



Office for Standards
in Education

Guide to Registration for Childminders

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Introduction

This guidance provides information about the registration process. It will help you to decide whether to apply and what processes your application will go through before Ofsted can make a decision about whether you are suitable to be registered as a childminder.

The registration process looks at your ability to provide care for children under eight years old and the suitability of your premises to do this. Once you are registered, Ofsted will continue to assess your suitability to provide care through regular inspections.

Why are childminders registered?

Ofsted registers childminders to:

- protect children
- ensure that childminders meet the National Standards
- ensure that children are safe, well cared for and take part in activities that contribute to their development and learning
- promote high quality in the provision of care and learning
- provide reassurance for parents.

Who needs to register as a childminder?

A childminder is a person who looks after one or more children under the age of eight.¹ This is for a total of more than two hours a day on domestic premises for reward. 'Reward' can be money or payment in kind. Domestic means premises used wholly or mainly as a private dwelling.

You must not act as a childminder without being registered. If you do, it may lead to prosecution.²

You do not need to register as a childminder if you:

- are the parent, or a close relative, of the child you are looking after
- have parental responsibility for the child
- are a local authority foster parent to the child
- are a foster parent with whom the child has been placed by a voluntary organisation
- foster the child privately
- only look after the child between the hours of 6pm and 2am
- look after the child wholly or mainly in the child's own home
- look after children for two sets of parents wholly or mainly in the home of either or both sets of parents.

If you are not sure if you need to be registered please telephone the Ofsted helpline number on 0845 601 4771.

helpline 0845 601 4771

¹ Section 79A of Part XA of the Children Act 1989 (as inserted by the Care Standard Act 2000) contains the full definition.

² It is an offence if a person, having been served with an enforcement notice, without reasonable excuse acts as a childminder without being registered (Section 79D(4) of the Children Act 1989).

The requirements for registration

What will Ofsted look at in deciding about registration?

Before you can be registered you must show Ofsted that:

- you, and every other person looking after children on the premises where you childmind, are suitable to care for children under the age of eight
- every person living or working on the premises where you childmind is suitable to be in regular contact with children under the age of eight
- the premises are suitable to be used for looking after children under the age of eight
- you comply with National Standards, regulations and any conditions of registration imposed by Ofsted.

What are the National Standards?

There are 14 National Standards published in a document called *National Standards For Under Eights Day Care and Childminding: Childminding*. They represent a baseline of quality, below which no provider may fall. Each standard describes a particular quality outcome, for example, 'safety'. They are accompanied by a set of supporting criteria, which give information about how that outcome is to be achieved.

You need to demonstrate to Ofsted how you will meet the National Standards before you can be registered. To help you, Ofsted has produced guidance to the National Standards. Annex A contains information on how to obtain the National Standards and accompanying guidance.

What are conditions of registration?

Ofsted may grant your registration subject to certain conditions. Conditions are restrictions to your registration such as the maximum number and ages of children that you may care for. We discuss any conditions with you during the registration visit. If registration is granted they are included on your certificate of registration. You must comply with conditions at all times.

Is there a registration fee?

There is a fee charged for registration. This is currently £14. You will be sent a letter requesting payment as part of the registration process. You cannot be registered until the fee is paid. Childminders also have to pay an annual fee of £11 on the anniversary of their registration. You will be sent a request for payment when this is due.

Is there anything that would automatically prevent me from becoming a childminder?

You cannot become a childminder if you are disqualified for registration.³

You **may** be disqualified for registration if you, or a person who lives or works with you, has been:

1. convicted or charged with an offence against a child
2. convicted or charged with certain offences against an adult
3. placed on the Protection of Children Act List of persons considered unsuitable to work with children
4. placed on the Department for Education and Skills List 99 of people that are not considered to be fit and proper persons to work with children
5. refused registration previously or have had a registration cancelled.

Are there any other agencies involved?

Local authority

Your local authority provides you with support, advice and training through the registration process. Ofsted works closely with your local authority to help your registration proceed smoothly. Local authorities provide pre-registration briefing sessions for prospective applicants. These sessions will help you to decide whether you wish to apply and give more information about the support and advice on offer.

Environmental health

You can obtain advice on food safety from your local authority environmental health department.

