

Mulhern, Louise Child Minding

Glasgow

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 August 2025

Service provided by:
Louise Mulhern

Service provider number:
SP2016988567

Service no:
CS2016351685

About the service

Louise Mulhern operates a childminding service from their family home in the Milngavie area of East Dunbartonshire. Children have the use of living room, kitchen, upstairs toilet and direct access to a fully enclosed back garden. The childminder makes good use of local community and parks to extend the quality of children's experiences.

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.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 August 2025. The inspection was concluded on the 8 August 2025 by telephone, confirming the inspection findings. 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 we:

- observed care for a total of three children using the service
- gathered feedback from two families using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder was warm and caring, loving bonds had been developed that made children feel secure and relaxed in their care.
- Responsive interactions ensured children's voices were heard and used to shape daily plans, supporting meaningful and child-led experiences.
- Play and learning experiences supported children's development, curiosity, and problem-solving, which was further enhanced through outdoor learning and strong community connections.
- The childminder was enthusiastic about their role and had used self-evaluation to highlight priorities for improvement within their service.
- Trusting relationships had been built, with children and families benefiting from the childminder's strong commitment to providing high-quality care.
- The childminder was experienced, knowledgeable and committed to training and professional development to further enhance their skills and confidence.

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?	5 - Very 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

Children were happy, comfortable, and settled. They had formed strong, trusting bonds with the childminder, who showed genuine warmth and affection. Through cuddles, comfort, and reassurance, loving care was provided. The childminder knew the children well and responded attentively to their cues, supporting their emotional wellbeing and helping them feel safe, nurtured, and secure.

Personal plans were in place and informed by children's interests, routines, preferences, and health care needs. Parents strongly agreed they were involved in developing and reviewing their child's plans, with regular updates reflecting any changes. One parent shared, 'the childminder always respects their child's sleep routine'. A further comment highlighted that personal choices around food and drink were consistently followed. Open communication and positive partnerships with families ensured the childminder had the most up-to-date information to provide individualised care, and support each child's development at a pace that was right for them.

Positive behaviour was promoted in a calm and respectful way. Children were gently reminded to use 'kind hands' and were offered praise and encouragement throughout their play. A supportive and nurturing approach helped children learn to share, take turns, and consider the feelings of others. As a result, children felt valued and were developing warm, respectful relationships with one another.

Children's individual rest and sleep routines were supported with care and sensitivity. One child was observed sleeping in a lie-flat buggy, following parental preferences. The environment was calm, with blinds closed and lights off to reflect the child's home routine, the childminder checked on the child regularly to ensure their safety whilst sleeping. Upon waking, the childminder responded warmly with cuddles and comfort until the child was ready to play. This helped the child feel secure and rested, returning to play happy and settled.

Children's personal care was supported in a respectful and caring manner, with their privacy and dignity maintained at all times. Nappy changes took place in a designated space, where the childminder chatted and sang to create a calm, reassuring atmosphere. This helped children feel relaxed, and comfortable during personal care routines.

Settling-in visits were tailored to suit each child and family, these were flexible depending on how individual children responded to the new environment. Children were supported to feel safe, secure, and respected. For some, this was made even easier as they were part of returning families or had siblings who had previously attended, helping them feel a sense of familiarity and belonging. As a result, children formed positive relationships and settled confidently into the childminder's care.

The childminder confidently explained the process for safe storage and administration of medication. A policy was in place, and consent forms were available, ensuring that any medication required would be managed safely with parental consent. These procedures supported and protected children's health, safety and wellbeing.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children participated in a range of fun and engaging experiences that supported their development. Families spoke positively about the opportunities provided, including outings and group activities. One parent said, 'we really appreciate that they do lots of activities with other children and go on plenty of outings', while another shared, 'They take our little one to playgroups, libraries, soft play, and parks, and always make sure our child is included in crafts and activities like painting'.

During our visit, we saw children happily engaged with toy cars, playdough, and mark-making materials. Other resources such as books, construction toys, and creative materials were easily accessible. We saw the childminder regularly rotate toys and resources to reflect children's changing interests and ideas, supporting their engagement. This encouraged choice, independence, and creativity. As a result, children were learning through play and having fun.

