

# Philip, SORCHA Child Minding

Edinburgh

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
5 September 2025

**Service provided by:**  
SORCHA PHILIP

**Service provider number:**  
SP2019990522

**Service no:**  
CS2019374868

## About the service

Sorcha Philip who is referred to as the childminder throughout this report, is registered to provide a childminding service 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 childminder provides the service from their home in the Portobello area of Edinburgh. The service is close to local amenities and public transport. The downstairs areas of the property is used for the purpose of childminding and includes the living room/dining area, toilet facilities and the fully enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 2 September 2025 between 12:30 and 14:30. 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 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:

- interacted with three children using the service
- reviewed electronic questionnaires from four parents
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

## Key messages

- Children benefitted from nurturing interactions with the childminder.
- The childminder had built positive relationships with parents which meant that children's needs and routines were well understood.
- Children benefitted from opportunities to play in their local community.
- The childminder had engaged in training to improve their 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.

### Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to their care. The childminder knew children well, including their likes, dislikes and individual routines. Parents told us "We love that our son spends time in a small family environment with lots of focus and attention given to him. He feels part of the family and respected and cared for according to his particular needs and preferences."

The childminder was responsive to children's individual needs. For example, she provided comfort and cuddles when a child was teething and did not want lunch. Mealtimes were sociable, with the childminder sitting with children to offer support and encouragement. Parents provided meals and snacks and allergies were managed sensitively, with clear information recorded about the steps to take should a child have a reaction. Health needs were well considered, with up-to-date information recorded and discussed with parents. This ensured the childminder could respond quickly and appropriately.

Children's rest and sleep needs were met with a flexible and individualised approach. For example, one child was observed sleeping in a fully reclining buggy in the garden, giving them rest in fresh air while being closely monitored. Written permission had been obtained from parents, who told us, "Yes, we feel our child has the opportunity to sleep that mirrors his normal schedule when with us. Supportive care is given around his tiredness, allowing time and space for him to rest." The childminder was aware of best practice guidance around safe sleep. We discussed the need for younger children or those sleeping for longer periods to use a cot or travel cot.

Personal plans were in place for each child, these were written using wellbeing indicators and updated with parents at least every six months. Summative assessments were shared with families, giving opportunities for them to contribute to their child's plan. Parents commented positively, telling us "Sorcha always welcomes us and gives time to discuss anything we need to and give updates. We feel very involved at pickup as there is always a chance to reflect on the day." Another parent said, "We love that Sorcha sends us lots of updates and pictures. We feel really assured that our child is safe and well looked after."

Children benefitted from regular outdoor play and a wide variety of experiences. Parents valued this, saying, "We love that he spends lots of time outside doing varied activities and being introduced to new things. We really like that he spends time among a varied age range of children."

### Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children's six monthly review included areas such as communication & language, physical development, personal, social and emotional, literacy, understanding, expressive arts and design. The childminder used this information to provide opportunities for children to develop and learn. Parents were positive about opportunities for their children, commenting, "Sorcha has a folder which outlines activities and development and we feel these suit and reflect his needs well".

Children were meaningfully involved in leading their play and learning. Play experiences supported the development of children's skills in language, numeracy and literacy. The childminder's skilled interactions promoted children's creativity and curiosity, for example, when the children painted the childminder spoke about shape and colour with them. The childminder joined in with children's play, reading and singing with them and engaged them in meaningful conversations. Books were enjoyed by children, who choose their favourite stories, which the childminder read in an interactive way. Children were encouraged to join in and comment on stories, this supported their language development.

The childminder used descriptive language when speaking with children, talking about what they were doing, had done and would be doing. This supported children's language skills, recall and understanding, helping them feel secure and confident in daily routines.

Children had opportunities for play and learning through connections in their local communities, such as attending toddler groups, Book bug at their local library, trips to the local park and beach. Parents commented positively on this, saying "Our child is introduced to lots of new experiences and supported through these new things, Group play / playing with peers on the beach / at the park / playgroups / local library".

## 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

The childminder's home was comfortable and furnished to a high standard. It was a welcoming space with plenty of natural light and ventilation. It gave a strong message to children that they mattered and had ample space for their needs. Parents agreed saying, "Clean, warm and welcoming home environment that is child safe".

Toys and resources were stored in the living area, which was accessible to children to choose from. Children were encouraged to tidy up and look after toys, this was modelled by the childminder.

