

Childminder inspection report

**McIntosh, Laura
Ellon**

Service provided by: McIntosh, Laura

Service provider number: SP2014986063

Care service number: CS2014327854

Inspection Type: Announced (Short Notice)

Care services in Scotland, including childminders, cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

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1 Introduction

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information in relation to all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

This service was registered with the Care inspectorate on 25 September 2014 therefore this was the first inspection of the service.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve. Getting it right for every child is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it right for every child. They are, safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators. We use these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

Laura McIntosh is registered as a childminder to care for 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.

Marianne McIntosh is approved as an assistant for the service.

Overnight care will not be provided.

The childminder provides her service from a semi-detached, two storey building within the expanding town of Ellon. Ellon is situated around 16 miles to the north of Aberdeen and nine miles from Peterhead. The property has a small garden that can be accessed from the dining kitchen.

The aims and objectives of the service are:

- To provide a safe, secure atmosphere for the children.
- To have a relaxed atmosphere which is also friendly and warm.
- To provide a flexible but reliable service.
- To be able to cater to all the children's needs.

What we did during our inspection

We wrote this report following an announced inspection (short notice) carried out by one inspector. The inspection took place on 3 September between 1.45 pm and 5.05 pm. Feedback was given to the childminder during and at the end of the inspection.

The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed annual return document from the provider. We did not receive a self assessment document.

We sent three care standards questionnaires to the childminder to distribute to parents and received two completed questionnaires before inspection. We spoke with one parent by telephone following the inspection and contacted another by email; however we received no response.

During the inspection we gathered evidence from the following sources:

We spoke with:

- the childminder
- the assistant
- one child
- one parent by telephone.

We looked at:

- children's experiences in the setting
- the childminder's practice with the children
- the assistant's practice with the children
- the environment for the children
- aims and objectives of the service

- information for parents
- children's records and daily feedback sheets
- training certificates
- registration certificate
- public liability insurance certificate
- risk assessments
- gas safety certificate
- home insurance
- car insurance
- newsletters
- menus
- fire safety record.

The following policies:

- health and safety
- records and notifications
- sleeping arrangements
- promoting positive behaviour
- working in partnership with parents
- trampoline
- evaluations
- child protection.

The following procedures:

- complaints
- emergency.

Views of people using the service

When the inspector first arrived there were no children present. However, one child was collected from school at the end of the session. The child was welcomed home by the childminder and then she automatically made her way to the activities in the playroom. She was accompanied by the assistant who sat and chatted with her as she played. We saw that the childminder and her assistant were kind and caring and interested in the child.

The child present during part of our inspection had only recently started attending the service. When the inspector spoke with the child at snack time, she revealed how she wanted to be a hairdresser when she left school.

Two parents returned completed care standards questionnaires. Responses indicated that both parents were very happy with the quality of care their children received at the service.

Their positive comments included:

"We have been very happy with the service provided by Laura. She communicates well with us and (name of child) is very happy to spend time with her and the other children after school. She gives a very good hand-over at the end of each day so we know all snacks, activities and homework completed. Very happy with the service provided."

We had the opportunity to speak with one parent by telephone. They were very happy with the service; commenting positively about the welcoming environment and the activities provided.

Their comments included:

"My child adores her."

Parents' comments are also included throughout the main body of the report.

Self assessment

Every year all care services complete a 'self assessment' telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this is accurate.

The Care Inspectorate did not receive a fully completed self assessment document from the childminder before the inspection.

What the service did well

We found the childminder and her assistant to be kind and caring and respectful of children's wishes. We saw that children had access to play and creative opportunities throughout their stay. The playroom walls were decorated with samples of children's artwork, respecting and celebrating children's efforts and achievements. We also noted how the childminder and her assistant respected children's interests and took these into account when planning for their stay.

We noted that the childminder had attended several training courses throughout her first year of operation and was able to tell the inspector how she felt her practice had improved as a result, positively impacting on the

children she cared for.

The childminder had recently employed an assistant. We saw that they worked well together and how this contributed to the relaxed environment.

What the service could do better

The childminder needs to ensure she has the health visitor contact details for all children.