Fire safety

Ofsted will not normally advise fire authorities of childminding applications unless there are particular concerns about fire safety or if you intend to provide overnight care.

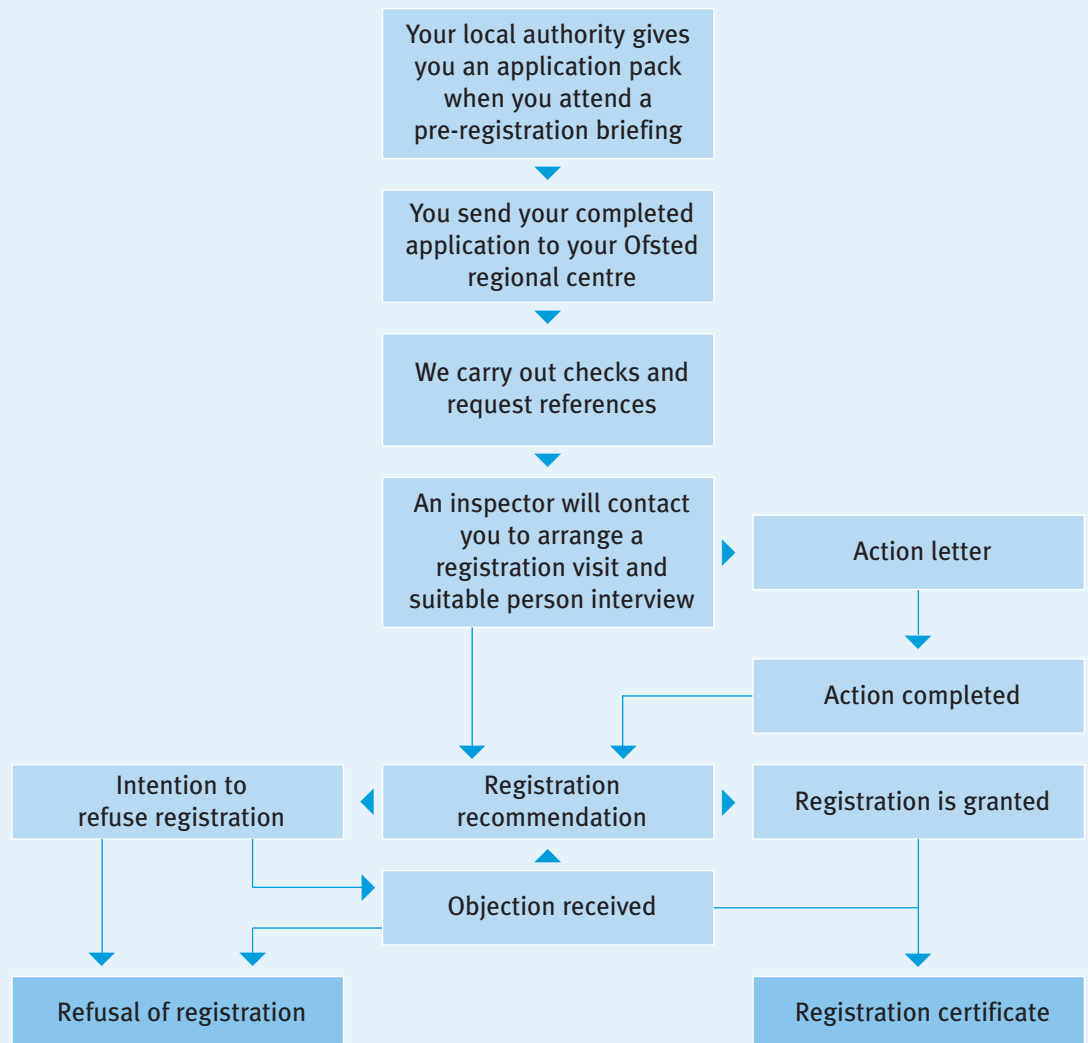
Planning permission

Planning authorities do not normally require planning permission for childminding. However, planning permission may be required in some circumstances, for example, if you want to care for a large number of children by working with an assistant or another childminder. You should check with your local planning authority if you think planning permission may be required.

³ Further information about disqualification may be found in Childminding and Day Care (Disqualification) (England) Regulations Statutory Instrument 2001 No 1827.