Infection prevention and control practices were adhered to ensuring a safe environment for children. Parents agreed saying, "Sorchas house is always clean and safe and well maintained, which we are able to see upon pickup of our child". Hand washing practices supported children to have a good understanding of the importance of handwashing in keeping themselves healthy.

The childminder carried out a visual risk assessment to minimise risks to children within her home. This included when in the wider community, when road safety and stranger danger were discussed with children in an age appropriate way. All of this contributed to keeping children safe. This was supported by the childminder's Health and Safety policy.

## 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.

### Quality indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Policy and procedures were written by the childminder which underpinned the service. These were shared with parents so that they knew what they could expect from the service.

Parents told us that they felt meaningfully involved in the development of the service. Their views were sought on their child's individual needs through the personal plan and they were included in regular updates of this. Parents were welcomed into the setting, which allowed them to share their views. Views about the overall service were gathered through daily discussions and formally by questionnaires issued to parents.

Since the last inspection, the childminder had increased her knowledge of best practice and current guidance to improve outcomes for children. They shared how the learning and training had impacted positively on the service provided. We saw evidence of this, for example, improved Personal Plans which were reviewed with families.

The childminder had signed up for the Care Inspectorate emails, to keep up to date with current and new best practice and guidance. They were aware of the introduction of the new 'Quality Improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding' which would be used for inspection from September 2025. We discussed how they could use this to support self-evaluation.

The childminder did not have a written improvement plan but was able to discuss the improvements she had made. We discussed ways in which she could write a simple improvement plan to document improvements planned and how these had been made and implemented. The childminder agreed to do this.

## 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

The childminder was warm, kind and compassionate, this contributed to children feeling valued, loved and secure. This was apparent through the warm, nurturing and responsive interactions between the childminder and minded children. They knew the children well enabling them to be responsive to their non verbal and verbal cues.

Children were supported to reach their potential, as the childminder was aspirational and had an enabling attitude. They interacted in a sensitive, responsive and stimulating way to promote curiosity and confidence.

The childminder was knowledgeable about how children develop and learn, which enabled them to support children and families, for example, having discussions with parents about areas of development specific to their child. They supported parents in a respectful manner, recognising them as the experts in their child's life. A parent said, "Sorcha always listens to our updates on how our child is doing and is adaptive depending on the circumstances".

The childminder made good use of professional development opportunities that linked directly to enhanced outcomes for children and improvements for the service. All training attended was recorded. We discussed that the training planned could be linked to the improvement plan to demonstrate how training impacted positively on the service. For example, since the childminder had attended training on loose parts, this had resulted in the introduction of more loose parts in the garden area, giving children greater opportunities for creative and imaginative.

Parental input was sought and was valued by the childminder. This was done informally on a daily basis and more formally every six months. Parents agreed that their views were sought telling us, "There are opportunities for regular feedback" and "Over time we have provided feed back and Sorcha's service has evolved to accommodate my child's changing needs". We discussed that they should consider collating any feedback and including in the improvement plan.

## What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

### Areas for improvement

#### Previous area for improvement 1

To ensure that children's needs are met, the childminder should further develop their personal plans to take into account the wellbeing indicators, reviews with families, and to outline the strategies for support for children's individual care and support needs.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

**This area for improvement was made on 13 September 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

All personal plans had been updated. All children had personal plans which had been updated with parents. These included the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators, which demonstrated a holistic view of children and how their individual needs would be met.

A chronology of conversations with parents was recorded to ensure that the childminder had the correct and current information to support children

This area for improvement has been met.

## Previous area for improvement 2

To support a culture of continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children, the childminder should continue to increase their knowledge of current best practice in early learning and childcare. This should include using the Care Inspectorate's website and 'The Hub' to access documents to support their practice. This should include but not be limited to safe sleeping, medication, personal planning and self-evaluation.

This is to ensure 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).

**This area for improvement was made on 14 September 2023.**

### Action taken since then

The childminder had increased her knowledge of best practice and current guidance to improve outcomes for children.

A record was kept of all the training, webinars, documents read which included notes of what the childminder had learned. They discussed with us changes made as a result of this. We suggested that the childminder, documents changes made to contribute towards a written improvement plan. We saw evidence of improved recording of medical information, improved personal plans which were regularly updated with parents

This area for improvement is met.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://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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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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