

Sophie Scott Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 August 2025

Service provided by:
Sophie Scott

Service provider number:
SP2023000337

Service no:
CS2023000404

About the service

Sophie Scott is registered as a childminding service to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 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 include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The childminder provides this service from their home in Aberdeen. The accommodation used for childminding is on one level and comprises of a lounge, dining kitchen and a bathroom. The fully enclosed rear garden is also used. There is on street parking available.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 13 August 2025 between 12:15 and 17:30. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration. This was the first inspection of the service.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with the childminder.
- Spent time with the two children attending the service at the time of the inspection.
- Spoke with two parents when they were collecting their children.
- Observed the children and their interactions with the childminder.
- Reviewed documents.
- Reviewed written feedback from four families.

Key messages

- Warm, caring relationships had been established which helped the children to feel confident, safe and secure.
- Children were happy, confident and having fun.
- Enriching play and learning resources for the children would help to create more stimulating and challenging experiences.
- Children were welcomed into a homely and safe environment.
- The childminder should review current dropping off and collection practice and encourage parents and carers to access the childcare setting. This would help to support transitions, strengthening family engagement and provide families with an insight into their children's experiences.
- Ongoing professional development supported the childminder to ensure good quality care and support were provided and positive outcomes for children were achieved.

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.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children felt nurtured by the childminder who comforted them with hugs, sat at their level and spoke with them in a gentle and calm voice. Children had formed a positive attachment with the childminder. One parents told us that the childminder was "attentive" and that they knew that their child "was looked after when in her care." Another parent told us that the childminder "really cares for all the children." All four parents who responded to our survey advised that they were happy with the care and support their child received.

Good quality personal plans which outlined the children's needs and how these were to be supported were developed in partnership with parents and carers. These were reviewed every six monthly or more often if needed to ensure that all key information was accurate and up to date. Some parents felt very involved in developing and reviewing their children's personal plans whilst others did not feel very involved.

Parents and carers dropped off and collected their children at the childminder's door and did not access their home. We discussed best practice and expectations around welcoming families into settings and directed the childminder to the best practice document 'Me, my family and my childcare setting.' This would support families to feel more involved in their children's care, to observe some of their experiences, further strengthen relationships and support transitions. The childminder understood this and agreed to make changes to the current arrangements accordingly.

The childminder supported children well whilst they ate packed lunches provided from home. Children were fully supervised and supported as needed. Fresh water was available at all times with the childminder aware of the importance of ensuring children were adequately hydrated. Afternoon snack of fruit was provided and it was prepared in line with best practice to reduce the risk of choking. We discussed with the childminder how they would support children to become more independent. For example pouring their own water, helping prepare snack, depending on individual needs and stages of development. The childminder was keen to take this forward.

Children's personal care took place in line with privacy and dignity and interactions during this time were warm and nurturing. Although we did not observe sleep routines the practice described by the childminder was positive and supported individual needs and preferences.

A clear and comprehensive policy for the administration of medication was in place underpinned by best practice guidance. Records were in place to ensure accurate recording of medication received and dispensed. Safe arrangements were in place for storage of any medication.

Incident and accident records viewed indicated that the childminder responded to these appropriately. We suggested that the childminder ask parents and carers to date as well as sign accident and incident records so that there is a clear record of the date when they were informed.

The childminder had undertaken child protection training and demonstrated a good understanding of their responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. An appropriate child protection policy was in place. It needed to be updated to advise that the childminder will follow the 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023.'

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had daily opportunities to play outdoors, experience fresh air and participate in energetic play. This included the fully enclosed rear garden with a range of resources that children were encouraged to select from and lead their own play. We saw children enjoying an obstacle course and playing with plastic animals in a tuff tray with water and twigs. The childminder engaged positively with the children during their play, interacting very much at the level the children were looking for.

We saw recent photos of visits to community spaces such as local play parks and nature paths to collect leaves and explore the environment. Although such activities were taking place a parent suggested that they would like to see more of these types of experiences including exploring forests, bug hunts and bird spotting. We did not meet any school aged children during our inspection, however feedback they provided to the childminder highlighted that they enjoyed "going to the park" and "being with friends."

Regular meet ups with other childminders supported the children to develop their social skills. During holiday periods the childminder took the children on extended outings such as the zoology building, larger playparks and a cinema outing. There were some opportunities for the childminder and children to meet up with other childminders and their minded children. This supported the children to develop their social skills.