How to apply

The flow chart shows the steps of the application process.



Ofsted aims to complete the registration process within 12 weeks of receiving an application. A number of stages in the process depend on information from other agencies and action that you need to take. These may cause delays that are outside Ofsted's control.

Where can I get an application pack?

You should contact your local authority for information about:

- pre-application briefing sessions
- registration courses and training
- advice and support that the local authority, its Children's Information Service (CIS), and its Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) make available
- an application pack
- the National Standards and Guidance to the Standards.

Annex A gives details on how to contact your local authority.

The application pack

The application pack contains:

- Completing the Application Pack leaflet
- CM1 – Application Form
- CM2 – Declaration and Consent Form
- Health Declaration Booklet.

Completing the application pack

1. The applicant

You have to complete the following forms:

i. Application Form CM1 – this form asks for information about you and the premises where you intend to childmind. It also asks for a declaration about criminal records and other matters of suitability and for your consent for Ofsted to carry out checks. These checks include any or all of the following:

- a) directors of social services (social service records, child protection register)
- b) a general practitioner or other medical professional
- c) Criminal Records Bureau, including details of spent convictions exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- d) the Protection of Children Act List and Department for Education and Skills List 99
- e) referees
- f) previous employers
- g) health visitor.

Ofsted may also pursue other checks to establish your suitability, for example with the probation service or the NSPCC.

ii Health Declaration Booklet – this form asks for information about your current and past health so that Ofsted can decide about your mental and physical suitability to care for children. You need to complete Section 1 of the Health Declaration Booklet and take it to your doctor so that he or she can verify the information you provide. Your doctor may charge a fee for providing this information. Your doctor sends the booklet back to Ofsted.

2. Other people looking after children (childminder assistants)

You have to demonstrate that every person who looks after children with you is suitable to do so. You should arrange for each person looking after children with you to complete a Declaration and Consent Form (CM2). This form asks for their consent to carry out a series of checks, and for a declaration about their suitability. Ofsted carries out checks with:

- a) directors of social services (social service records, child protection register)
- b) the Criminal Records Bureau, including details of spent convictions exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- c) the Protection of Children Act List and Department for Education and Skills List 99.

It may also be necessary to carry out a check with their GP if Ofsted has concerns about medical suitability. We will inform you if there are concerns about a person's suitability as a result of any checks. You will then have to decide whether you want that person to assist you. We will take into account the suitability of the people who assist you when deciding whether to grant your registration.

3. Other people living or working on the premises and not looking after children

Every person living or working on the premises where you intend to childmind must be suitable to be in regular contact with children. You should arrange for each person aged 16 or over to complete a Declaration and Consent Form (CM2). This form asks for their consent to carry out a series of checks, and for a declaration about their suitability. Ofsted carries out checks with:

- a) directors of social services (social service records, child protection register)
- b) the Criminal Records Bureau, including details of spent convictions exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- c) the Protection of Children Act List and Department for Education and Skills List 99.

The results of the checks will be taken into account by Ofsted when assessing the suitability of the person to have regular contact with children. We may ask a person to attend an interview following these checks to assess their suitability.

Completing the application

Using the checklist in the application pack, make sure all the required forms are included in your application. Please complete all forms as fully as possible.

Incomplete forms may lead to your application being delayed or your registration being refused. You can contact Ofsted for advice on completing the forms on **0845 601 4771**. You may obtain extra copies of form CM2 at the pre-registration briefing session, from your Ofsted regional centre or from the Ofsted web site. (Details are given in Annex A.)

Please note that a person who, in an application, knowingly makes a statement which is false or misleading, is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine.

Ofsted will provide details contained in the application and other registration details to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and other government and local authority agencies as required. The DfES requires Ofsted to provide these details to help local authorities organise information, training and advice services for parents and providers.

What happens next?

Ofsted will:

- acknowledge your application by sending you a letter
- return it to you if you have not provided enough details
- send you details of how to obtain criminal records disclosures from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for:
 - yourself
 - anyone looking after children with you
 - other persons aged 16 or over living or working on the premises where you intend to childmind
- begin to carry out checks
- arrange for an inspector to visit you.