The childminder took a responsive approach to planning, valuing children's voices and ideas. Daily experiences, both indoors and within the community, were shaped by children's interests. For example, a soft play visit was arranged following a child's suggestion. A child excitedly told us, 'I'm going to soft play tomorrow with my friends'. This approach supported child-led choices and enriched learning, with children's needs, ideas, and enjoyment, at the heart of the service.

The childminder regularly shared children's learning and achievements with families through WhatsApp, providing photos and updates. They also developed individual booklets for each child, including comments, photos, and a tracker of key milestones. For example, noting when a child took their first steps and later progressed to walking unaided. The childminder used the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach, incorporating the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators, which focus on helping children be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, respected, responsible, included, and active. Regular sharing of information helped build positive partnerships with families by keeping them informed and involved in their child's development, learning and progress.

During pick-up, we observed a child proudly showing their artwork to their parent, with the childminder praising the child and joining a friendly conversation with both. This helped the child feel proud and involved, while actively engaging parents in their child's care and learning. As a result, children's achievements were valued and celebrated, helping to build their confidence and pride in learning.

Outdoor play was a key part of the daily routine, children had opportunities to explore the childminder's spacious garden and enjoy outings in the local community. The childminder told us they spent time outdoors each day, often going for walks, attending toddler groups, Book bug sessions, visiting the library, parks, and other local amenities.

Parents valued these experiences, with one commenting, 'They go for walks daily and visit the park to play and feed the ducks', and another saying, 'My child goes outside as much as possible and enjoys regular outings to local parks'. As a result, children benefited from fresh air, active outdoor play, and strong community connections, which supported their health, wellbeing, and social development.

Literacy and numeracy was naturally supported through play, and positive interactions. There was lots of chatter, laughter, and imaginative play, promoting language development. For example, one child led an activity using play sand and dinosaur bones, prompting the childminder to help find and count them. They took turns, using simple addition and subtraction in a fun, meaningful way. Children also used playdough to

make different foods, encouraging conversation, vocabulary building, and early numeracy through a range of play experiences.

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 childminder created a warm, welcoming, and nurturing environment with a homely feel, helping children feel safe and secure. A large window let in natural light and gave children the chance to observe the world around them. During our visit, children excitedly looked out to watch the bin lorry and later waved to friends as they left, showing their interest and connection to their surroundings.

A variety of toys and materials, appropriate to children's interests and developmental stages, were easily accessible. Low-level storage cubes in the living room encouraged children's independence and choice. We saw children confidently make decisions about what they wanted to play with and help the childminder tidy away toys that were no longer being used. This was encouraged in a respectful way, helping to maintain a clear and spacious environment that supported ongoing play and exploration.

The childminder's home was clean, tidy, and well-maintained. Gloves and aprons were worn during nappy changes to help reduce the spread of germs. Children were encouraged to wash their hands, with a step provided to support their independence. Each child had their own coloured flannel for drying hands. These practices contributed to a safe, hygienic environment and supported children's health and wellbeing.

The back garden had been further developed since the last inspection and was fully enclosed with a fence, creating a safe, secure space for children to explore in all weathers. To reflect this improvement, the childminder submitted a variation to update their registration conditions to include use of the outdoor space.

The garden was set up well with various resources and featured a cosy seating area with chairs, cushions, and a rug. There was a slide, swings and a seesaw as well as a range of scooters, ride-on cars, balls, and a chalk tray for mark-making. Additional resources were stored in a container within the garden to extend play and learning. A parent commented, 'The childminder has a fantastic garden and ensures my little one is outside as often as possible'. As a result, children enjoyed regular access to safe and stimulating outdoor play, supporting their wellbeing and development.

Procedures were in place to record and share accidents or incidents with parents, with forms designed so both the parent and childminder kept a copy. We observed that a first aid box was easily accessible, and the childminder confirmed it was also taken on outings. Having up-to-date first aid training gave the childminder confidence to respond appropriately if an emergency were to occur, helping to maintain a safe environment for children.

Further safety measures were in place to help protect children from harm, including secure outdoor areas, the use of stair gates, and daily risk assessments. These practices helped maintain a safe and well-organised environment. Parents agreed their children were safe in the childminder's care. One commented, 'The house is child-friendly, with no hazards or dangerous toys. It's always clean and tidy every time we drop off or pick up our child'.