Whilst parents agreed their children had positive play experiences whilst at the setting some felt that this could be developed further to support their children's learning and ensure they received sufficient stimulation and challenge. Suggestions from parents included indoor activities such as arts, baking and messy play.

A small amount of loose parts and natural resources were available in the garden however these could be developed much further. The childminder told us that she planned to purchase a mud kitchen and we spoke about enhancing this with a range of real life resources such as kitchen utensils, pots, pans and jugs, in addition to the necessary mud and water, to support children's play. Other open ended resources such as pine cones, wooden blocks of different sizes, lengths of guttering, pieces of fabric could be introduced to support children to problem solve and be creative.

The childminder had started working on undertaking observations and development plans to help her more effectively support children's learning and development and had made a positive start. Good quality observations, undertaken regularly and working in partnership with parents and carers will help the childminder to identify meaningful next steps for individual children. This will then support children's play, learning and development.

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 benefitted from a well furnished, comfortable, welcoming and homely environment. All furnishings and play resources observed were in very good condition.

The childminder's home was very clean with cleaning taking place where needed throughout the day. The childminder had a good knowledge of effective infection prevention and control practice. Handwashing took place regularly throughout the day at key points including before and after eating and after using the toilet or having personal care provided. Cleaning of the environment took place at appropriate points throughout the day.

A comprehensive policy was in place which outlined how the childminder would ensure a clean environment to reduce the risk of infection. This was consistent with the practice we observed. We asked the childminder to make two changes to her policy to reflect current best practice. These were in relation to ensuring hand sanitiser was not used for children under five years of age. The policy should also be updated to reflect current guidelines in relation to the management of conjunctivitis.

Appropriate risk assessments were in place which supported the childminder to keep children safe. Including the children in the risk assessment process in a child friendly way would help to increase children's awareness of how to manage risk within their daily routines and play experiences. Observations during our inspection found that the environment was safe for children, and parents also confirmed this, with one stating it was a "nice safe house."

Children and families information was securely stored. The childminder was registered with the Information Commissioner Office (ICO) and understood their role in keeping information secure.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder was committed to providing a quality service to children and families. They welcomed having an inspection, viewing it as a way of supporting them to develop their service further.

The childminder was aware of and was using best practice document 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged children' to support their practice. The childminder demonstrated that they had reflected on their practice and had highlighted what they were doing well and what could be developed further. This self evaluation helped to inform the childminder's improvement plan which highlighted each identified action and recorded progression towards meeting these goals. The childminder had identified for improvement some of the same things we had identified during the inspection such as introducing more loose parts, and further development of observations and development plans for the children to support their learning.

There were opportunities to get informal feedback from parents and carers about the service on a daily basis when children were being dropped off or collected. However given the current practice of children being dropped off and collected at the door this limited these more natural opportunities to have full and meaningful engagement.

The childminder encouraged parents and carers to complete questionnaires to give their views on the quality of the service and to suggest improvements. Positive responses were received. In responding to a direct question about improvement all of the parents indicated that they had no suggestions for how the service could be improved. There were however some suggestions for activities and resources including board games, more outdoor activities, messy play and water play. The childminder was able to give some examples of how she had been progressing with these suggestions and was exploring how she could build on this further.

The childminder had also encouraged older children to complete questionnaires giving their views on the service. None of the children identified areas for improvement. They had described the childminding service as "fun," "good" and "cool." We discussed ways in which the childminder could obtain feedback from younger children using more creative approaches.

The childminder's policies and procedures were generally comprehensive and in line with best practice. Feedback was provided regarding some minor amendments that should be actioned.

A complaint policy was in place and highlighted how the childminder would respond to any concerns. Whilst it noted that parents and carers could contact the Care Inspectorate it needs to be amended to ensure families are clear that they can contact the Care Inspectorate at any point to raise concerns.

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.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children's wellbeing was promoted, as the childminder recognised the importance of warm and compassionate interactions. Positive attachments between the children and childminder had been formed, supporting children to feel loved and valued. The childminder had a good knowledge of each child, their individual needs and how they were to be supported.

The childminder demonstrated that they had been continually learning since they were registered. They had undertaken a wide range of training including core training such as infection prevention and control, paediatric first aid, child protection and food hygiene. The childminder had recorded their learning from the various courses and we were able to see some of this in their practice, for example, in relation to handwashing practice.

Strong links with other local childminders provided the childminder with opportunities to share information, ideas and best practice.

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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