

# Charlene's Happy Hearts Childcare Child Minding

Cowdenbeath

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
6 May 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Charlene Buchanan

**Service provider number:**  
SP2019990797

**Service no:**  
CS2019377088

## About the service

Charlene's Happy Hearts Childcare is operated by Charlene Buchanan, who provides a childminding service from their family home within Cowdenbeath, Fife. They provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than three may be of an age not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one may be less than 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family. The service is close to local amenities including green spaces, the local nursery, primary schools and local shops. The service is delivered from the ground floor of the family home and children have access to the lounge, dining kitchen and downstairs bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 May 2025 between 10:30 and 13:30. We provided feedback by telephone on the day of the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service.

This included registration and any complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with three children using the service
- reviewed feedback from families using MS forms
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

Children experienced nurturing care and support from a childminder who knew them very well.

The childminder recognised the importance of fun in children's play.

Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried, this supported children's wellbeing.

Children benefitted from a range of play experiences which reflected their current interests.

Children's wellbeing was enhanced and promoted as the childminder had formed strong and trusting relationships with them and their families.

Since the previous inspection, the childminder had made good progress, all previous requirements and areas for improvement have now been met.

## 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?	4 - Good

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 positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were having fun with the childminder, and they benefitted from warm, responsive and nurturing care. This helped children to feel valued, safe and loved. The childminder had developed positive and nurturing relationships with children and their families. Families who responded to our MS forms questionnaire strongly agreed that they had a good relationship with their childminder. Some comments included:

"She is excellent with my child,"

"Always keeps me updated and checks in regularly on days off."

Since the last inspection the childminder had further developed children's personal plans. The plans contained key information which helped the childminder support children's overall development and meet their individual needs. Plans were regularly reviewed with families to ensure information was current to fully meet the needs of children. This approach ensured families were included in the care of their child. Families strongly agreed that they felt involved in their child's care.

Communication was a key strength of the service. This included daily communication between the childminder and families, closed Facebook page and sharing learning through a digital application. This approach ensured that families were involved in their child's care and their individual home routines and preferences were respected.

Children experienced relaxed mealtimes. Families provided all meals, and the childminder provided a variety of healthy snacks. The childminder understood the importance of a balanced diet and supported the children to develop positive eating habits. Children were actively involved in snack preparation. This helped them to develop valuable life skills such as chopping and pouring and it promoted independence and choice. This approach further supported mealtimes to be sociable and relaxed. The childminder was knowledgeable about choking risks and how to prevent these. These measures helped to ensure a safe and sociable mealtime experience for children.

Children's health and wellbeing needs were carefully considered through the correct and well organised storage of medication. All consent forms were completed with families, and since the last inspection the childminder had developed a system to ensure medication was regularly reviewed to ensure information was current.

The childminder spoke with confidence about their role in keeping children safe from harm. Online child protection training helped to ensure they were kept up to date with current guidance and practice.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children could independently access a variety of resources both indoors and outdoors, activities were spontaneous to support children's interests. The childminder was knowledgeable about children's individual interests and how to support these, adapting activities to suit their different needs. This approach promoted play experiences that were meaningful and interesting, encouraging children to direct their own play and learning.

The childminder understood the importance of outdoor play opportunities. This supported children to be healthy and active. Since the last inspection the childminder had developed the garden space ensuring it was safe, and resources were appropriate. Children were engaged in using open ended resources such as crates, tyres, logs stones and shells. These resources further enhanced existing outdoor resources and offered children greater challenge through engaging in different experiences and supporting creativity. Children were also developing strong community links by regular visits to the nearby parks, local care home and library. This approach helped to enhance children's learning and encouraged them to make positive connections with their local community.

Planning approaches were responsive, and child led. This encouraged children to feel valued, respected and listened to. Children's play and learning was recorded within their individual files on the digital app. The childminder used photographs and written observations to track children's progress. This information was regularly shared with families. The childminder also had regular progress meetings with families to share children's learning and development. This promoted partnership working with families ensuring they felt included in their child's learning and development.

Children benefitted from a variety of resources and experiences that promoted literacy and numeracy. This was naturally embedded across the service and through meaningful interactions. The childminder offered children support and challenge, by using open ended questioning. The childminder encouraged children to problem solve and extended their language skills at a pace that was right for them.

### How good is our setting?

**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from an environment that was welcoming, bright and well ventilated. The childminder had improved the spaces both indoors and outdoors to ensure they were now safe and clean. Children were confident in moving around the areas of the home and could access the secure garden area. The garden was secure and spacious. Space was used well to allow children to be physically active using climbing equipment and children were excited by the new football goals they had lots of fun scoring goals and practising their kicks.

