

Douglas, Angela Child Minding

Dumfries

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 February 2025

Service provided by:
Angela Douglas

Service provider number:
SP2003907364

Service no:
CS2003013761

About the service

Angela Douglas provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Dumfries. The service is within close proximity to public transport links and a variety of local amenities. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of four children under the age of 16. Of these children, a maximum of four are under 12 years, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months.

Anne Kerr and Rachel Visca are employed as assistants. When an assistant is working with the childminder, the care service may be provided to a maximum of eight children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of eight will be under 12 and of whom no more than two are under 12 months. Children are cared for on the ground floor of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced follow up inspection which took place on 29 January 2025 between 11:45 and 13:30, and 6 February 2025 between 12:40 and 14:30. The inspection was carried out by three 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 intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed children using the service
- spoke with the childminder and one assistant
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Our inspection raised significant concerns in relation to how children's health, welfare and safety needs were met. As a result, we issued the service with an Improvement Notice on 12 February 2025. For further details of this enforcement see the service's page on our website at www.careinspectorate.com.

Key messages

- Our inspection raised significant concerns in relation to how children's health, welfare and safety needs were met.
- The childminder operated outwith the conditions of their registration. They did not ensure that an assistant was present in the service when required to meet children's needs.
- Fire exits were not clear of obstruction to support a safe evacuation in the event of an emergency.
- Children's personal plans did not support safe delivery of children's care.

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 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

At the previous inspection, we evaluated the quality of children's care and support as adequate. At this inspection, we were very concerned about children's care and support and have re-evaluated this quality indicator as unsatisfactory.

1.1 Nurturing care and support.

Immediate remedial action is required to ensure children receive care and support that promotes positive outcomes for them.

Children's care and support was significantly compromised. Children were unsupervised when we arrived for inspection, and the service was not appropriately staffed to meet their needs. The childminder was registered to care for a maximum of four children under the age of 16, of whom no more than three should be of an age not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one should be under 12 months. The childminder had six children in their care, all aged two years or under. This put children's safety and wellbeing at significant risk. As a result, we issued the childminder with an improvement notice on 12 February 2025.

Whilst the childminder's interactions were kind and caring, due to the amount of very young children in their care, they were unable to respond in a timely manner to children's individual needs. For example, one young child had been left unsupervised and unsupported in the toilet. This compromised their safety and wellbeing. One child was falling asleep on a low chair. The childminder acknowledged that they required a sleep, but they were unable to support this as they were feeding another young child. This meant that the child was not comfortable or supported to rest.

Some children required support with toileting or nappy changing. The childminder was engaged in feeding another child and did not support children with personal care until after lunch. This compromised children's dignity and wellbeing. Children experienced minimal interaction as the childminder was focussed on other tasks. We observed that some children were quiet, withdrawn and not encouraged to engage in play. This meant that children did not experience quality engagement to support their wellbeing. Given our level of significant concern, we remained at the service with the childminder until some children were collected by their parents and carers.

The childminder did not have all the information needed to support children's health and wellbeing needs. Whilst most children had personal plans in place, vital information about their complex medical needs and how they should be supported was missing. This put children at significant risk of harm. During the last inspection, we made a requirement about personal plans. This requirement had not been met, and we issued the childminder an improvement notice that reflects our concerns (see improvement notice, required improvement 1).

How good is our staff team?

1 - Unsatisfactory

At the previous inspection, we evaluated the quality of staff deployment as adequate. At this inspection, we were very concerned about children's care and support and have re-evaluated this quality indicator as unsatisfactory.

4.3 Staff deployment

Immediate remedial action is required to ensure children receive care and support that promotes positive outcomes for them.

As detailed in quality indicator 1.1 of this report, we were concerned that staffing levels were not managed appropriately to meet children's needs. There were periods of time where the childminder cared for very young children without an assistant. This meant that the childminder was unable to meet children's needs which significantly impacted on their quality of care and support. During our observations, the lack of supervision and adult interaction raised serious concerns around children's safety and their emotional wellbeing. Following a previous inspection, we made a requirement that staffing should be improved. This requirement had not been met. We issued the childminder with an improvement notice and required that staffing levels are improved within a short timeframe (see improvement notice, required improvement 3).

Systems to support staffing levels when planned or unplanned absences occurred were poorly managed. This meant that the childminder was caring for more children than they were registered to care for. As a result, the childminder was not able to appropriately meet and manage the care and support needs of all children present. This put children at significant risk of harm.