The childminder had some procedures that required further development for example, child protection and the administration of medicines.

As the childminder has employed an assistant, she now needs to develop a job description, recruitment and whistleblowing procedures.

These improvements would ensure that children's safety, health and wellbeing needs were wholly being met and safeguarded.

The childminder should further develop more formal ways of gaining feedback from children and their parents in order to progress the service.

2 The grades we awarded

We grade the quality of care and support, the quality of the environment and the quality of management and leadership. If the childminder employs an assistant, we also grade the quality of staffing. In each case, we award a grade on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent.

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

3 Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We found that the childminder had a good understanding of her role and responsibilities in meeting children's care and support needs.

We looked at how the childminder gathered information about the children and how she then planned the care for each child. She did this in a range of ways including:

- meeting and discussing childcare arrangements with parents and carers before the child started
- asking parents to complete an information sheet about their child
- completing contracts and permission slips with parents and carers
- planning a settling-in period to make sure the child was happy at being left
- establishing relationships, getting to know the child and their family.

The childminder explained her settling-in process. She described how parents, along with their children were invited to her home to be shown around. Those parents wishing to use her service were then asked to complete information forms and these would provide details about the child. This information was needed to plan for the child's care and support needs. The childminder told us how settling-in visits were arranged according to the individual child's needs, to ensure the child was comfortable with the childminder and within the environment.

The information gathered included nutritional and personal care needs; daily routines, drink preferences, health information, allergies, medical needs, likes/ dislikes and fears. The childminder told us she invited parents to her home every six months and how together they reviewed and updated their child's information for accuracy. She requested that parents keep her updated with any changes in the interim period. This procedure was confirmed by the parent we spoke with and the invitation extended to parents we saw itemised in the service's quarterly newsletter.

From the sample of records we looked at, we noted that one form did not include the health visitor's contact details. Children's health and safety could be compromised without this information. We also advised the childminder that children's initial start dates with the service should not change each time a contract is renewed. The exact date should also be included for accuracy. **Please see Recommendation 1.**

We spoke with one parent who told us how they were kept informed about their child's time within the childminder's home. She told us, "She lets me know about my child's sleep, what they've eaten and been up to". From this, we saw that there was continuity for children between the home and the childminding service. The childminder also described further ways of keeping parents updated:

- via text
- a quarterly newsletter
- photographs taken during the childminding session.

This practice further ensured parental involvement.

The childminder told us she how she had introduced tooth-brushing in response to a parent's request. Further practice guidance for childminders can be downloaded at: <http://www.child-smile.org.uk/uploads/documents/21636-IntroducingToothbrushing.pdf>

We saw that the childminder had registered as a food business. The childminder was happy to heat meals provided by parents; she provided an assortment of snacks and fruit along with milk or water to drink. The childminder had a copy of Setting the Table, the latest nutritional guidance for her information. She was due to attend a training session in the very near future to make her further aware of nutritionally suitable foods to offer whilst respecting children's cultural needs.

We noted how the childminder welcomed the child into her home when she arrived from school. Although very new to the service, the child confidently made her way to the playroom and appeared comfortable and relaxed as she made her activity choice. When snack time came, the child was asked to wash her hands and was offered a choice of cereal. Once snack was finished, she asked to complete the picture she had started the day before; this wish was granted. This showed us how the childminder treated children with respect and took account of their choices.

We looked at planning and how this promoted children's health and wellbeing. The childminder described the daily routine of collecting children from school. Weekly visits included attending toddlers, music class and the local childminding network group. These experiences provided children with routine and regular

social opportunities to meet up and play with friends. She further recalled the many trips and outings that she and the children had planned for and enjoyed; bus trips to Smugglers Cove and Haddo House and restaurants and going shopping and swimming. They also made good use of local parks to enable children to experience active, energetic play, boosting their health, confidence and wellbeing.

Those who responded to our questionnaire strongly agreed that children had regular access to fresh air and energetic, physical play.

