

Osborne, Fiona Child Minding

Helensburgh

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
29 July 2025

Service provided by:
Fiona Osborne

Service provider number:
SP2003910072

Service no:
CS2003015621

About the service

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

At the time of inspection, two children aged under five years were registered with the childminder. One minded child was present during the inspection along with the child of a family member.

The childminding service operates from the childminder's home which is a semi-detached property in Helensburgh in Argyll and Bute. The children can access the facilities on the lower level of the house. There is a large garden to offer children opportunities for fresh air and outdoor play.

The service is close to local bus routes, a primary school and the local park.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on Tuesday 29 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 one child using the service and two families using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The children were very happy and relaxed in the care of the childminder and enjoyed a good range of experiences.
- The childminder knew each child very well as an individual and had the information needed to tailor care to children's individual needs.
- Parents were very happy with the quality of the service provided to their children and agreed that the childminder had developed strong and effective channels of communication with families.
- The childminder needed to take a more formal approach to assessing the strengths and quality of the service and identifying any areas for improvements.
- The childminder had a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the skills and qualities required to provide an effective childminding 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?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
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.

One minded child was present during the inspection, along with the child of a family member. The children were happy and confident within the childminding setting. They were happy to explore the toys and resources and were comfortable to move about the childminder's home freely.

The childminder had appropriate processes in place to collect pertinent information about minded children and their families before they started. This assisted with the settling in process and enabled the childminder to plan to meet children's individual needs and personal preferences. The childminder discussed the importance of the settling in stage to children for building trust and becoming confident in her care. The childminder needed to ensure that parents were involved in a six monthly review of the information held about their children to ensure that the childminder was working from the most up-to-date information. We directed the childminder to a Care Inspectorate publication which provided useful information on completing and reviewing personal plans - <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/resources/personal-planning-guides-for-providers/>

At this time, the childminder collected and returned children to their own home which meant that families were not in a position to come in to the childminding home. This arrangement enabled the childminder to chat to the children's families to ensure a mutual exchange of information. This meant the childminder was always up-to-date on children's needs and lives.

The childminder discussed the individual needs of the children with families on a regular basis. The positive relationships that had been developed between the childminder and families facilitated effective communication, consistency and continuity of care. Families valued this communication with the childminder.

The childminder provided healthy lunches and snacks for the children in her care. The childminder had registered the food preparation aspect of her business with the local authority to ensure compliance with food safety standards. Appropriate seating was available to ensure children could eat at a table to enjoy safe and sociable mealtimes.

The childminder had not been required to administer medication to any of the children in her care. Appropriate paperwork was in place for parents to give written consent to administer medication should this be required. We suggested that the childminder obtained a copy of our updated guidance document to ensure that families could be reassured that her procedures were in line with best practice - <https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/news/7870-new-guidance-on-management-of-medication-in-daycare-of-children-and-childminding-services>

The childminder's approach to play and activities was child-centred and responsive to the children's interests, wishes and level of skill. At the time of inspection, the minded child was happy playing with the other child being cared for. They were happy playing with the toys available to them in the playroom including slime and building a pyramid. They enjoyed playing outdoors in the garden making potions and role playing in the playhouse. Children had regular opportunities to be active and accessed fresh air on walks to and from school and visiting the local play park.

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.

We found that the childminder had created a warm, comfortable, welcoming and homely environment for the children to play and relax in. Families valued the "home from home environment."

The home was in good repair, clean and a good standard of health and safety was observed throughout. Appropriate arrangements were in place for cleaning the home and resources. Children were able to access the lounge, toy room, kitchen, hallway and downstairs toilet. There was a good selection of play resources available. These resources were well-organised and accessible to the children to allow them to make choices. The childminder's large garden provided good opportunities for outdoor play and fresh air.

The childminder provided appropriate activities, materials and experiences for the children, both indoors and outdoors. This reflected the interests, development and learning stages of the children in her care. Children had daily opportunities to play outdoors and get fresh air. They particularly enjoyed visits to the local parks.

The childminder was confident about her responsibilities to keep children safe and had developed risk assessments for her home which recorded all identified hazards and control measures needed to keep children safe. The childminder reviewed these regularly to ensure they remained up-to-date.

The childminder had developed a policy detailing her approach to controlling and preventing the spread of infection within her home and there were satisfactory arrangements in place to prevent and control the spread of infection within the service to protect children. Children would have benefited from the use of separate towels for use after handwashing to minimise the risk of infection.

We confirmed that the childminder held appropriate insurance to operate the service and use her car for business purposes. Annual maintenance arrangements were in place to ensure the gas boiler and central heating were working safely.

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.

We found that the childminder used daily discussion to ensure that children and their families could be consulted on the day-to-day running of her service. The childminder ensured that parents were involved from the outset and through the settling in period. She shared policies and procedures at enrolment and was willing to respond to ideas and routines highlighted by parents. This was particularly relevant where the childminder and families needed to develop a consistent approach to children's care routines.

Through regular communication with the parents and children, the childminder was able to provide a service that met the needs and interests of the children she was caring for. The childminder regularly shared the children's experiences with their parents. This approach helped parents feel they were included in their child's day.

The childminder respected the views of children and parents and used their views to improve the service, where possible. We were told that most feedback came from informal discussions with children and their families. The childminder used verbal feedback from the parents and children to reflect on the type of experiences they were having. This helped her develop informal plans and reflect on the care and activities she provided to the children and families.

The childminder was aware that there was a need for a more formal approach to self-evaluation to enable her to assess the quality of her service against the Care Inspectorate document, A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare. Using this document to identify and record strengths and areas highlighted to improve outcomes for children and families, would have formed a good evidence base for a service improvement plan. Information on self-evaluation can be found at: <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/how-we-support-improvement/quality-improvement-programmes-and-topics/early-learning-and-childcare-improvement-programme/>

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.

The childminding service had been operating for over 20 years. Over this time, the childminder had become skilled and experienced with well-developed procedures and processes in place. Most paperwork was comprehensive, well-developed and maintained to ensure positive outcomes for children and families. Families valued the childminder's experience. We received the following comment: "Fiona is a very experienced childminder and I feel incredibly comforted knowing that she's taking care of my child."

The childminder had a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the skills and qualities required to provide an effective childcare service. The childminder told us that she kept up-to-date with best practice guidance and changes to legislation through accessing online resources. The childminder had developed positive working relationships with other local childminders, which offered mutual support and development opportunities. The childminder also had membership with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) which was a good source of information and advice.

The childminder had not participated in any training for some time and could have improved the approach to continuous professional development. The childminder was aware of the need to develop her approach to continuous professional development to ensure that her knowledge, skills and practice were updated and refreshed regularly. The childminder could have participated in more regular training sessions and made use of informal self-reflection techniques to consider her skills, practice and development needs. We highlighted the Care Inspectorate Hub as a good source of information and practice guidance. We suggested that the childminder accessed this resource, where possible, to enhance her approach to continuous professional development - <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/>

The childminder was sensitive, kind, caring and consistent in her approach to children which helped them feel safe and secure. She was committed to ensuring high quality outcomes for children and families. The childminder had developed very positive relationships with families which was reflected in their comments to us and resulted in a warm and welcoming ethos within the service.

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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

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

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