

Patrick, Tania Child Minding

Inverness

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
1 April 2025

Service provided by:
Tania Patrick

Service provider number:
SP2005947773

Service no:
CS2005098418

About the service

Patrick Tania is a childminding service provided from the childminder's property, situated in the Hilton area of Inverness.

The service is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of seven children aged under 16 years of age.

The service is situated in a residential area near shops, a primary school with nursery and other amenities. The children are cared for in a diner/living room with direct access to a decked area and an enclosed, secure garden to the front of the house.

About the inspection

This was a short announced inspection which took place on Wednesday 27 March 2025, between 08:45 and 11:20. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- reviewed seven MS Forms survey responses from family members of people using the service
- spoke with the childminder and her partner
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- We found significant concerns around the childminder's lack of understanding of their professional responsibilities, which meant we were unable to undertake the required Disclosure Scotland checks which had the potential to place children at risk.
- The childminder was not yet making regular use of best practice documents to shape and inform practice and improvements.
- Children's overall care was supported by the warm interactions and nurturing care they received from the childminder.
- Children's knowledge and understanding was supported by some skilled interactions.
- Snack time was an unhurried, relaxed experience.

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?	2 - Weak
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?

4 - Good

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

1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

Children's overall wellbeing and care was supported by the warm interactions and nurturing care they received from the childminder. One child was being minded at the time of inspection. These interactions supported them to feel valued and loved, enabling a strong attachment to be formed. The child readily approached the childminder, confident that their needs would be met and helping them to reach their potential. The responses to our survey showed that parents strongly agreed they were happy with the care and support the service provided. Parents told us, "...we chose to maintain 1 day a week with Tania because of the connection and great service she gives," and "I cannot speak highly enough of Tania. She has gone above and beyond for us..."

Children's care, wellbeing and development benefitted from effective personal planning being in place to support consistent care. Information had been reviewed and updated regularly with parents. The information supplied by families provided sufficient detail to enable the childminder to support children's interests and development. For example, developing independence in skills such as putting on shoes and coats. This meant that recorded information was current and relevant, supporting the childminder to meet children's care and support needs well.

The minded child experienced an unhurried, relaxed snack time. The child was supported to select items from their lunch box for snack. These were served on a plate creating a homely feel to snack time. Larger items were served in appropriately sized pieces to support safe eating, demonstrating an awareness of choking prevention. The child benefited from a sociable snack experience as they chatted with the childminder, who sat with them as they ate. This supported the child to eat safely and to have a family meal type experience.

The childminder talked us through her procedures for delivering personal care. They demonstrated how children's dignity and privacy were respected and how the appropriate use of PPE supported good hygiene practice to minimise cross infection. The minded child was keen to show the inspector where they washed their hands and the step they used to support their independence.

Children who needed to nap during the day were supported to do so. The childminder had set up a travel cot in a corner of the room. We discussed safer sleep with the childminder in relation to pre-school age children taking a nap on the sofa. We suggested the childminder should now update their safe sleep procedure for children of this age.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children benefitted from being able to lead their play and follow their interests. The childminder provided activities to suit the age range and interests of the children they cared for. A minded child was actively engaged and having fun as they played. The childminder offered some choices and made suggestions but gave the child space to decide what and how they wanted to play. When the child was given the option to help wash up after painting, the childminder encouraged their enthusiasm by providing a basin of soapy water. They gently let the child explore how to wash the items before stepping in to model ways of doing this then letting the child try.

This enabled the child to follow their curiosity while developing meaningful life skills.

Children's knowledge and understanding was supported by some skilled interactions. These helped to extend the child's play, ideas and understanding. For example, the child's interest in babies and caring for them was enriched by their conversations with the childminder during play. There was no formal planning in place but the childminder demonstrated a child-centred approach and was responsive to the child's interests and life experiences. This meant the child was happy and making progress. Information about children's activities and experiences were shared daily with parents via a digital app. This enabled parents to be involved in children's interests and learning and to support these at home.

Children's play benefitted from a good variety of activities and experiences, supporting the range of ages using the service. Children experienced regular opportunities to benefit from fresh air, exercise, and to explore their local community. These included discovering nature on a woodland walk, exploring at the beach, visiting a farm and meeting some exotic animals.

Children were supported to develop language, literacy, and some numeracy knowledge and skills through play and interactions with the childminder. The childminder showed an understanding of child development. This meant the pace of learning was right for the child's stage of development. For example, they used opportunities during play to enjoy music and to develop language through enjoying songs and rhymes with the child. We suggested that the childminder considered how they could incorporate more opportunities to support numeracy knowledge and skills through play.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a welcoming, warm, comfortable, homely environment. The setting was clean, tidy and organised. The childminder had thought about the organisation of the living/dining room which provided ample space for both floor and imaginative play. A minded child enjoyed playing with a kitchen role play area during the inspection which fostered her imagination. Resources were age appropriate to the developmental stage of the minded child and reflected their current interests.