We noted how the wide selection of toys, books and activities would offer children choice, fun and challenge. The childminder told us how these resources were often chosen by the children by looking through catalogues and expressing their wishes. They were attractively displayed at child height, encouraging children's independence and opportunities to lead their own play and learning, boosting confidence and self-esteem. The childminder ensured children of all age groups were catered for and could experience a range of play and creative opportunities. Examples of children's artwork showed how the childminder valued the children's efforts and contributions, celebrating their success and achievement and thus promoting confidence.

We found the atmosphere within the home to be comfortable and relaxed. We saw how during our brief observations that the minded child was included and given choice. In discussion, the childminder and her assistant demonstrated how well they knew each child's individual needs, described their personalities and were aware of their likes and dislikes. We noted how the observations carried out by the childminder recognised the child's current skills and abilities and planned for their next steps. The childminder should remember to date her records to demonstrate the child's progression. This showed us the childminder and her assistant were able to provide a caring service for the children.

We looked at behaviour management. We noted that the childminder and her assistant were calm in their approach with the minded child. The childminder told us house rules were shared with the children when first joining her service. She also discussed behaviour management with parents at their initial meeting to maintain consistency. The behaviour policy recognised this appropriate adult and child involvement. This showed us that she treated everyone fairly and with respect.

We looked at the system for administering medication. We noted that best practice guidance was being followed for the management and administration of short term medication. However the childminder must further develop procedures to include specific information for any child requiring long term medication whilst attending the service. For example, triggers, symptoms, how often the medication can safely be repeated, what to do if the medication is not effective etc. This will further safeguard children's health and safety needs.

Please see Requirement 1.

We talked about child protection and through discussion; the childminder demonstrated a good knowledge of how to protect children from harm, abuse and neglect. She further described how she used appropriate daily opportunities to discuss and promote children's own health, safety and wellbeing.

Grade

The quality of care and support is graded 4 - Good

Requirements

Number of requirements - 1

1. The childminder must further develop medication administration procedures in line with Management of Medication in Daycare of Children and Childminding services: <http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/189567/childrens-service-medication-guidance.pdf>

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210), regulation 4(1)(a) - a requirement about making proper provision for the health and welfare of service users.

Timescale: within two weeks of receiving this report.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 1

1. The childminder must ensure that appropriate records are maintained for children. In order to achieve this, the childminder must ensure:

- all children's personal details are provided, including those for their health visitor
- accurate records are kept.

Reference: National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 3: health and wellbeing and Standard 14: well-managed service.

4 Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

During inspections, we take time to look at the quality of the environment within each childminding service. This is carried out indoors and outdoors to see how well the environment meets the needs of the children being cared for.

On our arrival we noted that the areas used within the home were the living room, playroom, dining kitchen, the enclosed back garden and two of the upstairs bedrooms when the children wished to sleep. The playroom and living room were adjoined, giving the children plenty of space to play, relax and learn. The kitchen offered children space for creative opportunities and also to eat their snacks and meals. The enclosed garden was small and split over two tiers. However, it did offer the children opportunities to experience messy as well as active, physical play. During our inspection, the minded child and the assistant played outside with the new sand tray on the top, decked tier. We saw that this area was secured by a gate to ensure the children's safety. Steps led to the lower section of the garden. Appropriate risk assessments were in place for the childminder's home and garden. The childminder told us she had applied for training to support her to assess and identify risk. This would help her to develop clear procedures to follow when on trips and outings and provide children with additional safety.

Current public liability insurance for the childminding service as well as appropriate home insurance was in place. The childminder showed us current car insurance for her assistant to transport children to and from the service. This will be their arrangement until the childminder purchases a car. A current gas safety certificate was also presented.

Please see Recommendation 1.

We found the childminder's home to be clean, bright, smoke-free and well-maintained. The play and living rooms were well set out and furnished so that children could comfortably enjoy the range of activities offered in their area of choice. We noted how children's suggestions had been taken forward, resulting in a large wall display of Old MacDonald and his farm. We saw that children had been allocated their own space in the hallway to store their belongings. These factors contributed towards the welcoming, homely atmosphere. One parent we spoke with told us they felt welcomed adding, "we can go round any time and we always have a chat when picking up my child".

