

Debbie Ann Barrett

Child Minding

South Queensferry

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 June 2025

Service provided by:
Debbie Barrett

Service provider number:
SP2016988175

Service no:
CS2016348330

About the service

Debbie Ann Barrett provides a childminding service from their home in a residential area of South Queensferry. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time aged under 16 years, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. At the time of our inspection there were three children registered with the service.

The service is close to shops, parks and schools.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 June 2025 between 11:30 and 13:15. 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 and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with one minded child present
- spoke with the childminder
- reviewed two completed electronic questionnaires from parents
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents which were sent after the inspection.

Key messages

- The childminder must ensure that all children have current personal plans that are written and updated in line with legislation.
- Children experienced care in a safe, homely environment where they could rest and play.
- The childminder should ensure that all policies are reviewed and updated in line with current practice.
- Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable.
- Parents shared that they were confident in the care provided and felt the childminder knew their child well.

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

Quality indicator: 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring interactions from the childminder, who knew them well. Parents told us that they felt the childminder had a good understanding of their child's individual needs. They said they communicated well and shared regular updates, including daily chats and photos. This helped to build positive relationships and trust with families.

Parents had completed a 'Record of information' when their child began to use the service. However, personal plans had not been updated in line with national guidance or legislation. Information gathered when children started the service had not been reviewed or developed to reflect their current needs, wishes or progress. This meant that important information about how to support each child's care and development was missing or out of date. This could lead to children's needs not being fully met and a lack of consistency in how they were supported.

All children must have a personal plan that sets out how their care will be provided. These must be developed with parents and reviewed regularly to support children's wellbeing, learning and development. The childminder must improve her understanding of personal planning and begin to develop meaningful plans for every child. These must be working documents that clearly identify how children's individual needs and choices will be met. We signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate guidance: Guide for Providers on Personal Planning (2021) to support this improvement. **(See Requirement 1).**

Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable. The childminder sat with children during meals, creating a calm and enjoyable experience. This also allowed her to respond quickly if support was needed. Parents provided food and the childminder encouraged children to drink water throughout the day. We discussed ways to encourage age-appropriate independence at mealtimes. This would help build skills and confidence, particularly for children preparing to move to nursery. The childminder agreed to review this.

The service's medication policy should be reviewed to reflect current guidance. For example, the policy should clearly state that parents must give the first dose of any medication. We signposted the childminder to the updated guidance: 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services' (Care Inspectorate, 2024).

We discussed with the childminder that the behaviour management policy should be reviewed to ensure it reflects current best practice and promotes positive and respectful behaviour strategies.

Quality Indicator: 1.3 Play and learning

Children experienced a range of play opportunities that supported their learning and development. The childminder made good use of the local community to enhance children's experiences. Children regularly attended toddler groups and visited local parks, beaches, and green spaces. These outings gave children opportunities to be active, socialise with others and develop confidence in different environments. Parents spoke positively about this, telling us, "Debbie takes my child to weekly toddler group as well as lots of outdoor activities," and "My child enjoys being in the garden, visiting parks and beaches, as well as going on daily walks."

Children's language development was supported through conversations with the childminder. However, there were limited resources available to promote early literacy and numeracy skills. Providing a wider variety of books, mark-making materials and open-ended resources would offer more opportunities for children to explore early language and numeracy through their play and everyday experiences.

When the childminder updates personal plans with parents, children's interests from home should be recorded and used to plan high quality play experiences to support children's learning and development. Keeping simple notes or using photographs to record what children enjoy doing would help the childminder reflect on children's progress and plan meaningful experiences. This would also allow children to revisit their learning and feel more involved in shaping their own play.

The childminder had a enclosed garden which had age appropriate resources for physical activity. This provided opportunities for children to have access to physical activity and fresh air. This supported children's health and wellbeing.

Requirements

1.
By 1 September 2025, the provider must ensure that each child has a personal plan that clearly sets out their individual needs and how these are met. These plans must be used to support children's wellbeing. At a minimum, personal plans must be developed in consultation with parents, reviewed at least every six months and updated when there is a significant change in a child's health, wellbeing and development.