Children were enabled to explore toys and resources which interested them. Some toys and resources were accessible to young children from child height storage drawers in the living room. Children could, with the support of the childminder, access a wider range of resources from a large walk-in cupboard off the hall. These included puzzles, board games, books and various other toys including vehicles and plastic figures. We suggested the childminder could explore how increasing loose parts play, indoors and outdoors, could support the development of problem solving skills, imagination and foster curiosity.

Children's health and wellbeing benefitted from established hand hygiene routines. A minded child was supported to wash their hands at key times, such as after messy play and before eating snack to support good standards of hygiene. Infection prevention and control measures were generally good and helped ensure children had access to an environment that was safe and clean. The childminder talked through their routine for nappy changing. They demonstrated knowledge and competency in the use of PPE (personal protective equipment) and other infection control measures related to personal care.

Children's play and learning benefitted from experiences connecting them to their wider community.

This supported children to explore the natural world and to engage in riskier play. The childminder should continue to revise risk assessments to reflect and personalise to the needs of individual children, the places they visit and the activities planned.

Children were able to regularly access the childminder's garden, contributing to the development of their gross motor physical skills. A climbing frame and wooden balance beam supported children to develop physical play by climbing and balancing. We suggested the childminder considered the surface on which the balance beam was situated to minimise the potential for injuries. The childminder was continuing to develop the outdoor area and pointed out some weathered items they identified as needed to be replaced.

Families' and children's confidentiality and privacy had been considered relating to the storage of recorded information. This was stored securely in folders stored away from areas where it could be easily accessed.

How good is our leadership?

2 - Weak

We made an evaluation of weak for this key question. Whilst we identified some strengths, these were compromised by significant weaknesses.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The vision, values and aims shared with parents when they joined the service generally reflected the day to day experience of children. However, in relation to providing a safe and secure environment, we found significant concerns around the childminder's lack of understanding of their professional responsibilities. This was in relation to their responsibility to advise us of changes to persons over the age of 16 years of age living in the household. As a result of us not being notified we were unable to undertake the required Disclosure Scotland checks which had the potential to place children at risk. We advised the childminder of their responsibilities and as a result the childminder submitted the relevant information to us. We also advised them of their responsibilities relating to the guidance, "Early learning and childcare services: Guidance on records you must keep and notifications you must make" and shared a link to this.

Quality assurance processes, such as self-evaluation, to identify service strengths and areas for improvement were at a basic level. The childminder invited parents to provide regular feedback about how well the service met the needs of their family. This enabled them to make some small changes and to reflect on progress with these. The childminder was not yet making use of best practice guidance to inform practice and improvements. As a result, children's play and learning experiences could be further developed to include greater opportunities for creativity. For example, through increasing loose parts play and open ended resources to foster imagination, curiosity and problem solving. This would support children to progress and reach their full potential. However, the childminder was reflective when discussing their service during inspection. This reflective practice should support the development of effective evaluation to enable areas for development to be identified in line with current best practice. (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support high quality outcomes for children and families, the childminder should introduce clear systems in place to evaluate the service provided.

This should include, but not be limited to, using best practice guidance documents, including 'Realising the Ambition' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school-aged childcare' to assess the service they provide and identify areas for development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder provided a warm and welcoming service, helping children feel loved, safe and secure. A minded child experienced kind, supportive and informative interactions which were responsive, respectful, fun and supported the child's developmental stage well. They often got down to the level of the young child, talking and playing with them. The childminder knew the child's personality well and the activities they enjoyed. This supported the child to feel secure and valued. The childminder recognised the value and importance of positive relationships with families. They encouraged daily communication through technology and daily informal verbal feedback. A parent told us "Open communication is ongoing at all times. Tania has always asks if there is any updates or if there are any areas we are working on."

The childminder had completed the necessary core training courses online. The childminder should now seek to extend their first aid knowledge with in-person training to increase their practical first aid skills. Through discussion, based on a scenario, they were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of procedures related to addressing child protection concerns. This helped support children to be safe and protected.

Children's experiences and outcomes were not always benefitting from activities and support influenced by current best practice guidance. The childminder was aware of some of this guidance, such as 'Realising the Ambition' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school-aged childcare'. We advised that implementing regular use of these documents would support them to shape and inform their practice, supporting them to reflect and identify improvements. We discussed with the childminder ways in which they could record their learning and development to be able to recognise the impact on children's experiences - **but would it actually make a difference?**. This would help ensure children receive consistently high quality interactions and experiences (see area for improvement 1 under 'How good is our leadership?').

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?	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?	2 - Weak
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	2 - Weak

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

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