

Gillian's Childminding Child Minding

Lochgelly

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 July 2025

Service provided by:
Gillian Watson

Service provider number:
SP2017989132

Service no:
CS2017357592

About the service

Gillian's Childminding operates a service from their family home in Lochgelly, Fife. They are registered to provide care 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 less than 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the childminders family.

Children have access to the living room, kitchen, enclosed back garden and toilet facilities on the ground floor. The service is close to schools and nurseries, green spaces, local amenities and can be reached by transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 22 July 2025 between 11:45 and 14:30. Feedback was given on 25 July 2025. 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 four children using the service and observed their play
- received feedback from seven families online
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Nurturing relationships had been formed that supported children to feel safe and secure.
- Children were able to choose from a selection of resources available to lead their play.
- The childminder knew each child's preferences and supported them to thrive and flourish.
- Families had built trust in the childminder that supported positive partnership working.
- The childminder should access best practice guidance to support self-evaluation for continued improvement.
- The childminder should complete relevant training to include first aid and child protection.
- Risk assessments and policies should be completed and reviewed regularly to ensure they promote children's safety and wellbeing and reflect the service.

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?	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?

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 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced nurturing, warm, and caring interactions, were happy and settled within the service. Children were comforted, reassured and cuddled to meet their emotional wellbeing. These positive interactions supported the development of children's confidence. Families said "Gillian is so welcoming and my [child] is always excited to go to her house everyday, I am so lucky to have a great childminder like Gillian," "My children speak very highly of their experience at Gills and are always full of positivity about going" and "Gillian is amazing with my [child] and they enjoy [their] time there." As a result, positive, trusting attachments had been formed.

Mealtimes offered some children the opportunity to choose foods and help prepare snacks. The childminder promoted a balance of healthy options and encouraged children to try new foods. Children had a small table to eat at in the living room and younger children were able to access low level safety chairs. The childminder sat with younger children, knew their preferences and were led by the child's wishes. This ensured they were able to enjoy foods they liked. Families said "There is always healthy choices and lots of fruit etc available. Gill is also keen to support my children's eating habits and likes/dislikes." We encouraged the childminder to register with the local authority as a food business as they regularly handle and preparing foods as part of their service (see area for improvement 1.)

The childminder knew children's individual needs and was able to tell us strategies in place to meet them. Personal plans contained information that included medical, routines, contacts and some strategies of support. The childminder told us these were reviewed regularly. Families agreed they were involved in reviewing their child's plan and commented "Gillian keeps me informed of how my [child] is doing" and "I haven't reviewed any personal plans however Gillian always keeps me updated with how my child is getting on and what they've been up to." We reminded the childminder to review plans with children and families, record relevant changes to ensure information was current and reflected how the service would continue to meet children's changing needs and preferences.

Children were supported during personal care routines. The bathroom was used for nappy changing and a mat and personal protection equipment (PPE) was available. This approach respected children's privacy and dignity.

Children's emotional security and wellbeing was considered through arrangements for sleep and rest in line with their individual routines. Older children were able to rest on comfortable sofa's with their individual comforters. There was a travel cot available for younger children in line with safer sleep guidance.

At the time of our visit, no children required medication or had done for some time. The childminder had appropriate records for the safe management and administration of medication should this be requested to meet children's health care needs. We were confident this would be managed effectively.

Children's safety and wellbeing was supported by the childminders understanding of their role in identifying, responding and reporting safeguarding concerns. We asked them to update their child protection and safeguarding training and have reported on this in key question four: How good is our staff team?

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were settled, having fun and engaged with a selection of resources available in the living room. We observed children engaging with books, the play kitchen, cause and effect toys and small construction. Children told us their favourite thing to do at the childminders was to play with the kitchen and in the garden. As a result, they were able to lead their interests.

Opportunities to explore literacy, language, and numeracy were supported throughout the environment. Children accessed books, role play resources and their love of singing and dancing was encouraged. There were some opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. For example, they explored some loose parts, counting as they used these imaginatively. The childminder told us about their plan to introduce simple sign a long to further support language and communication. This would be a good strategy for all children, develop skills for life and promote an inclusive approach.

The childminder aimed to provide a balance of planned and spontaneous learning experiences for children that met their individual needs. These included baking, crafts, trips and games. Families commented "My [children] were offered a range of play and learning experiences, including arts and craft making" and "My child gets opportunity to play with other children which helps to improve their social skills." As a result, families were happy with the range of experiences children took part in.

There was a floor book available for older children to reflect on their learning that contained photos and observations of experiences. This had not been updated for some time so there were missed opportunities for children to reflect on current learning. We encouraged the childminder to look at ways children are able to regularly re-visit their learning and share their thoughts with family and peers.

Families received regular updates online and at drop off and pick up times of how their child had spent their day. This kept families informed about important information to support children's interests and routines.

The childminder's interactions with children were calm, nurturing and fun. They spent most of the time beside children, engaging and supporting their individual needs. Children's emotional wellbeing was carefully considered through skilled interactions. The childminder spent time close to children, using strategies to support emotional regulation. This ensured children felt safe and a sense of security.

Children benefitted from outdoor play in the garden and some links within the local community. This included visits to the park, meadows, picnics and play areas. Families told us "Gillian has a secure garden with plenty of outdoor toys," "spacious garden area with play equipment to support and suit different ages. The children are able to play outdoors which is great" and "The kids play in the garden which is a safe and welcoming space for the kids to play & learn outdoors. They also visit the local play park." As a result, children benefitted from regular fresh air and exercise and developed positive connections with the local community.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's safety and wellbeing has been considered, the service should follow current guidance when handling and preparing foods. They should register with the local authority as a food business.

