

# Inspection Report & 2023-2024

## Tracey Dale

Childminder

10 January 2024

**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 10 January 2024. The inspection was led by an inspector from the Registration and Inspection team.

### **Service and service type**

Tracey Dale 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**

Tracey is an experienced childminder who demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of child development and behaviour. The children present appeared comfortable and happy in the environment and were observed to have a variety of toys to play with which would support their learning and growth. The interactions between the children and the childminder were natural and relaxed and it was clear the childminder knew each child well.

The area of the premises used was on the ground floor, although there were steps at the front of the house to access the setting. There was also ramp access available if needed.

Tracey ensured that the children have the opportunity to access different activities and experiences by attending different community groups and by taking the children on outings to parks and recreation areas daily, as well as providing a range of activities within the setting.

There were no areas for improvement identified.

### **Parental feedback comments**

- "any concerns I've had Tracey has listened and has helped us"
- "she regularly asks to check and make sure the information is up to date"
- "Providing a home from home and giving the children the best quality & care they would need."

### **About the service**

The childminder 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

The childminder lives in Douglas and has been a registered childminder since 2008.

The main room used for childminding was the living room but occasionally the kitchen maybe used for messy activities. Safety gates were in place and the front door was locked. The garden was not being used due to the weather/ time of year but was secure and suitable for use. Tracey uses her car to take the children on outings or will walk if the activity is close by.

There were two family dogs seen however they were both upstairs and Tracey reported they are kept out of the living room while the children are present.

### **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 service on 10 January 2024.

### **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 not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be safe.

**Prevention and control of infection**

The setting and equipment all appeared clean and well maintained. Tracey reported a routine whereby floors and surfaces are cleaned every morning and evening to ensure the premises are clean and hygienic with a deep clean undertaken weekly. The toys are rotated regularly and cleaned weekly, or more frequently if needed, in order to protect the children from potential spread of infection.

There was a sick child policy in place which states that Tracey follows public health guidelines in regard to exclusion illnesses and periods of time the child must not attend. All parents were made aware of this prior to their child attending and had signed an agreement as such.

The children were observed sanitising their hands after nappy change and all seemed familiar with this routine.

Lunches and snacks were provided by the parents thereby negating the need for any food storage or preparation within the setting.

There were two dogs within the home; both were seen behind a gate at the top of the stairs. Tracey advised the dogs do not come into the rooms used for childminding when the children are present unless the child's parent is there and has given consent. All parents are made aware that Tracey has two dogs prior to their child starting the setting as part of the parental agreement form.

**Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management**

Tracey appeared to be safety aware and had written risk assessments available for all indoor areas used for childminding and for outings with the children.

The smoke and carbon monoxide detector records showed that both were checked weekly and fire drills were recorded termly. There was a written fire risk assessment and evacuation plan in place.

Tracey's safeguarding training was due for renewal however there was evidence to show that Tracey had made arrangements to complete online training in the absence of a safeguarding course being available for her to attend. Tracey's safeguarding policy was last reviewed in November 2023.

All written records were kept securely; there was a confidentiality policy and Tracey had recently registered with data protection as she uses her mobile phone to communicate with parents.

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.

## 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**

In the provider information return (PIR) Tracey wrote “When a child starts in my care I have a conversation with the parents about where the child is up to developmentally and what the child can do already. Whilst in my care if a child reaches a developmental milestone (first word, first step etc.) I make a note of this in my day to day diary and inform the parents.”

“If I feel a child isn’t where they should be developmentally and they need help, I will have a conversation with the parent/ guardian about what their thoughts are and how I can work with them to help the child develop further.”

This was supported in the parental feedback. It was also observed during the inspection, Tracey was seen to anticipate the children’s needs and preferences, knowing one child’s preferred book and managing the situation when one child took another child’s toy.

Each child had an individual file with all the necessary information recorded but Tracey does not provide books which record each child’s developmental progress unless this is requested by the parent. None of the children attending currently have one however milestones and daily activities are recorded centrally in Tracey’s childminding diary and verbal updates are given.

Tracey attends a range of group activities in the community which helps to support all areas of the children’s development and learning. She also likes to spend time outdoors when the weather permits to encourage physical exercise. In addition it was recorded that within the setting Tracey holds activity days which focus on specific areas of learning, such as number or colour days and information is recorded on each child’s level of understanding or engagement.

It appeared that all the children present were comfortable with Tracey and each other. They all individually approached her at different times for cuddles or assistance and she was able to respond and maintain focus on the children throughout the visit. It was observed during inspection that Tracey promoted confidence and independence by recognising and praising achievements and effort.

## 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.**

In the feedback received, one parent described the setting as a “home from home ... giving the children the best quality and care they would need”

Tracey reported in the PIR “All children in my care are treated with kindness, compassion and respect, I get down to their level, listening to the child’s wants and needs, speaking softly to the child, figure out what their wants and needs are if they’re unable to communicate themselves and helping the child out where needed.”

During the inspection there was evidence, through discussion, that Tracey knows each child well; she spoke about planning outings with one child who can be sensitive to certain noises and environments. She was aware of the behavioural triggers and what can be done to support the child to participate in the same activities as the other children. Tracey demonstrated that she was patient and able to respond to the child’s needs whilst encouraging the child to try but also recognised that the child was not yet ready for somethings.

The non-verbal communication observed during the inspection was lovely, with lots of touch, cuddles and eye contact. The children were comfortable approaching Tracey and appeared very “at home” in the setting.

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

All records and information was kept securely and Tracey was mindful that details of other children should not be visible to other parents, for example in the accident book every entry was on a separate page so when signing parents cannot view any previous recorded information. There was a confidentiality policy which all parents were made aware of and which they have access to.

In the PIR Tracey wrote “I aim to build a good relationship with all parents/ guardians and I pride myself on successfully doing so throughout the years. This relationship gives the parents the comfort and reassurance that they can tell me about anything they may need to that may affect the child. Every child is treated equally and with respect regardless of their history or background, this is in line with my inclusion and non-bias policy.”

“All children within my care are given many opportunities to help with their independence, for example: when getting dressed to go out they’re encouraged to try to put their coat on themselves. At lunch time they’re encouraged to use a juice bottle themselves and to feed themselves where age appropriate etc.”

The language Tracey used when talking to and about the children was positive and encouraging; she noticed and commented when one child was tidying away toys which clearly the child was happy about and hopefully made him feel good.

It was evident during discussion that Tracey had a lot of experience and a good understanding of child behaviour and development.



## 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**

Tracey will discuss with parents their child’s individual needs and preferences and ensures that she is aware of their current or new interests

In response to the question ‘How do you act on and ensure children’s interests are included in your planning?’ Tracey stated: “I loosely plan my day to day activities and these are subject to change based on many different factors, the main one being what kind of mood the children are in, whether or not I feel they’ll gain anything from the chosen activity or if I should leave it for another day and swap for an activity that may interest and benefit the children more. I will never make a child do anything they don’t want to.”

By attending different groups and activities the children have the opportunity to mix with and experience children and adults of different ages, abilities and backgrounds. Tracey also ensures that she has a range of toys and books that reflect diversity and difference and which the children are able to choose for themselves.

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.