The childminder's approach to staffing was not outcome focussed. We found previous occurrences and identified future dates where the childminder planned to work alone with more young children than permitted within the conditions of their registration. This raised serious concerns around the childminder's ability to keep children safe.

Children's care and support was not met in response to their needs. As highlighted in quality indicator 1.1, the childminder was task focussed rather than engaging in high quality interactions. For example, young children were strapped into highchairs and buggies without any toys. This restricted their movements and meant that children were not supported to engage in quality play and learning experiences. This impacted negatively on outcomes for children.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 29 January 2025 the provider must ensure all children have a personal plan in place that sets out how children's health, welfare and safety needs will be met. Plans must include clear and full information about children's health and 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 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 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 requirement was made on 22 November 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Whilst some personal plans had been updated since the last inspection, others lacked significant information that supported the childminder to meet children's needs. Some children did not have a plan in place at all.

Overall, we were concerned that gaps in the information recorded had the potential to significantly impact on children's health, wellbeing and safety.

This requirement was not met and is now subject to an Improvement notice. For further details of this enforcement see the service's page on our website at www.careinspectorate.com.

Not met

Requirement 2

By 19 December 2024 the provider must provide a safe environment. In order to achieve this, the provider must ensure that fire escape routes and areas children access are clear from clutter and hazardous substances at all times whilst children are present.

This is in order to comply with regulation 4 (1)(a) (Welfare of users) of the Social Care and Social Work 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 environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

This requirement was made on 22 November 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Since the last inspection the childminder had taken action to remove cleaning products and some clutter from the hall. However, at this inspection the environment remained unsafe for children. Some clutter remained in the hallway and a buggy where a child was sleeping directly blocked the front door of the premises. This posed a potential risk of children being unable to exit the premises quickly in an emergency.

This requirement was not met and is now subject to an Improvement notice. For further details of this enforcement see the service's page on our website at www.careinspectorate.com.

Not met

Requirement 3

By 8 February 2024, the provider must ensure that the service is appropriately staffed to meet children's needs. Conditions of registration must be adhered to. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

a) Ensure the maximum number of children attending the service does not exceed the number stated on the registration certificate.

- b) Ensure necessary adjustments are made to staffing level to reflect the conditions of your registration.
- c) Provide evidence that action has been taken to ensure you are working within the conditions of your registration.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4 (1)(a) Welfare of users and Regulation 15(a) Staffing of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

An extension to this timescale has been agreed to 29 January 2025.

This requirement was made on 23 March 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

The childminder was working alone with six children aged two and under on the first day of our inspection. Diary entries evidenced regular periods of time that the childminder had not made adjustments to staffing levels to meet the conditions of their registration. Future dates had been planned that would result in the childminder operating outwith the conditions of their registration. This put children at risk from harm.

This requirement was not met and is now subject to an Improvement notice. For further details of this enforcement see the service's page on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

Not met

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 health and wellbeing, the childminder should develop comfortable and cosy spaces in the playroom for children to rest, relax and regulate their emotions. The childminder should also develop a safe, comfortable and clutter free space for children to sleep when required.

This is to ensure the care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states 'If I experience care and support in a group, I experience a homely environment and can use a comfortable area with soft furnishing to relax.' (HSCS 5.6) and 'my environment is safe and secure.' (HSCS 5.19).

This area for improvement was made on 22 November 2024.

Action taken since then

At this inspection we found that improvements were still needed to support an environment where children's wellbeing needs could be met and they could sleep safely. We acknowledge that an area for children to relax had been identified and that two cushions had been added to that space. However, more furnishings and materials were needed to make sure it was cosy and welcoming for children.

This area for improvement was not met.

Previous area for improvement 2

In order to ensure that children's needs are met, safely and effectively:

The childminder should develop a systematic and consistent process for evaluating the quality of her service which involves staff, children and parents/carers and leads to an action plan for improvement.

This ensures management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11); and 'I can be meaningfully involved in how the organisations that support and care for me work and develop.' (HSCS 4.6)

This area for improvement was made on 8 August 2022.

Action taken since then

This area for improvement was not assessed at this follow up inspection.

Previous area for improvement 3

In order to ensure that children's needs are met, safely and effectively:

(1) The childminder should ensure that she keeps up to date with current best practice guidance, and attends relevant training regularly.

(2) The childminder should continue to develop an effective system for identifying and monitoring staff development needs, which should include regular opportunities to discuss and attend relevant training.

This ensures management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11); and '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 8 August 2022.

Action taken since then

This area for improvement was not assessed at this follow up inspection.

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
How good is our staff team?	1 - Unsatisfactory
4.3 Staff deployment	1 - Unsatisfactory

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