Contacting the Criminal Records Bureau

Ofsted will send you details of how to do this. All persons connected with your application will need to obtain a criminal records disclosure if they are aged 16 or over. Ofsted has arranged for you to make telephone applications to the CRB. Each person making an application needs to have at hand:

1. their National Insurance number
2. details of all addresses that they have lived at during the past five years, including the present address
3. details of a bank/building society account including the appropriate sort code and account number
4. details of a referee, including their occupation, home address and telephone number.

You must obtain all application forms from the CRB before the inspector visits you.

How can I prepare for the inspector's visit?

The inspector's role during the visit is to:

- check your identity by looking at personal documents
- sign your CRB form(s), and those for other persons living or working with you
- check that the premises are safe, suitable and ready for children to begin attending
- assess how many children you may be registered to care for
- to view the equipment that you intend to use for childminding
- to assess your suitability to be a childminder through an interview.

It may be necessary to make more than one visit during the registration process.

The National Standards and the Guidance to the National Standards will help you to prepare for these visits. Reading through the standards and guidance will help you to identify anything you need to show the inspector.

By using both booklets together, you will be able to prepare for the registration visit and for the childminding service you wish to provide. Before the visit the inspector will telephone you to confirm the date of the visit and make sure you have all necessary documents to hand.

What documents do I need?

Identity documents

You must provide documents that prove your current name and any other names you have used. One should preferably be photographic ID such as a current passport or a new-style photo driving licence. If you do not have photographic ID, the inspector will need to see your full birth certificate.

If you have changed your name by marriage, deed poll, adoption, statutory declaration or any other means you need to provide evidence of this change (for example, certificates, degrees).

In addition, you will need to provide evidence of your current address, for example by:

- a utility bill (gas, telephone, electricity)
- a credit card, bank or mortgage statement
- any recent communication from your local authority or a government agency such as the DHSS.

Additional documentation

If you have any childcare qualifications, the inspector will ask to see any certificates that you have. If you already hold a current first aid certificate including infants and young children you should have this available.

If you intend to use a car for transporting the children you care for, you will need to show the inspector your driving licence, valid insurance and MOT certificate.

The National Standards give information about the written records you will need to keep as a childminder. If you have prepared any in advance, or any written information for prospective parents, you may wish to show the inspector.

What equipment will the inspector want to see?

The inspector will need to see any furniture, equipment or toys you intend to use with young children, such as:

- safety equipment, for example, fireguards
- equipment to assist children, for example, potties
- equipment to help with transport, for example, buggies
- toys and materials for children to play with.

You do not have to have a full range of equipment at the time of the visit, but you must be able to demonstrate how you will obtain sufficient equipment to meet the needs of the children you care for.

Suitable person interview

The inspector will discuss aspects of all the National Standards with you. You will have to explain how you will meet the National Standards. You may need to draw on your experience from other care situations or your experience of parenting. You will be asked how you will keep children safe when they are in your care, how you have identified any possible risks to health and safety and what you have done to minimise those risks.

The inspector will also observe the contact and care you give to any children present during the registration visit.

Feedback and outcome of the visit

Before leaving, the inspector will tell you about anything that needs to be done before Ofsted can grant your registration. You may discuss with the inspector the action that you need to undertake and the time it will take you to do this. The inspector will also tell you about any conditions that may be imposed on your registration including the number of children you may care for. If all other checks are complete, the inspector may also be able to tell you the registration recommendation. This may be:

- to register you as a childminder
- to register you as a childminder only when you have completed any actions that are to be made
- to refuse registration.

What happens after the registration visit?

Action letter

You may get an 'action letter' that details the work you must do to meet the National Standards. The letter will contain appropriate timescales to carry out the work. You must complete the actions before you can be registered. An inspector may visit to check the actions you have taken.

Checks

If Ofsted is still waiting for the results of checks on yourself, persons looking after children with you or anyone living or working on the premises where you intend to childmind, the registration decision will not be made until all checks are complete.

Registration

When all checks and visits are complete, Ofsted will send you a letter recommending registration subject to certain conditions. You can discuss with Ofsted any issues regarding your registration although this may delay the issue of your registration certificate. You will be asked to pay the fee in this letter and given details of how to do this. Failure to pay the fee promptly will also delay issue of the certificate.