The childminder had further developed their risk assessments to ensure children's safety, including outings and areas accessed in the wider community. This prioritised children's safety and wellbeing protecting them from potential harm. A range of detailed policies were also in place these were regularly reviewed to reflect best practice guidance. This approach supported children's health, wellbeing and safety.

We found infection control measures had improved since the last inspection and this helped to reduce the potential spread of infection. Effective handwashing routines were embedded into daily practice. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was used effectively by the childminder to reduce the risk of cross contamination within the service. This supported a safe and healthy environment for children.

Children's information was stored securely on a digital app. This ensured that each child's personal information was kept private.

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

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

Children benefitted from the childminder's positive and nurturing ethos. The childminder's caring approach supported children to make choices and be independent. This reflected the aims of the service which put children at the heart. This supported children to feel valued, respected and loved.

Since the last inspection the childminder had developed a meaningful improvement plan for their service, and this supported their continued self-evaluation. Using the quality framework for day-care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare the childminder had identified what they were doing well and some areas they would like to develop within their service. To further support this the childminder sought the views of children and their families. These views were important to the childminder. Formal feedback was gathered through questionnaires and daily conversations provided informal feedback. Families strongly agreed that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. This encouraged families to be included and contribute to the life and development of the service.

Positive relationships were a strength of the service. The childminder understood the importance of developing relationships, and this encouraged children and families to feel valued, respected and included.

The childminder had a record of training that had been recently completed. For example, First Aid and child protection had been updated. We suggested that the childminder reflect further on their training opportunities and note down any changes to their daily practice because of training.

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 4.1: Skills, knowledge and values

Children's wellbeing was well supported through the childminder's kind and nurturing approach. This ensured that children and families felt safe, valued and respected. The childminder understood how children learn and develop. They were kind and patient when interacting with children. This contributed positively to children's overall wellbeing and helped them to feel loved, valued and secure.

Children felt comfortable in the childminders care and regularly sought cuddles. Interactions were responsive and nurturing, which promoted confidence, trust and genuine love.

The childminder responded to individual children's cues and body language; this enabled them to meet their needs and supported younger children who were developing their language and communication skills.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to their own learning and development. They had successfully completed some online courses relevant to their role including first aid and child protection to help safeguard children's wellbeing. We also discussed how the childminder was using best practice guidance documents on: The Care Inspectorate Hub and we could see this was having a positive impact on the service provided.

It was important to acknowledge that the childminder had made several improvements since the last inspection. This indicated a committed approach to their role, which was focused on supporting children to reach their potential.

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

### Requirements

#### Requirement 1

By 30 September 2024, in order to ensure children receive appropriate care and support at all times, the childminder must develop personal plans for each child using the service. These must set out how each child's health, welfare and safety needs are to be met. Reference should be made to the document 'Records childminding services must keep and guidance on notification reporting'. Personal plans must be reviewed by the childminder and the child's family at least once every six months, or sooner if there is any change to the child's care or welfare needs. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard 1.15, which states 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) It is also necessary to comply with Regulation 5(1)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(c) (Personal plans) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011/210.

**This requirement was made on 9 August 2024.**

#### Action taken on previous requirement

All children have a personal plan in place. This contains key information relating to each child's individual needs to ensure the childminder is meeting children's needs throughout their day. These have been updated every six months or sooner if required.

**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

The childminder should review medication held every 28 days in line with practice guidelines, to ensure that current medication and/or dosage is still appropriate to promote children's health and wellbeing. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "My future care and support needs are anticipated as part of my assessment" (HSCS 1.14).

**This area for improvement was made on 9 August 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder has devised systems to review medication every 28 days with families to ensure that current medication remains appropriate. This has now been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should develop opportunities to assess her service and enhance positive outcomes for children. This should include; - creating an improvement/action plan for the year ahead to identify priorities and support change - creating regular opportunities for formal feedback from children and families and using this to drive improvements - becoming familiar with and making use of the new 'Quality Framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding and School-aged Childcare' alongside the Health and Social Care Standards. Reference should also be made to the 'Self-evaluation Toolkit for Childminders' available on our website. This would provide evidence of progress and support action planning for future improvements. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (HSCS 4.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 9 August 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder has created an improvement plan relevant to their service. They are actively seeking feedback from children and their families to shape ongoing improvements to the service. The childminder is engaging with best practice guidance to support their improvement journey. This has now been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder should identify and access suitable training and self directed learning to support children's wellbeing and positive outcomes. This should include reviewing a range of best practice documents available as referenced within the Care Inspectorate document 'A Quality Framework for Childminding, Daycare of Children and School-aged Childcare.' This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard 3.14, which states 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 9 August 2024.**

**Action taken since then**

Since the last inspection the childminder has accessed a variety of training courses relevant to their role. The childminder is engaging positively with best practice guidance to support their role. This has impacted positively on outcomes for children and their families. This has now 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](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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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