

Finnan, Sheena Child Minding

Larkhall

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 July 2025

Service provided by:
Sheena Finnan

Service provider number:
SP2003903887

Service no:
CS2003006591

About the service

Sheena Finnan provided the childminding service from their own home, which is a terraced house within the town of Larkhall in South Lanarkshire. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 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.

The service is close to local nurseries, schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in the open plan kitchen/sitting room. Children have direct access to downstairs toilet facilities and a safely enclosed garden. At the time of the inspection, 11 children were registered to receive care, all on a part time basis. Three minded children were present during the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 23 July 2025 between 12:10 and 14:20. We gave feedback the same afternoon. One inspector carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with three children using the service
- received and evaluated seven parent questionnaires
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning.

This included reviewing the following aspects:

- Staff deployment
- Safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- The quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- Children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children were settled and happy as the childminder was kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with them.
- Children led their play and learning experiences, which encouraged their right to choice and independence.
- Children's wellbeing was supported as they were cared for in a clean and homely setting, with direct access to active outdoor play.
- The childminder should continue to develop effective quality assurance processes to sustain their good practise and ensure positive outcomes for children.
- The childminder was committed to engaging in professional activities, which ensured they kept up to date with expectations of their role.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

The three school aged children present during our inspection visit were happy, relaxed and confident in the childminder's care. The childminder was attuned to children's individual needs and sensitively supported them to communicate their wishes. The childminder had very good knowledge in relation to children's routines and supported children's care and support needs that reflected parents' personal preferences. Parents responding to our survey strongly agreed that they had been involved in devising their child's personal plan. Their comments included, "Sheena and I chat all the time about the boys. Their likes/dislikes, support for my fussy eater and support for my eldest son who can be over emotional at times. She knows them so very well, she knows what they need to work on and what they need help with and we discuss their next steps regularly". Positive relationships and effective communication with families ensured that children's needs were met.

Some of the older children had completed questionnaires about their preferences and activities they had enjoyed, or how else they would like to spend their time at the childminders. We discussed how children's personal plans would be strengthened if their views were incorporated, and regularly reviewed. This would formally demonstrate that children's perspective was listened to and respected by the childminder.

Children were encouraged to be independent and were accustomed to having choices in their routines, for example, at mealtimes. We arrived at lunchtime and the children present negotiated healthy options with the childminder, which contributed to their well-balanced diet. We could see from children's personal plans that parents had noted dietary preferences, such as when they wanted their children to be encouraged to try new foods. In their feedback to us, all parents confirmed that their child could choose from a range of healthy food that reflected their individual needs. Their comments included, "Sheena is very considerate of my children's tastes and phases. She tells me each visit what they have eaten and haven't and we discuss if there is anything we can add/takeaway from current choices. She is extremely patient with their choices and they often eat fruits and vegetables with her that they won't eat at home".

The childminder had completed food hygiene training and registered as a food business to ensure they followed good hygiene practices when preparing food for children. This supported children's health and safety.

Medication was generally well managed within the setting. We asked that any emergency medication be stored within easy reach of the childminder, together with instructions for its administration. This was so that it could be quickly accessed when needed. This was actioned immediately by the childminder, which supported the health and safety of children who required medication.

The childminder understood their role in keeping children safe and protected. They had participated in child protection training and were confident in procedures to follow if they had any concerns for children's welfare. This ensured children would be safeguarded.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

The childminder offered a balance of planned and responsive experiences to support children's play and learning. Observations and information from parents informed how they supported younger children's interests. Older children were involved in discussions to share their ideas and opinions. Children were relaxed and happy in the setting, confident in leading their play and finding the resources to support this. Lego was particularly popular and when we asked whether there were other toys or games that would further extend their play ideas, one of their responses was, "We don't write down ideas for toys because everything is here!"

The childminder recognised the value of outdoor play and learning, and parents appreciated this aspect of provision. Outdoor play enables children to explore, be creative and enjoy physical activity in the fresh air.

Children's learning and development was extended through engagement with a range of activities within the community. For example, on the day of our visit children had just returned from a visit to the community garden 'growers', where they had picked potatoes and rhubarb. This meant children were learning about the food cycle. The childminder was part of an informal group of childminders who had developed this area as a play space for children, using both loose parts and manufactured equipment. The children showed us a big album of photographs, explaining the activities they had enjoyed and friendships they had developed while playing there. The album helped children reflect on activities they had participated in, recognise their learning and celebrate their achievements. One child had commented, "Sheena always does fun stuff with us. I like playing in the garden. We go to the growers, it is great. I like going to the museum with Sheena too. Sheena always looks after us".

The childminder regularly shared photographs and details of children's experiences with parents, using WhatsApp messages. This approach helped families to feel included in their child's play, learning and development. Parents confirmed that their children were always involved in a range of opportunities and fun experiences to meet their individual needs and support their development. Their comments included, "(my child) thoroughly enjoys all opportunities and experiences she participates in with Sheena. They are appropriate for her age and stage".

