

Inspection Report & 2023-2024

Georgina Birchenough

Childminder

6 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 6 December 2023. The inspection was led by an inspector from the Registration and Inspection team.

Service and service type

Georgina Birchenough 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 area of the premises currently used is on the ground floor and includes a lounge and kitchen area. There is a separate playroom on the lower floor however this was not in use at the time of the inspection due to renovation work. The rooms were all clean, well lit, warm and contained a good range of toys for the children to play with.

The interaction observed between the childminder and the two children present was positive, with lots of chat and physical contact. The children appeared very comfortable and relaxed in the setting and were observed playing independently and directly with the childminder.

The childminder attends various groups and has 'outings' with the children depending on the age, interests and number of children attending each day.

Parental feedback comments

"I have one-on-one discussions at the end of every day with my childcare provider"

"Any concerns will be raised with myself and vice versa and we definitely listen to each other and take onboard each others concerns to make appropriate changes"

"I am very happy with the service my childcare provider has given in the last 17 months we have been with her"

" I think the childcare provider is very successful at ensuring clear boundaries are set, that any additional care such as potty training is provided along with advice, and providing me with a summary at the end of every day"

"[child] didn't take long to settle and Georgie was very patient and caring with her when she got upset the first few times"

"Georgie is very good at giving verbal updates regarding [child]"

About the service

Georgina must not look after more than 6 (six) children on the premises at any one time under the age of 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 one year. No more than 3 (three) children must be under the age of five.

Georgina lives in Peel and has been a registered childminder for more than 20 (twenty) years. The rooms currently used for childminding are on the ground level, however there is also a playroom on the lower floor which was not in use due to renovation work. She uses her car to transport children as well as walking on outings.

There are 5 (five) children registered with the service; 2 (two) were present during the time of the inspection.

Parents are asked to provide their own child's lunch, snacks and any personal items they may require.

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 17 October 2023. We visited the location's service on 06 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

An inspection of all the rooms used for childminding was undertaken and a range of documentation was reviewed. The documents viewed included a sample of policies, risk assessments and recording mechanisms, such as medication administration and fire safety checks.

The children's records were viewed along with the daily diary of attendance.

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 rooms inspected were all bright, clean and appeared to be well maintained to a good standard of health and hygiene. Georgina reported she has a daily routine that ensures the environment, toys and equipment are kept clean.

Georgina was observed wiping hands after toileting one of the children. The potty was kept and used in the corner of the room, it was emptied after use and washed out.

Parents are asked not to send their children to the service if they are unwell. Georgina's policy folder showed in the index an exclusion and sickness policy but a copy was not available during inspection. However it was evident this policy was shared with parents as exclusion due to illness was referred to by one parent when dropping of their child.

There was a cat in the household but not seen and it was reported the cat does not go into the childminding areas when the children are present. Parents are made aware of the cat prior to their child starting.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

Georgina provided a copy of her written risk assessments which demonstrated her ability to identified potential hazards and put in place procedures to manage potential risk or harm. The documents seen need to be dated and reviewed to ensure they are up to date and meet the standards required of childminders.

The smoke and carbon monoxide detector records showed that both were checked weekly but no recent fire drill had been recorded. There was no written fire risk assessment.

Georgina's safeguarding training was up to date. There was a safeguarding policy in place but this required review and needs to be updated to meet the regulatory requirements.

Georgina was not registered with the data protection office as she reported her records are all paper. However it was later mentioned that text messages were sent to parents occasionally to provide updates and reassurance in regard to the child being settled and happy. The inspector advised that the use of electronic messaging needs to be covered by registration with data protection information commissioner or all messaging must cease. All paper records were stored in a lockable cabinet.

All insurances were in place and evidence was available to show routine checks had been carried out on the environment, equipment and the vehicle used to transport children. All were up to date and renewals were being carried out within the required timescales. Evidence was available to show that recording systems were in place in regards to the administration of medication and recording of accidents but none had been recorded within the past 12 months.

Following internal renovations in the home the downstairs playroom previously used as part of the service has been out of bounds for several months. Once the work is completed Georgina intends to utilise the space again as a child's playroom. A discussion was had with the inspector about the fitting of a stair gate to ensure the room is safe before use.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement:

- Policies need to be in place according to the Regulations; these must be dated and reviewed regularly
- Safeguarding policy to be reviewed and updated to include details of the other agencies parents can contact if they have a safeguarding concern
- Fire drill to be carried out and recorded
- Fire risk assessment to be written and added to folder
- The childminder must not use her mobile phone or other electronic device to communicate information about the child unless she registers with the Information Commissioner, Under Data Protection legislation.

