

# Inspection Report & 2023-2024

**Miriam Cowell**

Childminder

12/12/23

**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 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The inspection was led by an inspector from the Registration and Inspection team.

### **Service and service type**

Miriam Cowell provides 'childminding' for one or more children under 8 years old, 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 areas used for minding were well equipped, organised, light and bright. They were laid out to encourage activities and toys are readily available for the children to choose from. All areas were well presented and clean

The interactions observed between the minder and the children were seen to be caring, compassionate and appropriate for their age. The children were the focus throughout the visit and they were encouraged to interact and were comforted when needed.

Miriam showed a good understanding of the children's development needs. She keeps a diary regarding the children development and key information is shared with the parents verbally each day.

Miriam keeps good records regarding the children, she was well organised and had appropriate systems in place to support the provision of her service.

**About the service**

Miriam 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

Miriam lives in Onchan and has been a registered childminder for many years. The areas of the premises used for childminding include a large open lounge, leading to a large kitchen/ diner which is only accessible though double doors.

Activities are planned on a daily basis, for activities outside of the home the childminder will transport the children in her own car or walk with the children.

**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 11/12/23. We visited the location’s office/service 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.

**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.

**After the inspection**

Feedback was given to Miriam.

## SECTION C Inspection Findings

### 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 some improvements in this area.

This service was found to be safe.

#### **Prevention and control of infection**

Miriam had policies and procedures in place to ensure all resources, toys and the premises were inspected and cleaned on a daily basis. These included changing mats being cleaned after use, highchairs being cleaned each time they were used, the use of hand sanitisers and the use of individual bedding which was washed weekly.

All areas appeared to be clean and in good repair. All toys and resources are checked monthly to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

All children had their own lunch bags/boxes provided by parents which had ice packs inside. Miriam has undertaken Food safety training and there was information available regarding allergens, including a separate allergy policy.

There was a Health and Safety policy in place and also a sickness/infection policy which included the exclusion procedures in place regarding illness. Discussion took place regarding the application of this and how exclusion can be made at the childminders discretion if she feels the child is infectious or not fit to attend the setting.

There is a comprehensive pet policy in place to ensure that they do not present an infection risk to the children

#### **Assessing Risk, Safety monitoring and management**

Risk assessments had been carried out for the premises and the activities undertaken by the childminder. These were comprehensive and well written with actions required to ensure risks to the children were minimised. They was dated evidence that they had been reviewed and a forward review date showed that they were reviewed annually.

The Fire risk assessment was included in the risk assessment folder but was also included in the statement of purpose. There was evidence that fire tests and fire drills had been carried out as required and there was full evacuation plan in place.

Pat testing was completed and up to date.

Safeguarding training was up to date and a Safeguarding policy was in place. Discussed the need to include procedures that parents could follow if they felt they had an allegation against the childminder.

There are also policies in place for medication use and intimate care. All policies were signed, dated and showed clear forward review dates

### **Action we require the provider to take**

Key areas for improvement:

- The safeguarding policy needs to be reviewed to include a section regarding allegations against the childminder.

## 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**

Miriam is an experienced childminder who has a good knowledge of the children’s expected milestones. She promotes learning through play, encouraging the children to explore their surroundings and to develop at their own pace whilst recognising the different age related development milestones. There is a Care, learning and play policy in place.

During the inspection Miriam was continually observing and engaging with the children. The children were able to choose their toys and activities in an informal way. There was a wide selection of appropriate toys and resources available from which the child could choose.

Various activities may be planned for the day depending on the needs and ages of the children and the weather.

Daily observations and development assessments of the children are held in a diary, these were shared verbally with the parents when they were picked up.

Miriam showed a good knowledge of the development stages and said that if she had concerns she would monitor it whilst discussing it with the parents. She would work with them on any support needs identified. She would recommend they seek further advice from professionals if she was overly concerned.

Miriam was aware of the individual needs of the children. During discussion she said that she prefers to mind children up until they reach 2.5yrs of age, as she recognised that after this age children may need more social stimulation and to learn to be part of a larger social group.

## 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.**

There were three children, under the age of 2 years, present during the inspection. Some of the children were unsure of myself being present but Miriam reassured them constantly and used appropriate cuddles when they were upset to comfort them.

Throughout the visit the interactions observed between the minder and the children were appropriate for their age. The children remained the focus throughout the visit with the childminder staying engaged with the children during the visit despite my presence.

The children responded well to the minder and they gradually relaxed in my presence due to her constant interaction and assurance.

Miriam was observed to be aware of the individual needs of the individual children and ensured that all children received her attention. She provided appropriate activities and resources related to their age and ability. She used distraction techniques when needed, checked on them when they fell over and was aware of their likes, dislikes and their personal routines and used this knowledge to the advantage of the children.

Miriam was observed to show a caring compassionate approach to the children's needs. She knew when children needed a bit more reassurance and by the end of the visit all children appeared to be happy and comfortable in the setting. The children responded well to Miriam's interactions and presence.

#### **Maintaining children's privacy, dignity and independence respected.**

There was a confidentiality and a social media policy in place which were dated and showed forward dates for review.

All records are written and held in a paper folder which is locked away when not in use.

Miriam keeps a daily diary in which she notes anything of significance for the children, sleeps, feeds, falls activities, milestones etc. this is shared with the parents verbally ensuring privacy as required.

Nappy changes are undertaken in the main room, but the minder tries to do this behind chairs to allow some privacy whilst still being able to observe the other children. Individual towels are used for changes which are washed daily.

Data protection registration was discussed but the minder doesn't use any electronic or digital platforms to share information with the parents. The minder is aware that if they do start to use these in the future that they will need to consider registration.

The children were observed being encouraged to do things for themselves and to make small choices where possible. The level of independence allowed was appropriate for the age of the children present.



## 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**

Information from parents re likes /dislikes and preferences are on the children’s records. This is in place before the child starts and is updated regularly. The children’s records are comprehensive and also has information such as pets, siblings etc

Activities tend to be planned daily but they may have an outing in the mornings and then quiet time or free-play in the afternoons. The activity depends on weather and the children present.

Diversity, equality and inclusion was discussed including awareness of alternative family groups, disability, different cultures etc. there is an equal opportunities and additional needs policy in place.

There were books and toys available in the setting which were used to increase awareness of diversity and inclusion; due to the age of the children this was felt to be a natural way to introduce the children to diversity.

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.