We looked at sleeping arrangements. We saw that beds were available in comfortable surroundings for those children who wished to sleep. The childminder described the appropriate storage and laundering of bed linen to ensure the risk of infection was minimised.

We saw that a wide variety of toys, books and activities were available within the playroom. These were very well organised and stored accessibly and visibly at child-height which encouraged children's choice and the opportunity to lead their own play and learning. We noted that these were clean and well looked after. We noted a further selection of toys suitable for outdoors. These included a trampoline. We noted a brief trampoline policy had been drafted; however this did not include its safe use or maintenance. Further information can be found at <http://www.rosipa.com/leisure-safety/advice/trampoline/>

The childminder told us how she and the children regularly went on outings either locally or further afield. She described a music class she and the children attended; shopping trips, childminder network meetings and visits to Haddo House. This range of activities catered for the different needs and interests of the children. The parent we spoke with told us, "there's plenty of activities; music class, painting, playing and the local park on the way home". The child present for part of our inspection moved freely and confidently from room to room. She told us she liked the playroom and colouring in.

We looked at the environment and how clean it was. The childminder described how cleaning routines were carried out to ensure her home was always hygienic, clean and tidy. Cleaning materials were stored safely and essential

safety equipment was available or installed. We saw that regular fire safety checks were carried out as well as safe evacuation practice.

Brief infection control guidelines and information for managing sick children were shared with parents; however these required additional information in order to promote children's health, safety and wellbeing.

Disposable gloves and aprons were stored appropriately and accessibly for use during nappy changing. As no child required their nappy to be changed during our inspection we were unable to see how the childminder carried this out.

We noted the childminder provided liquid soap for children to wash their hands. We saw however that they used a shared towel and this could compromise infection control. Further guidance can be found at <http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/208454/hand-hygiene-information-to-support-improvement.pdf>

We saw that the childminder respected parent's wishes and supplied toothbrushes for their children to brush their teeth. We noted that the toothbrushes were not individually stored and could compromise infection control.

Please see Requirement 1

We looked at the accident and incident records. We noted they contained the correct information. However we discussed the need to ensure parents included the date along with their signature for accountability and accuracy of sharing information. The childminder agreed to rectify this.

Grade

The quality of environment is graded 4 - Good

Requirements

Number of requirements - 1

1. In order to reduce the risk of infection and maintain children's health and wellbeing, the childminder must:

a) update infection control policies and procedures to reflect best practice guidance

- b) develop nappy changing procedures
- c) ensure appropriate means of hand drying is available
- d) store toothbrushes individually.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210), regulation 4(1)(a).

Timescale: point a) and b) within two weeks of receipt of this report; point c) within 24 hours of receiving this report.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 1

1. To review the risk assessment process to include outdoor play activities and outings for children's increased safety.

Reference: National Care standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 2: a safe environment.

5 Quality of staffing

We only assess this where the childminder employs an assistant.

Findings from the inspection

During our inspections, we take time to look at the quality of staffing when an assistant is employed within the childminding service. This is carried out to ensure safe recruitment procedures have been followed and that the assistant is suitably qualified to meet the needs of the children and the service.

A variation had recently been completed to vary the registration conditions to include the childminder's mother as an assistant. The assistant had undergone a successful PVG and fitness to work assessment. The childminder agreed to request two references from her assistant's current employer to support the

appointment. We noted however there were no policies or procedures in place to support the assistant's recruitment for the increased safety of children.

Please see Recommendation 1.

We saw that the childminder and her assistant worked in close partnership and shared good communication. In discussion, the childminder and assistant described a professional relationship, maintaining confidentiality at all times. The assistant described her supportive role throughout all aspects of the service. She told us of her relevant childcare experience which had stretched over many years. This included an active role within the Girl Guides organisation.

We noted the assistant's kind, caring and patient nature and her respectful rapport with the child. She demonstrated knowledge of the children and evidenced how this would contribute to children feeling safe, secure and included.

The assistant had attended a variety of training opportunities to support and influence her practice and to benefit the children being cared for.

