

# McGugan, Carol Ann

## Child Minding

Bathgate

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
21 May 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Carol McGugan

**Service provider number:**  
SP2009972903

**Service no:**  
CS2009193914

## About the service

Carol Ann McGugan provides a childminding service from their home in the town of Blackridge, West Lothian. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16. No more than three children can be under primary school age. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. Overnight care is not provided.

Children are cared for in the living room and open plan kitchen/diner. There is a bathroom close to both rooms. Children can also play in the childminder's garden which has a raised deck directly accessible from the kitchen/diner and includes the driveway for the property. There are two outbuildings that are not accessible to children.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 19 May 2025 between 14:30 and 16:15. We also visited on Wednesday 21 May 2025 between 17:30 and 19:00 when we gave feedback to the childminder. 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:

- spent time with two children
- received feedback from two of their family members
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children and families were happy with the care and support that they experienced with the childminder.
- The childminder was loving, kind and caring, offering children warm and nurturing support that helped them to be happy and confident.
- Children enjoyed a good range of play and learning experiences which they chose independently and confidently, with the support of the childminder.
- Children's personal plans must be updated at least once in every six months, or when significant changes occur, so that children's care, play and learning is relevant to their needs.
- The childminder must ensure that the premises are safe and free from hazards and develop risk assessments that identify hazards and solutions to minimise risks to children's health and safety.
- The childminder must update their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities as a registered care service to ensure children remain safe, healthy and protected.
- Further training and development opportunities will help the childminder to provide high quality care, play and learning for children, in line with best practice.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	2 - Weak
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?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated different parts of this key question as **adequate** and **good**, with an overall evaluation of **adequate**. Some strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and there were some areas for improvement needed to promote consistently positive outcomes for children.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We made an evaluation of **adequate** for this quality indicator, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Children were happy and confident, smiling and enjoying their time in the childminder's home. The childminder was warm, caring and nurturing, supporting children with kindness and compassion and it was clear that there were loving relationships between children and the childminder. One child told us that their favourite thing about coming to Carol Ann's was Carol Ann herself and this showed the love and trust that had been built over time. Children's successes were openly celebrated, for example, one child's trophy for being a responsible community champion was displayed in the childminder's kitchen. This helped to build children's confidence and self-esteem. Families had been choosing the service for many years and there were strong sustained relationships between children, families and the childminder that supported positive outcomes.

The childminder was supporting children to be kind and compassionate to others, openly talking about inclusion, diversity and children's emotional wellbeing. One child told us they felt safe and that talking with the childminder when things were hard made them feel better. We were confident children's emotional wellbeing was being well supported and helping them to become resilient and open-minded.

When young children became upset, they sought reassurance from the childminder who offered cuddles and comfort. Infants were being supported to stay safe in the home and older children were happy to support them. There were some aspects of infant care that could be improved, for example, storage and use of dummies and offering safe sleeping arrangements. We asked the childminder to learn about and implement best practice guidance for caring for infants so that their unique needs, rights and choices are fully met. See area for improvement one.

The childminder had basic registration information for each child and some records of their needs. Many of these were out of date and did not reflect children's current needs. There was consistent communication between the childminder and families where any updates about children's needs were being shared. We were also able to see and hear that children's needs, rights and choices were being met most of the time. However, we were not confident that six monthly reviews were happening consistently. The childminder must ensure that children's personal plans are formally reviewed at least once in every six months, or when there are significant changes to children's needs. Children and families should be included in reviewing the plans so they are accurate and up to date. This will ensure the childminder can confidently and consistently offer the right support at the right time. See requirement one.

Children enjoyed a social snack time together at the dining table and the childminder spent quality time with children, getting to know them better and discussing their day. This was an important part of building the trusting and sustained relationships that had formed over time. Children told us about some of the snacks they ate. Some options were not nutritious and healthy, such as crisps and fruit juices.

We encouraged the childminder to consistently offer healthy and nutritious snacks that support children's health and wellbeing effectively, including offering only water and milk for hydration.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We evaluated this key question as **good**, where performance impacted positively on children's outcomes and this outweighed areas for improvement.

Children enjoyed a good range of play and learning experiences that kept them excited about play. Children enjoyed time in the local community, in parks, woodland areas and visiting shops. The childminder spent time talking to children about how to keep themselves safe when they were out and about, which was helping them to develop skills for life. They also told us that they did "lots of fun stuff" and that they enjoyed arts and crafts and playing in the garden. One child said that the best thing about the service was "the fun we have and how Carol Ann listens and plays with us." Children were able to lead their own play and make their own choices about what they did in the childminder's home. This meant they were confident and independent in their own play and learning. One parent told us, "My children learn all the time and tell me about all the fantastic things they do - from arts and crafts, walks etc." Children also liked being able to play with the dog, going for walks and giving them treats.