Intent to refuse registration

If Ofsted decides that you do not meet the requirements of registration, we tell you what we intend in a letter called a 'notice of intention' to refuse your application. This is a legal document that gives Ofsted's reasons for refusal.

Objection and appeal

You have the opportunity to object to Ofsted refusing your application for registration. If Ofsted does not hear that you wish to object within 14 days of the date on the notice of intention, we will confirm the refusal in writing. This letter is called a 'notice of decision'. You then have the right to appeal to the Care Standards Tribunal, an independent body, within 28 days. We will send you information about how to object and appeal if we intend to refuse registration.

The registration certificate

The registration certificate is your proof of registration. This certificate states your name as the registered person, the address(es) where you may childmind and any conditions that apply to your registration.

It is a condition of registration that you display the certificate during the hours that you provide childminding. If you lose, damage or destroy your certificate, you will need to get a replacement. There is a fee of £5 for this service.

Once you have received your registration certificate you can begin working as a childminder.

Your certificate is a legal document and will remain valid unless:

- you have any of the conditions of registration changed either as a result of a request by you or because Ofsted decides to make changes
- your registration is cancelled
- you resign your registration.

Withdrawing your application

At any time during the registration process you may change your mind about continuing your application to register as a childminder. You must tell Ofsted in writing if this is what you decide, in order to stop the registration process. If you do not tell Ofsted that you want to withdraw your application then we will continue the process and may have to refuse your registration.

You cannot withdraw an application if Ofsted has already served you with a 'notice of intention' to refuse your registration. This does not affect your right to make an objection or an appeal about Ofsted's decision.

What do I need to tell Ofsted about once I am registered?

There are certain things you must tell Ofsted about once you are registered.⁴

You must tell Ofsted about:

- any change to your address
- any significant change to the premises (for example, a conversion or extension of part of the building)
- any change in the hours during which childminding is provided
- any change of your name
- any changes to people:
 - i) living on the premises (including when a person living there reaches the age of 16)
 - ii) looking after children on the premises
 - iii) employed on the premises

You must tell Ofsted of any new person's date of birth, full name, any former names and their full address.

You must also tell Ofsted of any change to the name or home address of any of the persons named in i) to iii).

- any other matter which may affect the suitability of yourself, any person looking after children or the suitability of any person living, working or employed on the premises to be in regular contact with children. This includes changes to health.

You should inform Ofsted at the earliest opportunity of any changes or proposed changes. Where it is not possible to notify Ofsted in advance, you must let Ofsted know of the change as soon as you can and, in any case, no later than 14 days after the event occurs.

You must tell Ofsted if any of the following situations occur:

- any outbreak of an infectious disease occurring on the premises, which a registered medical person considers sufficiently serious to be notified
- any serious injury, serious illness or death of a child or other person on your premises, or while a minded child was in your care
- any allegations of serious harm against or abuse of a child by any person looking after children or living, working or employed at the premises, including allegations made against you
- any serious matter or event which is likely to affect the welfare of any child on your premises.

⁴ These are set out in Childminding and Day Care (England) Regulations Statutory Instruments 2001 No 1828.

What records must I keep on the premises where I will care for children?

You must keep records of the following:⁵

- the name, home address and date of birth of each child who is looked after on the premises
- the name, home address and telephone number of each child's parent
- the name, home address and telephone number of the registered person and every other person living at or employed on the premises
- the name, home address and telephone number of any other person who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children living there
- a daily record of the names of the children looked after on the premises, their hours of attendance and the names of the persons who look after them*
- a record of accidents occurring on the premises*
- a record of any medicine administered to any child on the premises, including the date and circumstances of its administration, by whom it was administered, including medicine which the child is permitted to administer to himself, together with a record of a parent's consent.*

*In these cases you must keep the record for two years from the time the event took place.

You are also required to keep certain records, policies and procedures set out in the National Standards. These are listed in the guidance to the standards for easy reference.

⁵ These are set out in Childminding and Day Care (England) Regulations, Statutory Instrument 2001 No 1828.

Continuing registration

You must continue to demonstrate your suitability to be a childminder throughout the time that you remain registered. Ofsted monitors this through:

- regular inspections
- other visits such as to follow up any concerns we receive about the service you provide.

