

Easton, Elise Child Minding

Dunfermline

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
23 October 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2003904697

Service no:
CS2003007780

About the service

Elise Easton provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Dunfermline. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own children.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in a small playroom at the front of the property and have access to the upstairs bathroom.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on 22 October 2024. We visited the service on three occasions throughout the day between 11:10 and 19:10. We gave feedback on 23 October 2024 between 18:10 and 19:35. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 information gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with five children using the service
- received feedback from several families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- completed checks of the premises registered for childminding
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- We were very concerned about the quality of children's care, play and learning experiences and found that their health, safety and welfare had been compromised as a result.
- Children experienced a few warm interactions such as cuddles and physical comfort which supported positive relationships.
- The childminder demonstrated poor professional knowledge and limited skills to run an effective childminding service that kept children safe and protected.
- The childminder lacked knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities and had a very limited understanding of how to identify and assess actual and potential risk.
- The childminder did not have important, relevant information recorded about each child to meet their health, safety and welfare needs.
- Children and families told us that the play experiences in the local community were a positive aspect of the service. However, we were made aware of an outing in the community which was not appropriate for children and had the potential to compromise their wellbeing.
- The childminder did not consistently demonstrate openness, honesty and transparency during the inspection.

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?	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our setting?	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our leadership?	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our staff team?	1 - Unsatisfactory

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

1 - Unsatisfactory

We were very concerned about aspects of the care being provided and we evaluated the service as delivering an unsatisfactory level of care for this key question.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced a few warm interactions such as cuddles and physical comfort which supported positive relationships. Children were mostly content, and four children told us they liked going to the childminders. Two parents were positive about the care their children experienced and told us that their children looked forward to spending time there.

The childminder did not have important, relevant information recorded about each child to meet their health, safety and welfare needs. This included information that childminders must keep to ensure children remain safe and protected from harm. We were very concerned that in the event of an emergency, children's health, safety and welfare could be compromised through them not receiving the right support at the right time (**see requirement 1**).

Not all children had a personal plan and the personal plans that were available did not detail children's current needs and choices. This meant that the childminder did not have sufficient information to support children's care, play and learning. This had the potential to compromise children's learning and wellbeing (**see requirement 2**).

Children did not experience a social, positive mealtime experience as the childminder was focused on other tasks. We discussed how this experience could be improved, for example with the childminder sitting, chatting and eating with children. Meals and snacks were not always nutritionally balanced and did not reflect current guidance to ensure children were supported to be healthy (**see area for improvement 1**).

Safe sleep guidance was not followed as young children slept in buggies. This did not support their safety, emotional security and wellbeing and had increased the risk of children coming to harm when sleeping (**see area for improvement 2**).

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Most children were happy, playing cooperatively together or independently. At times, the childminder got down to children's level to play with them. There were several missed opportunities to follow and extend children's interests. Children had a limited selection of resources to choose from, such as plastic animals, books and wooden blocks. There was limited space for them to explore their own ideas. This meant children experienced poor quality play and learning experiences in the childminder's home. We discussed this with the childminder during the inspection.

Children and families told us that the play experiences in the local community were a positive aspect of the service. This included going to the park, library and to a museum in Edinburgh. The childminder told us that they understood the value in offering children these types of opportunities. The childminder shared photographs with families of some children's experiences. While children enjoyed these experiences, we were very concerned that they were not planned in a safe way and that this compromised their health, safety and wellbeing. For example, the childminder did not have full registration information for children to take with them on trips and outings so that families could be contacted in the event of an emergency. We were made aware by other professionals of an outing in the community which was not appropriate for children and which had the potential to compromise children's wellbeing. We discussed our concerns with the childminder and advised them of the potential risks to children's health, safety and wellbeing that this experience posed. The childminder must ensure that children's play and learning opportunities are safe, appropriate and ensure children's health, wellbeing and welfare is protected at all times (**see requirement 1**).

Requirements

1. By 3 November 2024, the provider must meet children's health, safety and welfare needs by recording registration information for all children attending the setting. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, ensure each child's registration information includes:

- a) the child's name, address and date of birth
- b) the date they started using the service
- c) details of next of kin
- d) the name and address of their General Practitioner
- a) information about children's medical needs, including any allergies and/or dietary requirements.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) and Regulation 5 (Personal plans) of the Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

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) and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Records childminding services must keep and guidance on notification reporting'.