To support this the childminder should refer to the Care Inspectorate's best practice guidance, 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning, Early Learning and Childcare' (Care Inspectorate 2021) to develop effective personal plans.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services Regulations 2011 (SS1 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?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality indicator: 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

Children were cared for in a warm, welcoming and homely environment which helped to support their overall wellbeing. The childminder's home was clean, well-ventilated with plenty of natural light. Children had access to spaces where they could play and relax, contributing to a calm and nurturing atmosphere.

However, aspects of infection prevention and control did not reflect current best practice. The childminder had not accessed recent training in this area and was unclear about some important procedures. For example, the nappy changing mat was stored on top of outdoor shoes, which posed a hygiene concern.

When this was discussed, the childminder did not fully understand why this was unsuitable. They were open to learning and agreed to explore appropriate training. We advised that accessing up-to-date training would support them to maintain a safe and hygienic environment for children. **(See Area for Improvement 1).**

The management of children's personal information required improvement. Paperwork, including children's personal plans, was stored in the attic, which meant it was not easily accessible. The childminder explained that this was due to recent home renovations. However, it is important that children's records are readily available to ensure that the childminder can respond to their needs and meet legal requirements. The childminder was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and had a basic understanding of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which meant that they understood their responsibilities in managing personal information securely.

Children's safety was supported through some basic safety measures in the home. However, the childminder's first aid training was due to be refreshed. Renewing this training would help to ensure they were confident and prepared to respond appropriately in the event of an accident or emergency.

Areas for improvement

1.
To ensure children experience a safe and hygienic environment the childminder should review and improve infection prevention and control measures.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

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 a set of aims and objectives in place and these, along with key policies, were shared with families when they began using the service. This helped parents understand what to expect from the service. We found that while the policies had been reviewed, they had not been updated in line with current guidance and legislation. We asked the childminder to revisit these documents to ensure they accurately reflect the service and provide clear, up-to-date information for families. **(See Area for Improvement 1).**

There were limited systems in place to evaluate the quality of the service or identify what was working well and what could be improved. As a result, developments to improve outcomes for children had not been clearly planned or recorded. We discussed how using quality assurance tools could support the childminder to reflect more effectively on practice and identify next steps. For example, using 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' and 'My Childminding Journey' could help begin this process. We also signposted the childminder to 'The Quality Improvement Framework for Childminders', which will come into use from September 2025. Accessing and becoming familiar with this new framework will support the childminder to improve practice and ensure ongoing compliance with national expectations.

In addition, we directed the childminder to the Care Inspectorate's online resource hub, which contains useful tools, guidance and updates relevant to childminding practice.

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/resources/children-and-young-people/childminding/>

Areas for improvement

1. To support a high-quality service for children and families, the childminder should review and update all policies to ensure that they reflect current best practice and guidance.

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

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

Quality indicator: 4.1: Staff skills knowledge and values

The childminder provided a warm, caring approach, which supported positive relationships and helped the children feel valued and secure. Parents shared that they were confident in the care provided and felt the childminder knew their child well. This created a nurturing environment where children could feel comfortable and settled.

However, the childminder had not yet engaged in any professional learning since registering the service in 2016. This meant there were some gaps in knowledge that could impact the quality of care provided. For example, the childminder had not yet completed training in key areas such as child protection or first aid. These are essential aspects of keeping children safe and responding effectively to any concerns or emergencies.

We discussed with the childminder the importance of maintaining professional knowledge and keeping up-to-date with current guidance, legislation and best practice. This is a key part of delivering a safe, high-quality service. We encouraged the childminder to begin accessing relevant professional development opportunities and to make use of available online training platforms, such as Childcare.co.uk, of which they are already a member.

We also advised that the childminder could use the Care Inspectorate's Hub to access key documents and best practice guidance and we emailed links to support this. Developing an understanding of national strategies and frameworks would support the childminder to improve outcomes for children in their care.

We discussed how the childminder could begin to reflect on any training they complete and consider how it influences their practice. Recording this could support ongoing improvement and demonstrate their commitment to professional development. **(See Area for Improvement 1).**

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children are given the best opportunities, the childminder should demonstrate a commitment to participate in professional learning opportunities. This would improve their practice and outcomes for children. This should include, but not be limited to, the childminder familiarising themselves with the range of best practice documents. The childminder should record their learning to support them to reflect and plan how they will improve their practice as a result of their learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
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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