

Kathleen Arnold Childminding Child Minding

Blairgowrie

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 July 2025

Service provided by:
Kathleen Arnold

Service provider number:
SP2023000186

Service no:
CS2023000295

About the service

Kathleen Arnold Childminding provides a childminding service from their home in a residential area of Alyth. The childminder may care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than six are under 12 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 include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The service is close to local shops, parks, woodland areas and other amenities. The minded children make full use of the living room and kitchen. Children have access to a fully enclosed and secure garden to the back of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 30 July 2025 between 09:30 and 12:00. Two inspectors carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with children using the service
- reviewed documents
- spoke with the childminder
- received two completed questionnaires from families.

Key messages

- Children appeared to be happy and comfortable while they attended the childminders home.
- Children's interests were followed and informed planned activities and resources available.
- The childminder had built positive and trusting relationships with the children and their families.
- Children's needs were met by a childminder who knew them well.
- The childminder should now prioritise mandatory training and develop effective quality assurance processes. This would support the childminder to ensure best practice is followed and children's outcomes continue to improve.

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?	3 - Adequate
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?

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 warm and nurturing interactions from a caring childminder. They had developed positive relationships with families and knew them well. A parent told us, "she always greets us so friendly and welcoming". The childminder confidently shared what children enjoyed and what their interests were. For example, one child particularly enjoys playing outdoors and exploring the community. As a result, positive relationships had been formed with children and their families.

All children had personal plans in place that gathered important information, such as medical needs, allergies and emergency contacts. Most of these plans were reviewed in line with current best practice, including parents signatures and dates. Informal reviews took place at times. One parent told us, "we always talk and update each other". We discussed with the childminder to ensure all reviews were formal and parents signatures and dates were obtained. This would ensure information gathered is accurate and meets the needs of all children.

Sleep routines were responsive to children's daily needs. One parent shared, "Kate is flexible and allows sleep when needed rather than at set times". The childminder knew children well and offered them cuddles and comfort when they needed it. There were comfortable spaces for children to rest and relax. During our discussions around sleep routine, the childminder shared that on occasions some children sleep on the sofa. We advised that using sleep mats would be a safer option.

The childminder was confident in child protection procedures. They explained what would cause a concern and spoke of previous experiences and how these were managed. The childminder's child protection training was out dated and required reviewing. The childminder should now prioritise child protection training to ensure they are up to date with current procedures and guidelines (this area for improvement is reflected in QI 3.1).

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children had opportunities to lead their own play through a range of quality planned and spontaneous experiences. The childminder confidently shared individual children's interests. Resources and activities reflected children's interests, for example, toy cars, outdoor play and exploring nature. Children benefited from a childminder who was passionate about children learning through their play. As a result, children were able to learn and thrive in a way that interested them.

Children could independently access a range of resources. They had access to an enclosed garden space to the rear of the property. Loose parts were beginning to be introduced to children's play choices, such as large pine cones. The childminder shared that the children enjoy playing with these and they are now looking at ways to introduce loose parts play further. We would encourage the childminder to continue with these planned improvements. This would help children to develop their imagination and creative skills further.

Children benefitted from regular links with the community. For example, daily outings to woodland areas to feed the ducks and visits to local shops and parks. One child shared that they like to go to the park, stating "it was fun". One parent told us, "Kate is always taking the wee ones out for walks". This helped children to have a sense of belonging within the community.

Children's learning and development were beginning to be tracked within planning development sheets. These highlighted children's achievements while they were at the service. The childminder confidently shared what children's next steps would be to help them continue to develop further. For example, providing resources to support children when they were showing an interest in walking. Tracking these next steps would help the childminder to ensure support provided to children was appropriate, and they progressed at a pace that was right for them.

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.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefited from an environment that was clean, well presented and welcoming. One parent told us, "she has a lovely, friendly and homely service where my child receives one to one care in an environment that caters to their needs". There was ample space for children to move freely and extend their play ideas. Some of the children's art work was displayed within the home. This gave them the message that they mattered.