2. By 25 November 2024, the provider must meet children's health, safety and welfare needs by recording and implementing personal plans for all children registered in the service. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) create personal plans within 28 days of children starting the service
- b) ensure personal plans set out children's current needs, rights and choices and how they will be met
- c) understand the information within the personal plans, and use this to effectively meet each child's needs
- d) review personal plans at least once in every six-month period in partnership with children and families
- e) record information accurately.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) and Regulation 5 (Personal plans) of the Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

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) and 'I am supported and cared for sensitively by people who anticipate issues and are aware of and plan for any known vulnerability or frailty' (HSCS 3.18).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Guide for providers on personal planning: Early learning and childcare'.

3. By 25 November 2024, the provider must ensure children experience safe and appropriate play and learning experiences. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) ensure children experience safe, developmentally appropriate play and learning in line with their needs, rights and choices
- b) risk assess play and learning experiences to ensure children are safe and protected from harm
- c) make appropriate plans for any trips and outings to ensure that relevant information and resources are available to keep children safe and protected from harm
- d) make appropriate plans for keeping children safe and protected from harm in the event of an emergency.

This is to comply with Regulation 3 (Principles) and 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of the Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

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 that I chose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children to have safe and comfortable sleep, the childminder should improve the children's sleeping environment. This should include, but is not limited to, providing suitable equipment for children to have high quality, safe sleep.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Scottish Cot Death Trust document, 'Early Years Safe Sleeping Guide.'

2. To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should offer children a positive, social mealtime experience. This should include, but is not limited to, providing meals and snacks that are nutritious and balanced to meet children's dietary needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning' (HSCS 1.33) and 'My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs, and preferences' (HSCS 1.37).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Scottish Government document, 'Setting the Table: Nutritional Standards and Practical Guidance for Early Learning and Childcare Providers in Scotland'.

How good is our setting?

1 - Unsatisfactory

We were very concerned about aspects of the care being provided and we evaluated the service as delivering an unsatisfactory level of care for this key question.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder's infection, prevention and control measures were ineffective which increased the risk of infection (**see requirement 1**). For example, children did not wash their hands before eating. We reminded the childminder of this during the inspection, however, two further opportunities were missed to encourage children to wash their hands before eating. We discussed with the childminder when children should wash their hands to minimise the risk of the spread of infection. In addition, we found that there were no aprons available for nappy changing, a child was given their dummy which had been on the floor and the buggy used by children was in poor condition. Since our inspection visits, the childminder informed us that they had purchased storage boxes for dummies when they were not being used and a new buggy. We will assess if this has reduced risks for children at our next inspection visit.

Some items on display in the childminder's home were not appropriate for children and exposed them to material which was unsuitable, for example, explicit language was used in one framed poster in the kitchen. The childminder informed us during the inspection process that these items had been removed. We will assess this at the next inspection. The childminder must ensure that the premises are fit for purpose and offer children a safe environment that protects their wellbeing (**see requirement 2**).

Children experienced a clean and generally well-presented environment. During our visits they spent all of their time in a small playroom. There was a limited choice of resources and children could rest and relax on a sofa. At times, the playroom was cramped due to the number of children. This meant that children did not have sufficient space to play. Children should be offered the use of other suitable and appropriate rooms and spaces in the childminder's home, to promote choice in their care, play and learning experiences (**see area for improvement 1**).

Requirements

1. By 3 November 2024, the provider must ensure that effective infection prevention and control practices are in place to support children's health and wellbeing. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) effective handwashing routines are implemented and established for all children
- b) personal protective equipment is used effectively during nappy changing
- c) dummies are stored hygienically and cleaned when required
- d) all equipment used for childminding purposes is safe and well-maintained.

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

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

2. By 3 November 2024, the provider must ensure that the premises are fit for purpose and offer children a safe environment that meets the aims and objectives for childminding purposes. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) ensure any inappropriate items are removed from the setting that may compromise children's wellbeing
- b) ensure areas accessed by children are safe and appropriate for children's care, play and learning experiences.

