

# McArthur, Carol Child Minding

Dalkeith

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
19 March 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Carol McArthur

**Service provider number:**  
SP2004937456

**Service no:**  
CS2003039370

## About the service

Carol McArthur provides a childminding service from their home, situated within a small village in Dalkeith, Midlothian. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children under the age of 16 years; of whom no more than 6 will be under 12 years; of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 will be under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

Children have access to a living room, additional room, kitchen, toilet facilities and a secure garden at the rear of the property.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 March 2025 between the times of 13:40 to 15:00, and 15:45 and 17:00. 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.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with six children and observed their play
- observed practice and daily life
- received five online questionnaire responses from families
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children were happy and confident and benefitted from warm, caring interactions from a childminder who knew them well.
- Parents provided us with positive feedback regarding their child's care, play and learning.
- To support children's health, wellbeing and safety needs, personal plans should be improved.
- The childminder's home was clean, tidy and well maintained.
- Children benefitted from access to stimulating outdoor play spaces supporting their health and wellbeing.
- The childminder should update their knowledge and practice to ensure they offer a service that prioritises the safety, wellbeing and development of the children in their 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
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?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated different parts of this key question as adequate and good, with an overall grade of adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

In general, children were nurtured and supported throughout their daily experiences. They experienced calm and kind interactions from the childminder who knew them well. Their experience and long-standing relationships with children, some of whom they had cared for since babies, supported children to communicate their needs and feelings. This demonstrated secure relationships where children felt at ease. One family told us, "[The childminder] has looked after my children for a number of years, they are happy and well cared for". Another family told us, "[The childminder] provides a home from home environment, it is warm and welcoming".

Children could select snacks which were on the whole healthy and offered nutritional value. During our visit the childminder prepared and served snacks to children. However, they shared, Friday lunchtimes children are offered opportunities for preparation and serving. Children excitedly told us, "We made crepes and could choose what we wanted on them, they were so nice". The childminder could enhance snack times by offering children more opportunities to participate in planning, preparation and serving, where appropriate. This would foster children's confidence and self-esteem as they develop into capable, independent learners. Resources, such as 'Food Matters Nurturing happy, healthy children' (Care Inspectorate 2018), should help support the childminder in ensuring their practice positively impacts on children's relationships with food and their eating experiences.

Children's individual health and wellbeing was not supported through effective personal planning. There was insufficient information recorded in children's individual plans to support their needs. The childminder held written records of basic contractual information and allergy details collected at the start of placements. Families told us that they thought the childminder knew their children well. However, as part of their regulatory responsibility services must have personal plans which detail information about children and how their care needs will be met. We sign posted the childminder to 'Guide for providers on personal planning, Early Learning and Childcare' (Care Inspectorate, 2021). An area for improvement identified following the last inspection, had not been met. We have required the childminder to complete and maintain personal plans for each child. **(See Requirement 1)**

At the time of our visit there were no children requiring medication. We reviewed some medications records. These had necessary information to ensure safe administration. However, the medication policy and procedure did not follow current good practice and needed to be updated to ensure that children's health and welfare was fully promoted. We sign posted the childminder to the 'Management of Medication in Daycare of children and Childminding Services' (Care Inspectorate 2024). (We have made a requirement regarding policies and procedures under section 'How good is our leadership?')

Although policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection were in place these needed to be updated to reflect current good practice and guidance. We sign posted the service to 'Scottish Government, National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland' (2021 - updated 2023). Our discussion with the childminder evidenced that there was a lack of confidence and understanding of roles and responsibilities in the handling of child protection concerns. The childminder required to update their child protection training to ensure that children were protected from harm and to increase their knowledge and understanding of child protection responsibilities. (See requirement 1 under section 'How good is our staff team?')