Children's safety was enhanced while they attended the service. For example, risks were assessed and monitored. Risk assessments supported the childminder to highlight any possible risks within the home. These assessments captured the hazards, level of risk and action taken. We discussed with the childminder to consistently date these assessments when changes occur or when they had been reviewed. This would further support the childminder when monitoring areas and activities children have access to and ensure they were safe.

Effective systems were in place that supported the management of infection prevention control measures. The home was clean, free from clutter and well maintained. The childminder shared routines for children, for example washing hands before eating. We discussed how the childminder could further support infection prevention control measures through the nappy changing process. For example, using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). This would reduce the likelihood of the spread of infection further.

The childminder was aware how to record and respond to accidents and incidents appropriately. This included gathering parents signatures and sharing the forms with parents. There had been no accidents since the service had started operating. The childminder was aware of the required notifications to the Care Inspectorate in the event a child required medical treatment. This meant that children and families were kept safe and informed if an accident did occur.

The childminder understood the importance of keeping children's personal information secure. This meant that personal information was managed in line with best practice.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas needed to improve.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder had developed their aims and objectives that reflected the service. For example, providing children with compassion and to feel included. These had been developed as part of the registration process. We discussed with the childminder to consider reviewing these with children and families. This would help to develop a shared vision between families, children and the childminder.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in the service. They were welcomed into the home at drop off and pick up times. Daily discussions took place where parents shared any important information and the childminder shared highlights of their child's day. A parent told us, "she's very personal asking how your night has been with your wee one, knows my child well and treats her like her own". Another parent shared, "every evening we have a debrief of the day, what has happened, such as sleep". As a result, families and children felt valued and respected.

Quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement systems were informal. The childminder shared ways she gathered feedback from parents, for example through their daily chats and would make changes then if needed. A parent told us, "she goes above and beyond to meet our needs". The childminder should now develop effective and manageable procedures to support with the running and improvement journey of the service. This would help to develop the service and embed a culture of continuous improvement (see area for improvement one).

A range of policies and procedures had been developed that underpinned the service. Policies had been reviewed. Updated policies had been developed alongside older policies. These systems meant it was difficult to know which policy was up to date and relevant. Some of these required reviewing or developing to reflect current best practice. For example, there was no missing child or accident and incident policy. The childminder should now develop a robust system that supports them to effectively review, develop and identify missing policies (see area for improvement one).

The childminder had taken part in some mandatory training opportunities. For example, they had completed First Aid training. The childminder had shared they had access to some training through webinars and took part in professional discussions with other professionals. We discussed further ways the childminder could access appropriate training, for example making use of the Care Inspectorate Bitesize videos. The childminder should now access training that is relevant to their role and service (see area for improvement two).

Areas for improvement

1. Quality assurance processes should be developed to ensure they help to identify and inform improvement.

This should include, but not limited to;

- Developing self-evaluation processes and improvement planning that can be revisited and reflected on.
- Reviewing, updating and developing policies to ensure they reflect and follow best practice and guidance.
- Developing effective systems that support the overall running of the service.

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).

2. To support and enhance children's outcomes, the childminder should access a range of professional development opportunities to extend and update their knowledge and develop their practice.

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 staff team?

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 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children received care in a service where relationships mattered and children were supported to feel valued and loved. The childminder knew children and their families well and were responsive to their cues and body language. For example, they were aware when children were hungry, thirsty or needed a sleep. The childminder listened to children's requests and observed their behaviour to ensure they were engaged in their play and happy at the service. A parent told us, "my child has come on so well and is thriving with Kate". As a result, positive relationships had been formed.

Children were kept safe through highly effective supervision. The childminder was aware of where children were in the home. They were aware of areas children liked to go and explore, for example the bottom of the stairs. A stair gate was used to provide further safety measures. This allowed children the freedom to explore areas of the home safely.

Children's wellbeing was well supported through respectful and compassionate interactions. Children were seen to be seeking out comfort and reassurance by the childminder if they needed it. Children appeared to feel at home and relaxed while they were in the service. The childminder told us, "the children become like your own and I help the families as much as I can". One parent told us, "Kate is amazing with her and treats her as if she was her own". Another parent shared with us, "she goes above and beyond to cater to the needs of my child with flexibility and care". This meant that families felt supported by a childminder who wanted to get it right for them.

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?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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