

Walker, Samantha Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 August 2024

Service provided by:
Samantha Walker

Service provider number:
SP2019990572

Service no:
CS2019375401

About the service

Samantha Walker provided a childminding service from their property in the residential Cove area of Aberdeen. The childminder is registered to provide a care service 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. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. Overnight care will not be provided. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate. Minded children will not access the garden area.

Children have access to the ground level of the childminder's home for play, rest, and meals. The childminder's home is close by local primary schools, parks and green spaces and a regular bus route.

About the inspection

This was a short notice inspection which took place on 07 August 2024 between the hours of 09:30 and 14:30. 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.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Spoke with children and observed their experiences
- Spoke with the childminder
- Received two completed questionnaires
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children attending the service were settled, happy and relaxed in the care of the childminder.
- The childminder had a friendly, nurturing, and welcoming approach with children and families which supported the development of trusting relationships.
- Children's overall wellbeing was very well supported by the childminder.
- Children had fun playing and learning and as a result were progressing well.
- The childminder's home was clean and welcoming.
- The childminder worked very closely with parents and children to make regular adaptations to the service as needed.
- The childminder showed a strong commitment to developing their own practice and a quality service for children and families.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were settled, happy and relaxed in the care of the childminder. The childminder provided lots of reassurance to children. This helped children feel loved, safe, and secure.

The childminder had formed close relationships with children and families and knew them very well. They worked in close partnership with parents to ensure each child's individual needs were met. This promoted positive outcomes for children as care and support was individualised. One parent commented, 'Sam is very understanding. I am always able to voice things happening at home and Sam is able to continue this on throughout her care.'

Children's overall wellbeing was very well supported by the childminder. The childminder knew the children very well, describing their interests, personalities and preferences and discussed how they supported these. For example, ways they provided support with eating new foods, toilet training, or developing confidence in speech. The childminder worked in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure personal plans contained up to date information about children. This supported the very good care of children and families.

The childminder provided a sociable, unhurried lunch experience for the children with lots of chatting and interactions. The childminder was aware of the benefits of sitting beside children while they ate. They understood how to use this time to provide lots of praise and encouragement to finish their lunch and to keep them safe from any choking hazards. Children had access to fresh water to ensure they were properly hydrated, supporting their health and wellbeing.

The childminder had reviewed and updated the sleeping arrangement for children attending. A cot was available for younger children and suitable portable sleep mats for older children. The childminder was aware of safety measures when using these and how to create a cosy and calm sleeping space while maintaining the safety of children.

Children were well supported in their personal care routines such as nappy changing and visiting the toilet. The childminder was mindful of the child privacy and dignity during these times. Children were familiar with these routines and the childminder used these times to support and connect with each child.

1.3 Play and learning

Resources were developmentally appropriate and easily accessible which gave children choice of what they played with. The childminder's supportive interactions with children during their play supported children to learn, develop confidence and feel secure.

The childminder had worked to improve the range of resources and activities on offer for children. There were a range of toys and resources available that supported children's interests. For example, arts and crafts, construction materials, books, treasures, and cars were of particular interests for some children. We

could see how children enjoyed exploring paint and mark making skills as well as play dough. Children enjoyed playing together and had built positive friendships through their play and learning. One child told us, 'I like seeing my friends. I like getting to play outside after school. Sam has fun things to play with.'

Literacy and numeracy development was promoted with a good selection of resources available, such as, books, mark making materials and turn taking games. The childminder's interactions supported early numerical skills as they sat together counting, matching shapes, and identifying colours. The childminder provided lots of praise as they had fun together. This supported children's literacy and language development.

The childminder had an improved understanding of child development and used this to plan for goals and next steps for each child. The childminder worked with children's interests and parents comments to provide varied activities that helped support children's wellbeing and learning. As a result, children were progressing well.

Children had opportunities to benefit from fresh air, exercise and to explore their local community by regularly spending time outdoors at local parks and green spaces. Parents told us that their children have, 'Lots of outdoor experiences' and they, 'Go on walks and go to playparks.' The children spoke to us about giving the 'lady pennies' on regular visits to the local shop to buy foods for snack. This supported children's play, learning and sense of community.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

The childminder's home was clean and welcoming. This enabled children to feel comfortable and safe within the setting. Children used the sitting room as the main play area for activities which provided plenty space to play and a large couch to rest and relax. A small child sized table was used for craft and games. Children were very comfortable in the space which helped them feel a sense of belonging.

Resources were stored on low level shelving, which were accessible to children and well organised. There was a range of toys and games on offer to support different play experiences and age ranges. Children were able to make choices and develop their own interests. The childminder was aware of how to manage varied age ranges and their access to resources and spoke about how some were only available for older children or under close supervision, such as Lego and other smaller items. This helped keep children safe.

A variety of measures were in place to keep children safe. Maintenance records were kept, and up to date risk assessments were in place, such as keeping safe outdoors.