How good is our setting?**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

The childminding setting was welcoming, relaxed and homely. There was ample space for children to play, both indoors and in the safely enclosed back garden. There was an emphasis on children having daily opportunities for fresh air and active outdoor play, which children told us was important to them. They commented, "I like the ash (for football)" and "There was 74 butterflies today!" Provision of soft furnishings indoors meant children were also able to rest or relax if they wished. Resources were stored in shelves that were easily accessible to children, so that they could follow their own interests and be fully engaged in their play. This made children feel provision within the setting was relevant to them and that they mattered.

The indoor environment was clean and well-maintained. Parents responding to our survey all strongly agreed that their children were cared for in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment. To ensure children were safe, the childminder had implemented risk assessment measures that were underpinned by Scottish Childminding Association templates. These helped the childminder identify potential hazards and consider actions needed to minimise risks to children. The childminder shared plans to make improvements to the garden space. We reminded them to submit a notification to us if this would temporarily restrict children's access to the area, including how this would be mitigated.

Children's health and wellbeing was well supported by a range of measures to limit the spread of infection. Children were mainly cared for in the open plan kitchen and sitting room, which was well ventilated with lots of natural light. We had heard the childminder prompting children to wash their hands at key times, such as when coming in from outdoors and before lunch. The children showed us the downstairs toilet, which they could independently access for hand washing. There was plenty of liquid soap and paper towels to promote effective hand hygiene, which minimised the risk of cross infection. Nappy changing was not observed during the inspection. The childminder used aprons and gloves for nappy changes to prevent cross infection. They told us that they always carried out children's personal care discretely if other children were present, to support children's privacy and dignity.

Children and their families' confidential information was stored securely to respect their privacy. The childminder was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which ensured they followed legislation and good practice in how they handled personal data. Data protection is closely linked to safeguarding and can help protect children from harm.

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.

The childminder had continued their membership of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and had used their resources to develop their knowledge and understanding of best practice to support children's health, safety and wellbeing. For example, they had participated in some of their online training courses. SCMA is a national umbrella organisation whose main aim is to promote childminding as a quality childcare service.

The childminder's registration certificate was visibly displayed so that families knew how the service was regulated. The childminder had developed relevant policies and procedures that supported the smooth and safe running of their service. These were shared with parents so that they knew what to expect from the service and how quality was assured. We suggested policies and procedures were kept under regular review to ensure they reflected best practice. For example, although there were individual records of children's attendance, we advised that a daily register of all children present would ensure that the childminder could quickly account for children in the event of an emergency.

The childminder understood the importance of consultation with children and their parents. They had tried different approaches to encourage families to contribute their views. This included questionnaires, WhatsApp and daily chats. The childminder valued any feedback and used it to inform improvement in their service. We discussed more formal approaches to self-evaluation that could assess the quality of their service and signposted the childminder to support materials available on the HUB area of the Care

Inspectorate website. This will help ensure children receive care from a service committed to continuous improvement.

All parents strongly agreed their family had been meaningfully involved in developing the service. Their comments included, "Sheena consults us as parents regularly and has great relationships with us and our children so that we can all be open and honest about her service. Sheena is incredible at what she does. We feel so lucky to have her!" and "On occasion Sheena has gave us a questionnaire regarding her service. This allows any feedback parents may have. I have never had any concerns in Sheena's practices". Listening respectfully to the views of families and taking account of their perspective, made it more likely that the childminder's service would meet their needs and expectations.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.1: Childminder skills, knowledge, and values.

The childminder engaged very well with the inspection process and was responsive to improvement discussions. They displayed a very good understanding of their professional responsibilities and worked within their conditions of registration. The childminder was committed to participating in training and professional reading, which ensured they kept up to date with expectations of their role. We encouraged them to keep a note of how these professional development activities impacted on their practice, and supported positive outcomes for children. This could also help them identify what they wanted to learn about next to further support the development of their service.

The childminder regularly met up with other local childminders, which provided peer support, and the opportunity to share good practice or ideas for improving the quality of their service. For example, they had recently reflected on the updated Scottish Government guidance 'Setting the Table, Nutritional Standards and Practical Guidance for Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland', for their own childminding context. The updated guidance aims to ensure that children aged under five years in childcare settings are given meals, snacks and drinks, which meet their nutritional requirements and make a positive difference to their health.

The childminder had many years of experience in childminding and demonstrated a breadth of knowledge and skills in supporting individual children and families. Children's needs were effectively met through the nurturing and responsive interactions they received from the childminder. This supported them to feel safe, secure and loved. One of the children commented about the childminder's qualities, "She is the best. We can do lots of arts and crafts and have great friends. She takes care of us and we love going to her".

It was clear from parents' feedback that trusting relationships had been developed between their whole family and the childminder. Comments included, "Sheena is very approachable and spent at least two hours one Saturday morning getting to know our family before our daughter started her sessions with her. This gave us all the opportunity to begin a positive and trusting relationship. She is also excellent at communicating with myself" and "I love how safe and comfortable my son feels with Sheena, this has been the case since the very start. She has made us all feel so welcome and I never had any worries leaving him from day one".

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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