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 require improvements in this area.

This service was found to be effective.

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

Individual child records were seen for all children attending the service; these records included essential information about the child, their parents contact details and specific requirements for each child. Georgina had developed a contact renewal form for completion by the parents of children who have attended for more than 12 months to ensure the information she has is current.

Georgina does not request “all about me” books or similar but she does meet with the parents and the child prior to them starting with the service to get to know them. Georgina reported that she has a good relationship with all the parents and communicates with them daily to give and receive updates about the children. This was confirmed by the parents who provided feedback.

The daily records kept reflect the children attending and the times of their sessions but there were no activity records kept or records to monitor the child’s development.

Georgina is NNEB trained and qualified and has a good knowledge and understanding of child development. The toys and activities available to the children during the inspection were age appropriate and readily obtainable. The interaction between Georgina and the children was observed to be natural, with both children going to her for reassurance and support. She was observed to be clear and consistent in her management of behaviour, for example one of the children kept climbing onto the toy garage. Georgina repeatedly told the child not to climb on the toy and physically removed the child in a calm but firm manner.

Planning for activities is done daily and will depend on the children present and the weather; they undertake a range of activities usually having outings in the mornings. They attend local child focused groups several times a week to socialise with other children and to support the child’s learning and development.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- The childminder must evidence that regular information is provided for parents about activities carried out with the children, for example daily logs.
- The childminder needs to evidence that children are meeting their developmental milestones.

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.

Throughout the visit the childminder remained engaged with the children. She interacted well with both of the children present and they remained her priority throughout the visit.

It was evident that Georgina knew the children well by the way she predicted their choices and actions. She was playful and nurturing, giving cuddles on request but also encouraging each child to try to do things for themselves. She gave praise for achievements, but also maintained boundaries consistently. Both children looked to her frequently for reassurance, but both were happy to play on their own for age appropriate periods of time.

Georgina stated information about the children's preferences, likes and needs were exchanged verbally with the parents during handovers.

Georgina told us in the PIR "prior to entering an agreement with the parents of a minded child I hold a number of introductory sessions with the parents present so that the child's particular needs and preferences are understood and agreed."

Maintaining children's privacy, dignity and independence respected.

Georgina showed patience and gave dignity to the child who was potty training and when the child requested to use the potty several times during the inspection visit. The potty was placed in the corner of the room and a blanket placed over the child's legs when sat down. Georgina stayed close by but allowed the child privacy and promoted independence.

Georgina stated she encourages independence by allowing the children choice and helping them with tasks rather than doing things for them. This was observed during the visit. Georgina was verbally able to provide examples of specific children and how they had grown and developed over time and how their confidence had increased through activities and play in the setting.

Georgina stated she does not record developmental information but verbally updates the parents when any child achieves a specific milestone. If the child is new to the setting Georgina reported that she sends a text or WhatsApp message to the parent during the day to reassure them the child is settled but usually all information exchanged was via daily verbal update at handover time. The parental feedback received confirmed that verbal feedback is given daily and parents are able to discuss any concerns directly with Georgina if necessary.

There was a confidentiality policy in place that explains to parents how their data is handled and where their child's information is kept.

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

Georgina stated that activities are planned on a daily basis, taking into account the age, ability and interests of the children attending. Information is requested about each child prior to them starting in regard to their dietary, cultural and medical needs. Parents are asked to inform Georgina if there are change of circumstance.

Whilst there was no evidence of formal planning Georgina was able to explain how she uses activities and play to encourage learning. i.e. singing rhymes repetitively, counting steps to learn numbers, talking about the colour of objects used daily etc. She also liaises with the parents on a daily basis to take into account individual needs to help her plan the day’s activities.

During the inspection the children present were observed playing with a range of toys which they were able to access and select for themselves. The dolls and small world people seen reflected a diverse range figures.

The inspector discussed with Georgina how she promotes diversity with the children. It was acknowledged that although the children are young an awareness of difference can be included through the toys and resources used with the children during play.

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.