If an Ofsted inspector visits you, always check their identity. All Ofsted inspectors carry identification and authorisation documents that include the inspector's photograph and rights of entry.

What is an inspection?

After your registration, an Ofsted childcare inspector will inspect you at least once every two years. The inspector visits your home to check if you still meet the National Standards and continue to be suitable to provide childminding. Inspectors do this through discussion, observation, and by examining the records that you keep.

Before an inspection you will be asked to provide or confirm information about your childminding service.

After the inspection the inspector will write a report that gives the inspection judgements. The inspector will judge the quality of your provision as good, satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The inspector may give actions you have to take for your registration to continue, or recommendations about how to improve the quality of your service further. Where childminders are judged unsatisfactory we will take further enforcement action that may include cancellation of your registration. The inspector may also vary the conditions of your registration, remove conditions that no longer apply or add new conditions. You may object to or appeal against any changes to conditions of registration (see page 7).

What other visit might be made?

Ofsted may visit at other times, for example:

- to check on actions given at an inspection
- to consider a request to vary the conditions of your registration
- because something about your registration has changed, for example, you have moved house.

You do not receive a report from these visits. You will receive a letter that sets out the outcomes of the visit. This may include actions or recommendations. Where necessary, we may issue a notice of intention to vary, add or remove conditions applying to your registration. You have the right to object or appeal to any notice or certificate (see page 7).

We may also visit if a parent or other person gives us information that brings your suitability to provide childcare into question. The law gives Ofsted powers to ensure that children are cared for by suitable persons in a safe and suitable environment at all times.

Inspectors can:⁶

- enter your childminding premises at all reasonable times
- inspect and take copies of any records kept by a childminder
- seize and remove any document or other material or thing that may be used as evidence of a failure to comply with the law or the National Standards
- take measurements, photographs or make recordings
- interview you in private
- interview another adult in private if they consent.

If you prevent an inspector carrying out any of the above you may be committing an offence.

Following a visit arising from concerns we will tell you about any enforcement action that we intend to take. In extreme cases this may include prosecution and/or cancellation of your registration. Where Ofsted takes steps to cancel your registration you have the right to object and appeal to the decision (see page 7).

⁶ These rights are set out in Part XA Section 79U of the Children Act 1989 (as inserted by the Care Standards Act 2000).

What should I do if I no longer wish to be registered as a childminder?

If you no longer wish to be a childminder, you need to resign your registration. This must be done in writing.

You should send a letter of resignation to your Ofsted regional centre or ask for a form to complete from the regional centre. Ofsted will confirm receipt of your resignation.

You may not resign if you have been served with a notice of intention or a notice of decision to cancel your registration or if you are waiting for the outcome of an appeal to the Care Standards Tribunal.

Resigning as a childminder does not affect any future application you wish to make to provide childcare.

Annex A

Useful sources of support and information

Ofsted

Your local regional centre can advise you on the regulations and requirements of registration.

There is also useful information and forms available on the Ofsted web site

www.ofsted.gov.uk/about/childcare. Ofsted's helpline number is 0845 601 4771, where your call will be directed to your local regional centre.

Once you have submitted your application form, you will be given a direct line telephone number and a named contact.

Your local authority

Your local authority can provide you with details, support and advice about any training that they offer, and any information that they provide. You can obtain details of your local authority contact from the telephone directory, from Ofsted at the above number, or contact them via their web site address www.name of authority.gov.uk

Children's Information Services (CIS)

Your local CIS can provide you with information about existing childcare services in your local area.

You can obtain details of your local CIS from Childcare Link, telephone number: 08000 960 296 or web site: www.childcarelink.gov.uk

You should read the following documents, available from your local authority, before making an application:

The National Standards for Under Eights, Day Care and Childminding

You will have to demonstrate that you meet the standards set out in this document before Ofsted can register you. The National Standards may be obtained from your local authority or viewed on the DfES web site: www.dfes.gov.uk.

Childminding: Guidance to the National Standards

This contains guidance on the 14 National Standards and good practice information. It may be obtained from your local authority on the Ofsted web site www.ofsted.gov.uk/about/childcare.

