

# Wee Pals Childminding Child Minding

Dunfermline

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
31 July 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Sharon Crawford

**Service provider number:**  
SP2018990138

**Service no:**  
CS2018369813

## About the service

Sharon Crawford operates Wee Pals childminding service. The childminder's home is situated in Dunfermline and is close to local amenities. Children have access to the sitting room, kitchen, hall, and bathroom which are all on the ground floor of her home. The enclosed garden is not currently being used as it needs to be upgraded.

The service has the following conditions of registration;

1. The childminder may care for a maximum of 6 children up to 16 years of age these numbers include the children of the childminder's family:

Of those 6 no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school;

Of those 3 no more than 1 is under 12 months.

Any other conditions unique to the service:

2. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

3. Overnight service will not be provided.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 30 July 2024 between 08:45 and 10:15. We gave feedback to the childminder on Wednesday 31 July at 18:15. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two children using the service. We also considered the information from six parents who completed the electronic questionnaire we sent to the childminder
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and how children were supported with their play, learning and routines
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- The childminder interacted with children in a caring, kind and supportive way.
- Activities and outings were planned to support children's learning, development and interests.
- Information recorded about children's learning and progress and been further developed to include outcomes and next steps. This should continue to be built on.
- Self evaluation and quality assurance had been used to to make changes within the service. This needs to be be embedded in practice.
- The childminder needs to complete relevant training or learning that will support their professional development.

## 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

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

## How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were cared for in a warm and nurturing way. They benefitted from close attachments as the childminder knew them well and interacted with them in sensitive and respectful ways. Children had also developed close friendships with each other. These positive relationships meant that children were well settled and comfortable in the care of the childminder. They told us "She's (childminder) always friendly and welcoming."

Relevant information was contained in children's personal plans and used to meet their individual needs. To support positive outcomes, children had shared information about approaches they preferred. For example, what helped them if they were upset. As a result, the childminder talked confidently about children's needs, personalities and how they were supported. The childminder should continue to develop personal plans so children's progress is noted and any changing needs planned for. Parents shared that the childminder "Takes the time to get to know the children, is loving, caring, and compassionate about her job and she has a very special bond with my son."

The childminder recognised the importance of communication. There were regular opportunities to share information with parents which meant partnership working had been established. As a result, parents felt included and involved in planning their child's care. This enabled the childminder to meet the needs of children with a flexible and responsive approach. Parents shared "Easy to communicate with and Sharon is always there if u need extra days covered and I feel reassured leaving my child with her ." And "I keep in regular contact with Sharon. Any changes are promptly communicated with me."

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Activities and experiences were provided to promote all children's interests, development and well-being. For example, a favourite activity was drawing and colouring in. One child said "I think my colouring in is getting better." The childminder chatted to children about their activity and recognised and praised their achievements. This encouraged children to share what they were doing and have a sense of pride in their work.

Photographs showed the range of activities children were involved in. Children benefitted from new initiatives such as visiting a local care home. These gave children opportunities to share skills as they joined in activities with the residents. The childminder had recorded some information to show how children benefitted from activities and experiences. To support their continued development 'next steps' had been identified. These should followed up to ensure children are making progress. When reviewed, children's achievements, learning and development should be recorded.

The local community was well used to extend children's experiences. For example, going to local parks and places of interest promoted opportunities for children to explore the natural environment. Parents shared that children had "Days out, crafts, educational activities, safety with animals, safety when out and about,

fun experiences that help develop skills." As a result, they had made progress in their development as they participated in a range of fun activities.

## How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

### Quality indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities.

Children were cared for in an environment that was homely and welcoming. Risk assessments for indoors were used to identify how any hazard could be reduced. The childminder was in the process of changing the areas used by children, so should review risk assessments to reflect this. This will highlight items to be removed and promote safety for children.

Children were mainly cared for in the lounge and had access to the dining/kitchen for meal times. There was enough space to play so children could develop their games. The range of toys, games were being reorganised so they met the needs and interests of the children being cared for. The childminder supported children's choice which meant they could lead their play. They had positive play experiences as she responded to their ideas. Soft furnishings enabled children to rest or have quiet time if they wanted.

