

Inspection Report

2023-2024

Catherine Earl

Childminder

12th December 2023

**Under the Regulation of Care Act 2013 and
Regulation of Care (Care Services) Regulations 2013**



DHSC

We carried out this inspection under Part 4 of the Regulation of Care Act 2013 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements, regulations and standards associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service.

We carried out this announced inspection on 12th December 2023. The inspection was led by two inspectors from the Registration and Inspection team.

Service and service type

Catherine (Cath) Earl provides 'childminding' for one or more children under 8 years old by a person at a private dwelling for reward and for more than a total of 2 hours in the same day.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

To get to the heart of people's experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following five questions:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Is it caring?
- Is it responsive to people's needs?
- Is it well-led?

These questions form the framework for the areas we look at during the inspection.

Our key findings

The children were receiving a caring service that promoted their independence, confidence and learning. There were routines in place that provide structure and consistency for the children and the children observed during the inspection appeared to be happy and relaxed in the setting.

There were areas of improvement identified as a result of this inspection.

Cath is an experienced childminder and demonstrated a good knowledge of child development and an understanding of child behaviour.

Parental feedback comments

"Cath is very good at writing everything necessary in my [child's] book. She also tells me anything of importance when I collect my [child]."

"I feel very comfortable approaching Cath with any concerns I have and they are all sorted asap."

"She's very nurturing and loves all the children she looks after. Cath has great control with the children when it comes to things like getting out of the car, crossing the road etc, the children know where to wait to keep safe, they know to listen to Cath. My [child] is very well behaved when [child] is with her and [child] absolutely loves going to see her everyday. She has helped [child] so much in preparation for pre school,"

"She's an incredible childminder and the children are so lucky to be with her."

About the service

Cath must not look after more than 6 (six) children at any one time under the age of 8 (eight) years, including the childminder’s own children. Of these 6 (six) children:
No more than 2 (two) children must be under the age of 1 (one) year
No more than 3 (three) children must be under the age of 5 (five) years.

Cath lives in Castletown and has been a registered childminder since 2010. Currently Cath cares for children between the age of 11 (eleven) months and 11 years in various combinations within the terms of her registration, providing before and after school care as well as preschool day care and holiday care.

The areas of the premises used for childminding are on the ground floor and comprise of the main lounge, the kitchen and downstairs toilet. All areas were clean, bright and warm. There was a selection of toys available for the children to play with and the two children present during the period of inspection appeared relaxed and comfortable in the setting.

The childminder attends group activities in the community daily with the children and has a routine in place to ensure the children have consistency and structure to their day. The childminder walks with the children or uses her car to attend activity groups and for visits to the park or other outings depending on the age and ability of the children attending each day.

Notice of Inspection

This inspection was part of our annual inspection programme which took place between April 2023 and March 2024.

Inspection activity started on 19th October 2023. We visited the service location on 12th December 2023.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we received about the service since the last inspection. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR), notifications, complaints/compliments and any safeguarding issues.
We sent parental questionnaires to parents of minded children.

During the inspection

We used an observational framework for inspection, this is a way of observing care to help us understand the experience of people/children.

C1 Is the service safe?

Our findings:

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. The service does require improvements in this area.

This service was found to be safe.

Prevention and control of infection

The premises were found to be clean and well maintained, with child friendly safety covers in place where needed to protect the children from hazardous furniture. Cath has a daily cleaning routine in place for all rooms used and reported that she rotates deep cleaning of toys and bedding. In the PIR Cath stated " personal hygiene is promoted; children wash their hands on arrival, each child has a separate towel and shoes are removed when indoors"

There were policies and procedures to inform parents of the need to exclude children with any infectious illness.

When possible Cath will open windows to allow a flow of fresh air into the house.

All parents are asked to provide lunch, snacks and personal care items for their child.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

There were risk assessments in place for all the utilised areas within the home and for outings with the children. The policies in place were dated and current but require review to ensure they reflect Isle of Man regulation and legislation. There was not a fire risk assessment. The safeguarding policy also needs to include contact details of the Isle of Man Childcare Team and Police.

There was evidence that monthly checks are carried out on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors however these need to be completed weekly. All insurances were up to date and there was evidence to show vehicle maintenance and household equipment was safety checked within the required timeframes.