Grade

The quality of staffing is graded 4 - Good

Requirements

Number of requirements - 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 1

1. To ensure children's safety, the childminder should develop an appropriate:

- recruitment procedure
- whistle blowing procedure
- job description.

Reference National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 12: confidence in staff and Standard 14: well-managed service.

6 Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

This was the childminder's first inspection. We noted that she had attended a variety of training courses. These included Induction, Child Protection, First Aid, Food Hygiene, Pre-birth to 3, Child-led Planning, Supporting Children with Autism and Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC).

She told us how she had successfully secured a place to undertake a child-related qualification through distance learning and was due to begin later this year. This demonstrated the childminder's commitment to her role and would support the minded children's health, safety and wellbeing.

The childminder told us how she felt more confident in her childcare role as a result of her increased knowledge through training. She described feeling confident to deliver first aid and recalled how prior to attending training, she had no awareness of SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included); the wellbeing indicators used to assess children's growth and development to achieve their full potential. She also told us of imminent Setting the Table (the latest nutritional guidance for early years) training she was due to attend. By keeping up to date with current guidance and initiatives, the childminder demonstrated her commitment to supporting children's health, safety and wellbeing. We noted that the childminder had not received a copy of Building the Ambition and was also unaware of the training available to support practice in relation to the document. This document can be downloaded at <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00458455.pdf>

Please see Recommendation 1.

The childminder told us she was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and described how she used their website to keep up to date with current best practice and changes to legislation. She further told us of the local childminding network group of which she was a member and explained how she benefitted from the knowledge, experience and support of fellow childminders.

We looked at the childminding records, and noted confidentiality was maintained, and that all childminding records were stored securely.

We looked at how the childminder shared the childminding policies and procedures with new families. Discussion with the childminder and from the sample of evidence we looked at confirmed that information relating to her service was shared from their initial agreement. This was confirmed by the parent we spoke with and those who completed the care standards questionnaire. The information included the childminding complaints policy and the child protection policy.

From the policies we reviewed, we noted that additional information in the child protection policy was necessary to ensure children's safety was maintained.

Please see Recommendation 2.

We looked at how parents and children were able to make suggestions and feedback their views about the service. The childminder told us how she regularly asked children what they would like to do and how overall, she managed to meet their wishes. She further explained how she always asked for feedback and suggestions when she met formally with parents to update their children's records. Two parents who responded to our care standards questionnaire agreed the childminder had involved them and their child in developing the service. The parent we spoke with told us, "She always asks us what she'd like her to do with him - she's always willing".

The childminder should now develop more formal means of seeking and recording feedback from children and their families, using open questions to gain more information to further develop and improve the service. The methods of including children and their parents' should be added to the aims and objectives of the service, so that they are aware of the expectations.

Please see Recommendation 3.

Grade

The quality of management and leadership is graded 4 - Good

Requirements

Number of requirements - 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 3

1. The childminder and her assistant to access Building the Ambition training to support their practice and good outcomes for children.

Reference National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 12: confidence in staff and Standard 14: well-managed service.

2. In order to maintain children' safety, the childminder should:

- a) review and update the emergency contact details for the relevant child protection agencies
- b) make parents aware that they may not be consulted prior to referral of any child protection concerns to an external agency
- c) refer to the National Guidance for updated child protection information.

Reference: National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 13: improving the service and Standard 14: well-managed service.

3. The childminder to look at how parents/carers and their children are given formal opportunities to evaluate and comment on her service.

Reference: National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 13: improving the service and Standard 14: well-managed service.

7 What the service has done to meet any recommendations or requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

1. To ensure children are kept safe and protected at all times, the provider must:
 - (i) not allow unregistered adult to assist with the care of the children
 - (ii) notify the Care inspectorate of any changes to the house hold and obtain a disclosure for any persons over 16 living at the premises.

This requirement was made on 20 April 2015

The childminder applied for a variation to her registration conditions and added her mother as her assistant.

The childminder declared in future, she would carry out a disclosure on any persons over the age of 16 years residing at the premises.

This would ensure children's safety and protection.

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

8 Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints against the service which have been upheld.

9 Enforcements

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

10 Other issues

n/a

11 Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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