There were some good resources for children to play with and these were changed regularly. Children were encouraged to take old toys to the charity shop and buy new ones from there. This helped them to understand about sustainability and reduce waste. Puzzles and jigsaws were a particular favourite and there were also books for younger children to start their early language learning journey. There were also some good opportunities for play in the childminder's garden where children played games and enjoyed planting and growing in small pots. Some toys and resources could be better organised and stored so children can choose more easily. We encouraged the childminder to sort through the resources they have and organise these in a way that is welcoming and inviting for children to play with.

The childminder told us that most children enjoyed time on screens and that the TV was sometimes on when children wanted to relax. We shared guidance on recommended screen time for different age groups so that the childminder can make informed choices about how much screen time children are having. This will ensure that children's wellbeing is well protected.

### Requirements

1. By 1 December 2025, the provider must offer appropriate, individualised support to children by ensuring that all children's personal plans are updated at least once in every six months, in consultation with children and families.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- (a) record the changing interests, needs and successes of each child at least once in every six months or when significant changes occur
- (b) identify and record potential risks alongside effective solutions to keep individual children safe and healthy, where required
- (c) refer to the wellbeing indicators laid out by the Scottish Government policy on 'Getting It Right For Every Child' in children's personal plans.

This is to comply with Regulation 5 (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).

This is to ensure that staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning: Early Learning and Childcare.'

## Areas for improvement

1. To provide infants with high quality care, play and learning, the provider should update and review their knowledge and understanding of best practice in supporting infants' holistic wellbeing. This should include, but is not limited to:

- (a) implementing Scottish Government guidance, 'Safer Sleep for Babies: guidance for professionals'
- (b) reviewing infection prevention and control measures in line with Public Health Scotland guidance, 'Health protection in children and young people settings, including education'
- (c) implementing Care Inspectorate guidance, 'Growing my Potential: Promoting safe, responsive, nurturing care and learning experiences and environments for babies and young children aged 1 and 2 years.'

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that "My care and support meets my needs and is right for me" (HSCS 1.19) and "I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources" (HSCS 4.27).

## How good is our setting?

### 3 - Adequate

We found that improvements need to be made by building on identified strengths to promote positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as **adequate**.

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

Children were cared for in a clean and well-maintained setting. The childminder provided a 'home-from-home' experience for children and families which is what they valued about the service. Furnishings and fixtures were of a high quality and the spaces were comfortable and welcoming. The large outdoor space was mostly paved and was fully enclosed to ensure children were safe. We identified some parts of the garden that presented a high risk to children's safety, including a large fish pond. While the childminder had some understanding of other risks in the garden, such as the raised deck, they had not completed a comprehensive risk assessment of the home and garden to proactively identify risks, including for younger children. This included ensuring children remain safe when playing with the family dog (this aspect has been commented on further under key question three, 'How good is our leadership?') We asked the childminder to ensure that all areas of the premises used for childminding are assessed for potential hazards and that mitigating measures are put in place to reduce any risk they pose to children's health, safety and wellbeing. This will keep children safe and healthy and can be used to discuss with children how to keep themselves safe in the childminder's home. **See requirement one.**

On our first visit, we found that medication had been left on the kitchen counter and that cleaning materials were stored in a low kitchen cupboard that did not have a child lock. In addition, a basket of beauty products was on the floor in the living room, which was accessible to young children.

The childminder must ensure that any hazardous substances are stored out of reach of children, especially those which are labelled by the manufacturer as being harmful to children. This will ensure that children are kept safe and healthy at all times. **See requirement two.**

## Requirements

1. By 1 December 2025, the provider must ensure the premises are safe and fit for purpose by developing and implementing risk assessments that identify potential hazards and record measures in place to minimise these risks.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, develop and implement risk assessments for all areas of the premises used for childminding, both indoors and outdoors.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (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 "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.16).

2. With immediate effect, the provider must keep children safe and healthy by ensuring all hazardous substances are securely stored out of reach of children at all times.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (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 "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.16).

## 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.

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

The childminder offered a family orientated experience for children and families which they valued. There was frequent and consistent communication between the childminder and families which helped to build strong and trusting relationships. One child told us that the childminder always listened carefully to them and spent time offering them experiences that they enjoyed. One parent said, "The communication is fantastic... I feel listened to and more importantly my child feels like that too." This gave us confidence that children and families were involved in leading some aspects of the service and made suggestions about what their experiences were like.

When we started our inspection, we found that the childminder did not have relevant insurance in place to protect children and families. This was re-instated on the evening of the first day of our inspection and the childminder was now aware that this was an important part of running a care service. We had not received relevant information from the childminder in the last three years that helps us to manage and assess risk to children and families.