During our visit, the childminder demonstrated effective infection prevention and control practices. For example, handwashing was well supported at key times, such as before lunch and after visiting the toilet. Nappy changing routines followed best practice and the use of personal protective equipment in a non-obtrusive manner. This meant children were safe from the potential spread of infection.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had a friendly, nurturing, and welcoming approach with children and families which supported the development of trusting relationships. The childminder spoke daily with parents during arrival and departure to exchange information. Photos and messages were shared regularly through media apps which supported parents to be involved in their children's experiences.

The childminder aimed to provide a safe and nurturing setting for all children in their care and an open channel of communication between them and families attending. This was well reflected in the childminder's practice. Parents commented, 'My child is always happy to go which is the key thing for me. My childminder's place is a safe space for my child' and 'My child is always happy to attend' and 'If I have got any concerns I can approach easily.'

The childminder had a range of up to date policies and procedures in place which supported them to provide a quality service. We spoke with the childminder on how some would require to be updated to reflect the most up to date best practice.

Children and families had opportunities to regularly discuss the service and make suggestions for improvements. Parents who returned our online questionnaire had no suggestions for any improvements. The childminder worked very closely with parents and children throughout the year to make regular changes as needed, such as toys and activities available to support the wellbeing of children.

The childminder was a member of Scottish Childminders Association (SCMA) and used this link to access support to develop their childminding practice. The childminder used opportunities to use of the document 'A Quality Framework for day-care of children and childminding and school-age childcare', to reflect on and evaluate their practice. This supported the ongoing development of the service.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder knew the children very well and provided compassionate and responsive care. We observed caring interactions between the childminder and the children. This supported children to feel valued and respected.

The childminder had undertaken training to promote their professional development. They had recently completed training courses on realising the ambition, parental involvement, autism and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The childminder reflected on these and had identified ways in which this would further help support children in their care. The childminder also continued to ensure core training, such as first aid and child protection, was up to date. They were committed to their professional learning and had recently began to undertake a profession qualification in childcare.

The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and had used this link to receive professional support and training. This provided access to resources and support to develop the quality of the service. The childminder was aspirational for their service and for the achievements of children. They showed a strong commitment to developing their own practice and a quality service for children and families.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 22 August 2023, the provider must ensure they provide a service within their conditions of registration at all times to ensure the safety of children and meet their legal responsibilities.

To do this the provider must at a minimum:

- a) Ensure they manage children's contracted and actual attendance hours to adhere to numbers permitted within their conditions of registration.
- b) Keep up to date records of attendance (including times arrived and departed) for all children.
- c) Inform parents of the conditions of registration.

This is to comply with Regulation 4 (1) (a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210) Welfare of users.

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 managed and led' (HSCS 4.23).

This requirement was made on 7 July 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

The childminder had reflected on their working pattern and made adjustments to suit the ongoing needs of the service. The childminder met their condition of use and kept ongoing record of attendance. Parents were informed about the conditions of registration before beginning to use the service.

Met - within timescales

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

To support children's safety and wellbeing, the childminder should ensure that they are knowledgeable in safe sleeping practices and that up to date guidance is reflected in practice.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skills, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 7 July 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had reviewed and updated the sleeping arrangements for children attending. A cot was available for younger children and suitable portable sleep mats for older children. The childminder was aware of safety measures when using these and how to create a cosy and calm sleeping space while maintaining the safety of children.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's overall wellbeing, up to date personal plans must be in place for all children. These should take into account the wellbeing indicators and be effective in supporting children.

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 my 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).

This area for improvement was made on 7 July 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder worked in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure personal plans contained up to date information about children. This supported the very good care of children and families.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children to learn, play and achieve, the childminder should develop ways to evaluate and plan for children's progress and achievements and that activities and experiences meet the needs of children and their own individual learning.

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

state that:

'As a child 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 7 July 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had worked to improve the range of resources and activities on offer for children. There were a range of toys and resources available that supported children's interests. The childminder had an improved understanding of child development and used this to plan for goals and next steps for each child. The childminder worked with children's interests and parents comments to provide varied activities that helped support children's wellbeing and learning. As a result, children were progressing well.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To support children's wellbeing and ensure that indoor environments are developmentally appropriate, information technology used (such as the television) should only be used for educational purposes and have appropriate parental controls applied at all times.

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

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying, and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

This area for improvement was made on 7 July 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had reviewed the use of technology and had reflected on seeing positive changes to how children played and interacted when the TV was not switched on. They also noted how this contributed to a calmer environment for children.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

In order to support their learning and development and to promote children's curiosity, inquiry and creativity the childminder should:

- a) Provide more open-ended, natural resources for children to explore in their play; and
- b) Ensure that children have access to a wide range of activities and experiences both indoors and out.

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

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 7 July 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had worked to improve the range of resources and activities on offer for children. There were a range of toys and resources available that supported children's interests appropriate to their age and stage of development. For example, arts and crafts, construction materials, books, treasures, and cars were particular interests for some children. Resources were stored on low level shelving, which were accessible to children and well organised.

Children had opportunities to benefit from fresh air, exercise and to explore their local community by regularly spending time outdoors at local parks and green spaces.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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