Cath had a valid First Aid certificate and had recently updated her Safe Guarding children training.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement:

- Policies and procedures need to be reviewed to ensure they refer to and reflect Isle of Man regulation and legislation.
- The Safeguarding Policy needs to be updated to include the contact telephone numbers for childcare services and the police.
- Fire risk assessment to be written
- Smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detectors to be tested weekly.

Inspection Findings

C2 Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people’s care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be effective.

Children’s care and development needs are assessed, supported and promoted

All the children have their own file which contains the required information about the child. There were no photographs on the individual files although these were available electronically. There was evidence that this information was updated regularly.

Cath demonstrated a good knowledge of child development and has many years of experience as a childminder.

Cath was observed to give clear messages to the children; her tone was calm but firm when telling one child not to take a toy from the other. She also responded consistently when one child climbed onto the toy garage. The parental feedback received confirmed that Cath is good at setting boundaries, managing behaviour and implementing good routines.

Daily communication books were in place for the preschool day care children. The book seen provided parents with a daily update of activities their child had done and any other relevant information. Verbal updates were also evident from parental feedback.

Cath reported that she attends child focused group sessions every morning with the children, this provides the opportunity for the children to socialise and participate in various activities to promote their learning and development. Cath encourages the children to learn through play and ensures they have choice. Cath stated “extra time is spent with children who need additional support; 1-1 where possible.”

There was a good range of toys available in the home that the children were able to select for themselves giving them some independence and choice.

One parent commented “Cath has helped [child] so much in preparation for pre school, [child] can count to 12, he knows all the colours and can differentiate between dark & light blue”

Inspection Findings

C3 Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be caring.

Ensuring children are being treated with kindness, respect and compassion, and are given emotional support when needed.

Cath reported that she gets to know the children she cares for well and quickly learns their individual likes and dislikes. In addition information is requested from the parents prior to the child starting so Cath is aware of any specific needs or issues. All children are treated fairly and provided with lots of experiences to grow and develop in all areas.

Two children were present during the inspection period, during this time Cath engaged fully with both children and was able to focus and respond to their individual needs. The younger child stayed close to Cath and appropriately became unsettled when Cath momentarily left the room. Cath responded by picking up the child and gave reassurance on return which quickly calmed the child. Cath was observed anticipating and preparing the child for a nap which demonstrated the routine in place and her understanding of the child's needs.

Throughout the visit Cath used appropriate touch with the children. She was observed giving them cuddles when upset, allowing them to sit on her knee for reassurance and gave hugs when needed.

During play Cath encouraged the children to share and take turns, she promoted good manners and urged the children to say 'please and thank you'. This was observed during the inspection visit.

Cath reported she uses stories and rhymes to teach and improve communication. She will talk to the children and explain concepts (such as sharing) in age appropriate language and will always be patient.

Parental feedback received stated "She's very nurturing and loves all the children she looks after."

Maintaining children's privacy, dignity and independence respected.

There was a confidentiality policy and a records policy in place, both had been recently reviewed. There was documented evidence that parents had seen or were aware of these policies. All records were stored securely.

Cath reported that independence is encouraged by attending playgroups daily, the children learn by being in a group situation. Cath concentrates on more structured play within the home but allows choice and encourages each child to do things for themselves.

The children all had their own space and bedding for nap time; this was witnessed during the visit with one child being placed in their own pram in the hallway for privacy, familiarity and

comfort. Toileting was also managed during the visit with another child being taken to the toilet and changed in privacy and with discretion.

Inspection Findings

C4 Is the service responsive?

Our findings:

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people’s needs. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be responsive.

Delivering personalised care

With the range of toys within the setting and daily attendance at the group sessions there was sufficient evidence to suggest that the children in Cath’s care are given plenty of opportunities to explore their interests and be introduced to new activities and experiences.

Cath advised that she also visits other community venues with the children, such as trips to the park or beach and during school holidays, when she often has older children, they will travel further afield for picnics and to visit other areas of the Island. She stated that she is mindful of maintaining the routine for younger children but can plan outings depending on the children attending and their specific interests.

The parental feedback confirmed the parents were happy with the level of care and information received.

Cath practices baby sign with the youngest of the children, this is not due to the child’s specific need but as an alternative and additional means of communication. This is a method widely used in group settings to make the activity more inclusive.

If areas of improvement have been identified the provider will be required to produce an action plan detailing how the areas of improvement will be rectified within the timescales identified. The R&I team will follow up and monitor any actions undertaken.