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun as they experienced a range of play, learning and development opportunities. They were confident in their environment and mainly played outdoors. They climbed trees, played in the play park and played football in the open grass space. Children had opportunities to be curious and test things out for themselves. They told us, "I like playing last to leave the bush game and playing at the park". Another shared, "I like playing football and the five second rule game". The childminder trusted the children to take risks and at times supported them in managing these. Family feedback was positive about the play opportunities provided, they told us, "My child has fun there" and "They can play in the back garden, hide and seek, cars, Lego, football and also at the play park". As a result, children experienced a sense of wonder, curiosity, confidence and connection with nature, this contributed to their overall health and wellbeing.

Children were empowered to lead their play and learning. Following outdoor play, some chose to rest and relax indoors, they engaged in creative arts and crafts and digital games. Children told us, "I like playing safe kids on the chrome book" and "I like arts and crafts, sometimes we play board games". The childminder listened to children and responded to their developmental stages, providing appropriate experiences. A child proudly shared, "I had an idea I could make my own comic; [The childminder] helped me make it into a book using staples and threading the wool through". They recalled the childminder's assistance in overcoming a binding challenge. This fostered children's creativity, thinking and problem-solving abilities. Families told us, "The childminder is always asking parents and children what types of activities they would like to do".

Individual memory books had been created by the childminder for most children. These were in the process of being updated, we discussed the importance of keeping these up to date and encouraged the childminder to support children to contribute to these. This would support their participation and provide them with a sense of ownership over their books. Furthermore, it would contribute to extending experiences around children's wishes and choices. A child excitedly told us when looking through their book, "I remember making that" (a dress). The child's sense of achievement was evident, especially as their friend wore the creation.

Families were positive about children's play experiences and the childminder's communication about them. Their comments included, "If I mention something that my child enjoys, [The childminder] will try to find ways to offer that opportunity" and "The childminder always keeps us up to date with any activities they will be doing, from special trips or even trips to shops to collect supplies".

### Requirements

1. By 30 July 2025, the provider must ensure that all children have a personal plan which sets out how their individual needs will be met as well as their wishes and choices.

To do this the provider must at a minimum:

- a) Ensure that they understand the purpose of personal plans and are familiar with Care Inspectorate guidance 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning, Early Learning and Childcare'.
- b) Ensure that personal plans are in place for all children and are regularly reviewed with children and families, at least every six months, and when necessary, to ensure that information is up to date to reflect children's current needs, wishes and choices.

This is to comply with regulation 4(1)(a) and regulation 5(2)(b) (Personal Plans) 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 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).

## How good is our setting?

## 4 - Good

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

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

The environment supported children to freely explore and use their own initiative. Children could choose where to spend their time as they moved between the lounge, kitchen, an extra room with small sofa and outdoor space. This meant that they could choose where they wanted to be, whether to play with others or relax in a quieter area.

Indoor and outdoor environments were developmentally appropriate. A wide range of resources were available to children. For example, Lego, arts and craft resources, board games and technology such as, a laptop and a TV. One family commented, "They have a variety of outdoor play items like balls, etc, that they can play with". The childminder shared how they rotate resources both indoors and outdoors depending on what children are attending that day. As a result, the wide range of resources developed children's play and learning.

The childminder's home and garden was clean, safe and well maintained. Food preparation areas were clutter free and the toilet was clean. However, we observed few children washing their hands before eating and after outdoor play. To enhance infection prevention and control, we recommend the childminder revisit handwashing routines with the children. This would contribute to minimising the spread of infection.

Children were given opportunities to be independent and access nearby outdoor play areas. Overall, these opportunities were age appropriate and children demonstrated an awareness of outdoor safety, boundaries and were regularly remind by the childminder of risks. However, this practice was not suitable for the younger children in the group and more robust risk assessment and supervision procedures were needed to ensure their safety. (See Requirement 1 under section 'How good is our leadership?')

## How good is our leadership?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

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

The childminder had created a happy and welcoming ethos in the service, which promoted a positive atmosphere for children to play and learn. Families commented, "[The childminder] has become an integral part of our child's life; they are a significant adult who nurtures our child, and we really appreciate this". Another told us, "My childminder is like another family member. Nothing is too much bother".