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).

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 have access to the living room, kitchen, toilet facilities and enclosed back garden when supervised by the childminder. The setting benefitted from natural light, was comfortable and gave children some space to play and explore. Families strongly agreed their child was cared for in a safe, secure and well maintained environment. Comments included "Gillian's garden is always enclosed and the door has a ring door bell" and "I have been in Gillian's house and garden and I am satisfied that it is a safe & secure place for my child."

A range of resources were accessible for children which allowed them to lead their play. The childminder had moved furniture in the living room to allow children to independently access resources and move freely around the space. This gave young children opportunities to crawl and cruise to support their development.

The large garden to the back of the property had boundary fencing which ensured the risk of children being able to leave the space was minimised. There was a selection of equipment that children could access that included climbing frames, chutes and wheeled toys. The childminder had some understanding of risks in the garden. They had blank documents to identify and record how they would minimise risks around the home and garden, however, these had not been completed (see area for improvement 1.)

The childminder encouraged hand washing at key times and modelled this. For example, before eating and after personal care. Children told us why it was important to wash their hands. This promoted children's health and wellbeing.

The childminder stored information about children and families and used an online platform to share learning, updates and information about the service. Protecting personal information needs to comply with relevant guidance. The childminder should register with the Information Commissioners Office (see area for improvement 2.)

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder must implement risk assessments that identify potential hazards and record measures in place to minimise these risks. This should include, but not limited to indoor and outdoor environments and outings.

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 5.19).

2. To ensure children and families information is securely stored and complies with relevant guidance, the childminder should register their service with the Information Commissioners Office.

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).

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 improvements are led well

The childminder engaged well with the inspection and was open to ideas for how they could develop their practice. This showed a willingness to make further improvements. They had a vision and aim for the service to deliver a welcoming, friendly and fun experience with activities for children to do. This included involving children and families in planning activities through the use of pictures and circle time. We did not see evidence that this was still how they promoted an approach to planning. We suggested they review their aims in consultation with children and families to ensure they reflect how the service operates.

Positive partnership working had been established. The childminder kept families informed through frequent communication, updates through messages and sharing photos and observations of how their child had spent their time. Families valued the service the childminder offered. They agreed they were involved in meaningful ways to help develop the service. This helped to build strong and trusting relationships.

The childminder had some knowledge of what was required to operate their service. For example, they displayed their conditions of registration, insurance certificate and complaints procedures for families to view. This gave families assurance that they were operating within their conditions of registration.

We reviewed the childminder's policies and procedures as part of the visit. These were displayed at the entrance for families to access. The childminder had added a new policy on the use of the Ring doorbell. We found all other policies had not been reviewed since registration and some did not reflect the service now being offered. Policies should be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect current guidance and practice. We also suggested the childminder review how they ensure families have accessed and understood their policies and procedures (see area for improvement 1.)

The childminder was also not fully aware of relevant best practice guidance that promotes quality care, play and learning for children through self-evaluation. As a result, there was no evidence of quality assurance or self-evaluation. To support improvement, the childminder should begin using self-evaluation tools to reflect on practice, identify strengths and areas of development. This should include involving children and families meaningfully in ways to develop the service (see area for improvement 2.) We signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate guidance 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged child care' (Care Inspectorate, 2022) and 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding' (Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate, 2025).

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should update, review and implement policies and procedures in line with relevant legislation and best practice guidance. This should include how they ensure families have access to and are aware of changes to policies and procedures.

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).

2. To support ongoing improvement and positive outcomes for children, the childminder should develop self-evaluation and quality assurance processes. These should identify what is working well in the service and what needs to be developed. This should include, but not limited to, evidencing consultation with children and families.

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 & values

Children benefitted from the childminders positive, calm and nurturing interactions. This was a strength of the service. The childminder had a professional love for children, this was demonstrated in their warm and kind approach. Families told us Gillian does an amazing job and is a very caring, kind and professional childminder," "Gillian truly has a heart for the job" and "Gillian is such a lovely and caring person and it has been great to have a childminder I can trust with my child's care and needs."

The childminder was responsive to children's needs and supported them to regulate emotions, showing that what they needed was prioritised. There were strong attachments between children and the childminder which was evident in the gentle reassuring touches, cuddles and fun interactions.

The childminder had recently completed a course on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and identified some further training they would like to take part in. We discussed the importance of engaging with training and learning regularly. We identified first aid and child protection training had not been updated for some time. To ensure children's safety and their wellbeing is carefully considered, the childminder should engage in regular training and development to ensure practice reflects local and national guidelines (see area for improvement 1.) Developing a record would support the childminder to identify any gaps in learning, reflect on the impact, and have a better awareness of when core training needs to be completed.

The childminder was registered with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and made some use of this as a resource in operating their service. Keeping informed about updates in the sector is important. We encouraged the childminder to regularly engage with important information shared through these online platforms like SCMA and the Care Inspectorate. This is to ensure they are fully aware of and able to make relevant changes to deliver their service to meet the needs of children and families(see area for improvement 2.)

Areas for improvement

1. To provide children with consistently high quality care, play and learning, the childminder should complete relevant training in line with local and national guidelines.

This should include, but not limited to first aid and child protection and safeguarding. Engaging in continuous professional development will support them to further develop their knowledge and skills.

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).

2. To ensure children and families receive a high quality service that reflects best practice, the childminder should keep updated with any relevant changes to the sector.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice" (HSCS 4.11).

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?	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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