The garden to the back of the house was not in use for childminding. We talked to the childminder about making this area safe for children as they would benefit from direct access to outdoors. It would offer them more play space and opportunities for different play experiences.

The downstairs toilet was available for hand washing and use of disposable towels promoted good infection control measures. Appropriate personal protective equipment was used when children's personal care was carried out.

The childminder used community resources to extend opportunities for children. For example, local parks enabled children to explore the natural environment and develop their physical skills on large equipment. Parents shared "Visiting the local park, visiting local stores and businesses. Generally exploring the local environment through walks."

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

### Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The childminder's values were evident in the warm, sensitive interactions observed throughout the inspection. This enabled children to share their views and be involved in the development of the service. They felt listened to as their ideas and interests were valued and used.

Verbal and electronic communication supported information sharing. Families felt involved as they could share their views which informed the care provided. They felt included as they could join in activities with their children. One parent said "I have often accompanied Sharon on different visits to local businesses such as the vine conference centre, the park and soft play."

The childminder had identified areas of the service to develop. For example, she planned to care mainly for school age children, changed the areas used for childminding and introduced voice messages for parents. These were in the early stages of being implemented and should be evaluated to ensure positive outcomes for children are achieved.

The childminder had used some best practice guidance to support their work. For example, 'setting the table' had promoted positive meal and snack time experiences. We talked to the childminder about continuing to develop self-evaluation and record the impact and outcome of changes. They should use 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare.' as this document is aimed at helping services evaluate their work. It will help identify what is going well and areas for development. The bitesize information on the Care Inspectorate hub about quality assurance may also be useful. This will help improve outcomes for children.

## How good is our staff team?

**3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where there are some strengths, these just outweigh weaknesses.

### Quality Indicator 4.1 - Staff skills, knowledge and values.

Children benefitted from a kind, caring and consistent approach which helped them feel secure. The childminder had a good understanding of children's development and personalities. She recognised their friendship with each other and supported their play. As a result, children were having positive experiences.

The childminder used information from the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) to keep up to date with current events. They also linked with other childminders which also offered support. They had updated their knowledge as they had completed Paediatric first aid and child protection training. We talked to the childminder about increasing the range of training and learning they undertook. They should identify relevant learning to promote positive outcomes for children. We also talked about how best practice guidance could also support professional development as they reflect current practice and would support the development of the service. Training should be evaluated to show how it is used to improve outcomes for children. We made a recommendation about professional development at the last inspection which was not fully met, so will continue it.

**See area for improvement 1.**

### Areas for improvement

1. So children have positive outcomes, the childminder should continue to identify training and current best practice guidance that will help their professional development and promote the development of her service.

This is to ensure confidence in the people who support and care for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state "that I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes." (HSCS 3.14).

## 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 should record observations about children's learning and use the information to assess their progress and identify 'next steps' for their continued learning and development.

This is to ensure I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me. (HSCS 1.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder had recorded some observations about children's experiences. She identified how children were progressing and possible 'next steps' for their continued progress. She should continue to develop this to build up an overall picture of outcomes for children.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should develop the quality assurance systems to evaluate her service. She should use best practice guidance documents which will help identify what she does well and areas for development. Consideration should also be given to how she will gather and include feedback from children and parents in this process.

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

Area for Improvement Category

**This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

There was some evidence of how the service had been evaluated. The childminder had reviewed the service provision and was adapting it as they would be caring for mainly school age children. The childminder had used some best practice guidance to promote positive experiences for children. She had had outlined plans for developing the service.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

#### Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder should continue to identify training and current best practice guidance that will help their professional development and promote the development of her service so children have positive outcomes.

This is to ensure confidence in the people who support and care for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state "that I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes." (HSCS 3.14).

**This area for improvement was made on 17 October 2023.**

### Action taken since then

The childminder had completed paediatric first aid and child protection training. To fully meet the area for improvement, they need to evidence a range of learning that supports positive outcomes for children. We will continue this area for improvement.

## 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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