The childminder had many years of experience and had developed skills to support families through the building of positive relationships. There were elements of the service which needed to be updated to ensure that the childminder was working to current good practice and safe childcare practices. For example, personal planning, medication, child protection and risk assessment procedures. The childminder acknowledged this and made some immediate adaptations. We have signposted them to the Care inspectorate website and the HUB where information on good practice could be found. **(See Requirement 1)**

All families agreed both they and their children were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. One family told us, "[The childminder] is always asking for extra ideas or suggestions on how to improve things or new activities". Another family commented, "[The childminder] always consults with us and my child's viewpoints are considered prior to any changes being made". However, there were no formal systems in place to gather and record the views of children and families or to evaluate the service and identify areas for improvement in service development. We discussed the benefits of using quality audit tools, such as 'A quality framework for day-care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' (Care Inspectorate 2022), to support self-evaluation.

The childminder was operating outwith their conditions of registration. Immediate action was taken to address the situation therefore we have not made a requirement here. However, the certificate of registration must be displayed in the home to ensure that parents are aware of the number of children who can be cared for at any one time. **(See Area for improvement 1)**

### Requirements

1. By 30 August 2025, the childminder must review and update their policies, procedures and risk assessments to ensure they reflect best practice guidance and prioritise children's safety.

Priority must be given but not limited to the following:

- a) Review, further develop and implement their child protection and safeguarding policy and procedure. The childminder's policy must outline clear reporting procedures, including details on internal and external reporting mechanisms.
- b) Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated.
- c) Medication to include most recent guidance.

d) Digital technology to ensure children are safe while accessing the internet.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) and 4(1)(d) 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); and

'My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event' (HSCS 4.14).

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children are cared for in a group size that is right for them and to adhere to conditions of registration, the childminder should ensure they take a more formal approach to recording attendance and allocating placements in the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience care and support in a group, the overall size and composition of that group is right for me' (HSCS 1.8).

## How good is our staff team?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

#### Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder's kindness and long-term care for some children enabled children to feel loved and secure. They were available when children needed them. One family commented, "I have been with my childminder for 14 years and have never had any complaints or issues with the care they provide. They provide excellent care and a loving and safe environment". Another told us, "[The childminder] demonstrates genuine care and attentiveness, creating a nurturing environment where my child feels safe and valued". This demonstrated a commitment to nurturing care and support.

Although the childminder was an experienced child carer there were gaps in professional knowledge that would enable them to fully promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children. The childminder must attend child protection training to further their understanding of roles and responsibilities in this area. **(See Requirement 1)**

To ensure children experience a service that is based on current best practice, the childminder should develop their skills and knowledge through training, self-directed reading and developing awareness of good practice documents. **(See Area for improvement 1)**



## Requirements

1. By 30 August 2025, the childminder must demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding.

To do this the childminder must at a minimum:

a) Attend training to ensure that the childminder can recognise, respond and appropriately report signs that a child is at risk of harm. A record of completion of the training must be kept.

This is to comply with regulation 3 and regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210) and section 8(1)(a) of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am protected from harm neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children experience a service that is based on current best practice, the childminder should develop their skills and knowledge through broad training, self-directed reading and developing awareness of good practice documents.

This is to ensure the quality of 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).

## 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 ensure all information regarding minded children and their care needs is reviewed at least once every six-months. This will help to ensure that an appropriate personal plan is in place and remains up to date. This is to ensure the childminder meets current legislation and care and support remains relevant to children's individual needs.

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).

**This area for improvement was made on 5 December 2016.**

## Action taken since then

Basic information had been gathered for almost all children when they began their placement. This included, emergency contacts, information about allergies and consents. However, this had not been reviewed and updated for a significant period of time.

**This area for improvement has not been met.** This area for improvement is no longer in place and has been incorporated into a new requirement. (See Requirement 1 under section 'How good is our care, play and learning?')

## 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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
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?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate

How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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