This is to comply with Regulation 10(2)(a) and (d) (Fitness of premises) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children experience an environment which meets their rights, needs, and choices, the childminder should ensure children have sufficient space to play, rest and relax.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I have enough physical space to meet my needs and wishes' (HSCS 5.20).

How good is our leadership?

1 - Unsatisfactory

We were very concerned about aspects of the care being provided and we evaluated the service as delivering an unsatisfactory level of care for this key question.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder demonstrated poor professional knowledge and limited skills to run an effective childminding service that kept children safe and protected. They lacked knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities as a provider of a care service. They also had a very limited understanding of how to identify and assess actual and potential risk. As a result, children's health, safety and welfare was significantly compromised (**see requirement 1**).

The childminder failed to submit relevant notifications to support safe practice, including informing us of a serious incident. We were very concerned that the childminder lacked an understanding of the potential risks that this incident posed to children. We were also concerned that the childminder did not inform us of this incident so we could assess the potential impact on children's health, safety and welfare. The childminder must improve their understanding of the notifications they must submit to relevant agencies to keep children safe and protected from harm (**see requirement 1**).

In addition, they did not inform us of members of the household over the age of 16 to ensure relevant safety checks were undertaken. This had the potential to put children at significant risk. The childminder submitted information to allow us to complete relevant checks during the inspection process.

Families had some opportunities to give feedback, for example, through daily discussions and technology. This helped to build positive relationships and exchange information. Feedback from families was gathered through questionnaires, however, it was unclear how the childminder used this information to improve the service.

There were no systems in place to evaluate the quality of the service and identify areas for improvement. Our inspection highlighted a number of serious concerns, as detailed within this report, which had not been identified by the childminder. We have required the childminder to take urgent action to improve experiences and outcomes for children.

Requirements

1. By 25 November 2024, the childminder must become familiar with the regulations and responsibilities of operating a childminding service. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) become familiar with the Scottish Statutory Instruments SSI 210
- b) become familiar with 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare settings'
- c) know what records childminding services must keep and when notifications need to be made in line with guidance.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 7 (2)(c) (Fitness of managers) 2(c) of the Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

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 skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14) and 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Records childminding services must keep and notification reporting guidance'.

How good is our staff team?

1 - Unsatisfactory

We were very concerned about aspects of the care being provided and we evaluated the service as delivering an unsatisfactory level of care for this key question.

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

At times, children experienced some interactions which were kind. The childminder sometimes sat with children at their level and played alongside them. This was inconsistent, and interactions did not always support children's needs and interests.

The childminder did not consistently demonstrate openness, honesty and transparency during the inspection. For example, it was unclear how many children they were caring for, who the children were or when children attended. The childminder kept inaccurate and ineffective records which meant we were unable to establish if the childminder was working within their conditions of registration (**see requirement 1**).

The childminder had a very limited understanding of their role in child protection and safeguarding which had the potential to put children at increased risk of harm. They were not confident about what to do, including contacting other professionals, if child protection or wellbeing concerns arose. They had also not completed relevant checks for people living in the home, in line with child protection guidance. In addition, a serious incident had the potential to compromise children's health, safety and welfare, showing a lack of understanding in protecting children from harm. As a result, there was the potential that children's safety and wellbeing was not protected (**see requirement 2**). During the inspection process, the childminder informed us they had completed child protection training. We will assess the impact of this at the next inspection.

Requirements

1. By 25 November 2024, the provider must keep accurate records of children's attendance to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing needs are protected by following the service conditions of registration.

This is to comply with Regulation 6 (2)(a) (Fitness of Providers) of the Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

2. By 11 November 2024, the provider must ensure that children are safeguarded and protected from harm. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of child protection and safeguarding practices.

This is in order to comply with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/210) 4(1)(a) Requirements to make proper provision for the health and welfare of service users.

This is to ensure 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 is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023'.

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?	1 - Unsatisfactory
1.1 Nurturing care and support	1 - Unsatisfactory
1.3 Play and learning	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our setting?	1 - Unsatisfactory
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our leadership?	1 - Unsatisfactory
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	1 - Unsatisfactory
How good is our staff team?	1 - Unsatisfactory
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	1 - Unsatisfactory

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