practice and outcomes for children.

The childminder provided a welcoming and homely environment for children. They discussed their plans to rearrange some resources in the conservatory, and had already reflected on creating a cosy corner to enhance the space further. Throughout the inspection, children were motivated and highly engaged in their play, accessing resources independently to support their learning. A planned outing was rescheduled due to the inspection, with the childminder showing a degree of flexibility. Children enjoying time in the garden and a walk to the woods was planned for the afternoon. The childminder's passion for outdoor learning was evident, with children exploring the mud kitchen in the garden, mixing, pouring, digging, and experimenting with natural materials. Children demonstrated confidence, even the younger children were able to climb ladders and cross the bridge independently. Creative opportunities were also well supported, with children given time and freedom to explore ideas using craft materials, in their own way. Children experienced engaging experiences that supported confident, independent, and creative play.

Families told us that their children were always involved in a range of fun experiences, including outdoor play. One said; "[The childminder] always tries to get the children outside and they rarely have a day indoors which is what our child loves, they go out to parks, castles, the beach, farms, sledging in winter, local walks, and spend lots of time in [their] wonderful garden." Another shared; "[The childminder] strongly promotes the outdoors and healthy living by walking and going places." This highlighted that the childminder provided children with a rich variety of engaging experiences, demonstrating a strong commitment to active play, healthy living, and learning through exploration in natural environments.

The childminder's interactions consistently supported children's learning and development, demonstrating a sensitive balance between standing back to allow independent exploration and stepping in when needed. For example, during outdoor play, the childminder engaged children in thinking and talking about rain and sand, extending their curiosity and understanding of the world. They also modelled skills and spent time wondering together. For example, modelling how to use glue, folding paper during craft, and pouring water with a watering can. The childminder encouraged language development through playful conversation about shadows, leading to laughter and shared enjoyment. Singing was naturally woven into play, supporting speech and language development, particularly for younger children. The childminder also made effective use of counting opportunities, such as counting blocks when building towers and highlighted early mathematical concepts such as floating objects in water. The childminder's interactions were warm, responsive, and supported children's learning experiences.

Planning was both intentional and responsive. The childminder incorporated activities such as seasonal themes like Valentine's Day crafts, as well as following children's emerging interests. Children's curiosity about nature was well supported, with the use of a bird spotting chart and discussions during walks. One child enthusiastically shared that they had spotted a magpie. Older children were consulted about what they wanted to explore, leading to creative activities such as making wool and stick crafts. Planning was also flexible, responding to spontaneous interests such as exploring the spiky branches of a monkey puzzle tree, which children told us they were keen to revisit. Photos and observations were shared with families through group and individual updates, strengthening communication. Observations were regular, clearly identified the learning taking place, and were linked to the Curriculum for Excellence. These observations informed trackers and next steps aligned with the wellbeing indicators. These were shared with families through the app and regular face-to-face reviews to promote partnership working. Planning and observations were purposeful, responsive, and effectively supported children's ongoing learning and development.

## Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

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**.

The childminder was consistently warm and responsive in their interactions, supporting children effectively to express their needs, for example, helping with jackets and boots when asked. Young children confidently used the childminder's name and frequently invited them into their play, with the childminder joining at the children's level and showing genuine interest. Tools such as a wall display of smiley faces with pegs encouraged children to talk about their feelings and supported emotional literacy. Strong, trusting bonds were clear, with children seeking reassurance through proximity. Children benefited from nurturing, attuned interactions that promoted security, confidence, and emotional wellbeing.

Parents and carers told us they had a good relationship with the childminder. One said; "[The childminder] has great communication, [they are] really personable and has got to know us, and the wider family that helps support our childcare, [the childminder] has made the effort to build relationships with all of us." Another shared; "[My child] has been with [the childminder] since being a baby and [they have] the most nurturing and friendly childminder that gives me comfort as a parent." Parents and carers consistently described the childminder as highly nurturing, communicative and relationship focused, demonstrating strong, trusting partnerships that contribute positively to children's care and family support.

Transitions were managed naturally and calmly, with the childminder talking to children about what would happen next, such as moving on to snack or discussing plans for the rest of the day. Children were familiar with routines, knowing to wash their hands before eating, sometimes with gentle reminders, and understanding tidy up expectations. Children were keen to help with tasks such as wiping tables and sweeping after meals. These consistent routines and smooth transitions supported children to feel safe and secure.

Risk assessments were in place, regularly reviewed, and contributed to maintaining a safe environment. Through community childminding, the childminder showed a strong commitment to supporting families and had built positive relationships with extended family members to support children. The childminder was diligent in following up on incidents requiring information sharing to ensure children's wellbeing. The childminder demonstrated strong, consistent practices that promoted children's safety, wellbeing, and trusted relationships with families.

Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried, with children sitting together with the childminder in a way that promoted social skills and language development. Children were well supervised, offered choices, and enjoyed nutritious foods. Independence was encouraged through tasks such as chopping their own bananas, scraping plates, and helping with tidying up. Children were also involved in aspects of menu planning and food preparation, with younger children helping to choose snacks at the local shop and older children preparing food. This effectively supported children's independence, social development, and healthy routines.

Personal plans were in place for all children and updated regularly in partnership with families to ensure information remained current and care was tailored to each child's needs. The childminder used the wellbeing indicators to provide a holistic overview of every child. Next steps included strategies, such as how to support speech and language and were clearly outlined. Chronologies were also in place and used appropriately to record significant events, with effective follow up involving other professionals when required. Overall, personal planning was thorough, reflective, and contributed positively to meeting children's individual needs.

The childminder knew the children very well and welcomed families into the setting daily. They were also invited into the home regularly to discuss their child's progress in more depth. Following these meetings, the childminder created an individual development plan for each child, which was shared with families. Strong relationships and effective communication supported a clear, shared understanding of each child's progress and needs.

## 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

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>4 - Good</b>
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
<b>Children play and learn</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
<b>Children are supported to achieve</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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