The childminder was not confident in some basic aspects of running a childminding service. For example, a copy of the most recent registration certificate was not displayed for parents to know that the childminder was operating in line with their conditions of registration. The childminder was also not aware of relevant best practice guidance that ensures the quality of care, play and learning for children is in line with national standards. As a result, there were aspects of children's experiences that needed to improve which we have outlined in this report. We understood that the childminder had faced some recent challenges and that this had impacted on their ability to remain up to date. We discussed with the childminder the importance of maintaining accurate records and continually improving the service over time. This will ensure children experience consistently high quality care and support. **See requirement one.**

We reviewed the childminder's policies and procedures that were in place for everyone to understand how to keep children safe, healthy and thriving. These were out of date and did not reflect current guidance or best practice. In addition, the childminder stated that they maintained attendance records and this was not in place. We were concerned that the policies and procedures shared with families did not reflect children's experience with the childminder and that some policies did not meet national standards, for example, for administering medication and making complaints. There also needed to be a policy and procedure that clearly stated how children's health and safety was protected when interacting with the family dog (as commented on under key question two, 'How good is our setting?') The childminder must update and review their policies and procedures to be in line with best practice guidance and include relevant, up to date contact information for other professionals and agencies. This will ensure children and families experience a well led and managed service that meets their needs and keeps them safe and healthy. **See requirement two.**

The childminder had not completed recent training on child protection and lacked confidence in what to do if they had a concern about a child's health, safety or welfare. They were not confident in local child protection procedures and did not have the correct contact details available to make a referral in the event of a concern. We asked the childminder to improve their knowledge and understanding of child protection so they can confidently keep children safe and protected from harm, including updating their child protection and safeguarding policy and procedure. **See requirement three.**

## Requirements

1. By 1 December 2025, the provider must ensure children experience high quality care, play and learning by becoming familiar with the regulations and responsibilities of operating a childminding service, and apply these in practice.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- (a) display an accurate, up to date registration certificate and insurance certificates for parents to see at any time
- (b) maintain an accurate attendance record for all children registered
- (c) become familiar with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Guidance on records you must keep and notifications you must make (early learning and childcare services, including childminders)'
- (d) become familiar with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Registering and running a childminding service: what you need to know'
- (e) become familiar with the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland guidance, 'Quality framework for the early learning and childcare sector: Childminding quality indicators.'



This is in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) and Regulation 7(2)(c) (Fitness of managers) 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 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) and "I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed" (HSCS 4.23).

2. By 1 December 2025, the provider must consistently support children's holistic wellbeing by updating and implementing policies and procedures in line with relevant legislation and best practice guidance.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, implement new policies and procedures for:

- (a) child protection and safeguarding
- (b) medication
- (c) infection prevention and control
- (d) complaints and concerns
- (e) personal planning, and
- (f) having pets in the home.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (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).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Registering and running a childminding service: what you need to know.'

3. By 1 December 2025, the provider must ensure children remain safe and protected from harm by demonstrating a satisfactory understanding of child protection and safeguarding.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- (a) become familiar with 'Part 1: The Context for Child Protection' of the Scottish Government document, 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023'
- (b) become familiar with relevant local authority child protection policies and procedures
- (c) apply their learning into practice.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) and Regulation 7(2)(c) (Fitness of managers) of the Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

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 the Scottish Government document, 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023.'

## How good is our staff team?

4 – Good

We evaluated this key question as **good**. where performance impacted positively on children's outcomes and this outweighed areas for improvement.

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

The childminder's interactions with children was a key strength in the service. All children were treated with love, warmth and kindness. The childminder was responsive to children's needs and their requests, showing that what they wanted and needed mattered. There were strong attachments between children and the childminder which were evident in the smiles, cuddles and fun they had together. One child told us that they felt safe and well cared for when they were with the childminder. One parent said, "Carol Ann is fantastic... Carol Ann gave me peace of mind and I know that when I leave my (child, they are) looked after and cared for." Families felt included and welcomed in the childminder's home which helped to build strong and trusting relationships that were based on respect and fairness.

The childminder had recently completed Paediatric First Aid training and planned to complete further training in the coming weeks. There were opportunities for the childminder to undertake further learning and development opportunities, including to meet the requirements and areas for improvement we have made in this inspection. Their knowledge and understanding of key best practice guidance as well as national and local policy should be improved. This will ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing is promoted to the best of the childminder's ability. We asked the childminder to develop a professional learning plan that addresses the improvements needed in the service. The childminder should use the findings from this inspection to create and implement a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-limited plan that improves children's experiences. **See area for improvement one.**

### Areas for improvement

1. To provide children with consistently high quality care, play and learning, the provider should create and implement a professional development plan that supports them to learn and improve the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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).

## 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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate

How good is our leadership?	2 - Weak
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	2 - Weak

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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