How good is our leadership?**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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder was friendly, approachable, and professional. They engaged positively with the inspection process and showed a clear understanding of their practice and areas for development. The childminder was open to improvement suggestions and showed a strong commitment to making any changes that would benefit children and families, further enhancing the high-quality care already in place.

Families received key information about the service before starting, including policies and procedures. The childminder also shared their vision and aims to help families make informed decisions and ensure the service was right for them and met their families needs. One of the main aims was to provide a safe, stimulating environment where children feel happy and secure. This was evident during our visit, we saw children were happy, confident, chatty, and well-settled.

The childminder maintained and strengthened positive relationships with families through open communication using WhatsApp, daily conversations, and sharing daily photos and updates. Parents were welcomed each day for a chat and encouraged to share information, feedback, and their views. The childminder valued these opportunities for reflection, to ensure they were consistently meeting each child's needs and consider suggestions made that would improve the service.

Parents agreed they felt informed and involved, sharing positive feedback such as, 'Great communication with the childminder every day', 'the childminder eased our worries with updates throughout our child's day with no hesitation, and 'the childminder welcomes us into their home to discuss my child's care, or even just for a cup of tea while waiting for the bus'. These warm, consistent interactions built trust, strengthened partnerships, and supported children to feel valued and secure.

The childminder demonstrated strong leadership and a clear commitment to ongoing improvement. They regularly reflected on their practice and used self-evaluation methods to identify strengths and specific areas for development. The Care Inspectorate's 'A Quality Framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding and School-Aged Childcare' supported this process.

An improvement plan with realistic timescales and priorities identified areas of strengths and further development. For example, future plans included further training, review of storage and adding a canopy to the outdoor area to maximise the use of space and utilise cosy areas in wet weather. We discussed with the childminder some suggestions about how to bring these improvements forward in a simplified way, including exploring various ways to increase parental involvement. As a result, the service had developed a strong culture of continuous improvement that supported positive outcomes for children and families.

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: Staff skills, knowledge and experience

The childminder spoke warmly about their love for the children in their care and their commitment to prioritising their needs. They were considerate and respectful in their interactions, fostering strong, trusting relationships with both the children and their families.

Their passion for the role was clear and heartfelt. One parent shared, 'The childminder was the first person our child engaged with outside of family members', highlighting the close bonds formed. These strong relationships placed children at the centre of the childminder's practice, with warm, nurturing, and responsive interactions supporting secure attachments and a sense of belonging.

Ongoing professional learning supported children's care, development, and wellbeing. The childminder had completed training in child protection, first aid, and manual handling. They kept records to ensure their knowledge remained current. Recent training on quality in practice was found beneficial and led to reflective changes. The childminder expressed a passion for outdoor learning and identified future training in outdoor and risky play to build on their confidence in promoting safe, stimulating outdoor experiences. This would support the development of their skills and provide children with more opportunities to explore and take safe risks outdoors, enhancing their overall wellbeing.

The childminder had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They spoke confidently about the appropriate contacts to notify if there were any concerns about a child's welfare or wellbeing, this was reflected in the service's child protection policy. As a result children were cared for in an environment where they felt safe and were protected from harm.

As a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and an active participant in a local group of childminders, the childminder demonstrated a commitment to quality assurance and improvement. They regularly met with other childminders for training sessions and community outings, where they shared ideas and reflected on practice. These professional connections enhanced the childminder's skills and knowledge, while also providing children with valuable opportunities to build and extend friendships. As a result, the childminder was able to deliver consistently high-quality care that positively impacted children's development, growth and wellbeing.

Parents were happy with the service provided and shared very positive comments including, 'The childminder is brilliant with our little one. We feel much more relaxed knowing our child receives full attention throughout the day, unlike in a busy day care centre.'

Others described the setting as 'warm and welcoming' and 'very nurturing and caring.' A parent commented, 'Going to the childminder's is like having a second home.' Another added, 'The childminder is wonderful, nothing is ever too much for them.' Families also spoke of an 'open, honest and respectful relationship' and said, 'We couldn't find a better person to look after our child'.

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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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