



Sheffield  
Information  
Link

# FACTSHEET

## A Guide to Registration and Ofsted

### What is Ofsted?

Ofsted stands for the Office for Standards in Education. The new Ofsted – the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – came into being on 1 April 2007. It brings together the wide experience of four formerly separate inspectorates. They are responsible for the inspection of a range of education and children's services, and for the inspection and regulation of registered early years and childcare provision.

### What is Registration?

Under the Childcare Act, most daycare and childminding services intending to care for children under 8 years old, for a total of more than 2 hours a day, away from the child's own home, more than 14 times a year must register with Ofsted before they become childcare providers.

Recent changes to the registration process mean that there are now 2 registers:

- **The Early Years Register.** This is for all registered providers who look after children from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (0 – 5 years). They are required to register under the Childcare Act and must meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is the new regulatory and quality framework for the provision of learning, development and care for children between birth and the academic year in which they turn five
- **The Ofsted Childcare Register.** This has 2 parts:
  - Compulsory part.** This is for providers who care for children from 5 – 7 years for more than 2 hours. This will include some out of school clubs, holiday playcare and childminders.
  - Voluntary part.** This is for individuals and groups who are currently exempt from registration, running for more than 2 hours. This includes providers who care for children aged 8 or over, carers working in parents' homes (such as nannies or home childcarers) some creches operating for up to 4 hours

where the parents are on the premises or in the near vicinity, and other providers not currently required to register (such as study support, sports and activity clubs). In Sheffield providers are encouraged to register on the voluntary part as this promotes good practice and standardises checks on providers. The Council's Early Years Education and Childcare Service (EYECS) also provide Good Practice Guidance for non registered providers. This can be obtained through Sheffield Information Link.

People who only care for children who are close relatives are not allowed to register on either part of the childcare register.

Those parents who are eligible will be able to claim the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit for use with any group or individual who is on any part of the two registers, which should provide more choice. Parents may also be eligible to use tax credits if a provision is run directly by a school. For more information, please see our factsheet 'A guide to child tax credit and working tax credit'. Using a registered provider will also enable parents to use employer supported childcare vouchers or directly contracted childcare.

### Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was introduced in September 2008 and replaces the National Standards for Childminding and Day Care, the Birth to Three Matters Framework and the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The Early Years Foundation Stage sets standards requiring early years providers to deliver individualised learning, development and care to enhance the development of children in their care and to give those children the best possible start in life.

The standards set a baseline of quality which childcare providers must not fall below. They include early learning goals and educational programmes, along with the arrangements for assessing young children's achievements.

They also include a set of welfare requirements which cover safeguarding and promoting children's welfare, suitability and qualifications of staff, standards for premises and equipment, and standards of organisation and documentation required of providers. The Early Years Foundation Stage is mandatory for all early years providers required to register under the Ofsted Early Years Register, as well as for all schools attended by young children up to the end of the academic year in which they turn five.

## Requirements for the Ofsted Childcare Register

Regulations for both parts of the Childcare Register (compulsory and voluntary) include sets of requirements to be met by providers. These requirements cover childcare on non-domestic and domestic premises, and childcare provided by childminders and home childcarers, and must be met at all times when childcare is being provided. The requirements cover areas such as the children's welfare, safeguarding children, suitability and qualifications of childcarers, suitability of premises and equipment, procedures for organisation, record keeping and dealing with complaints.

## How does Ofsted check services for children?

Ofsted carries out four main regulatory functions:

- **Registration** – all childcare providers are subject to checks by Ofsted before they can be included on any of the Ofsted registers. These checks include a criminal records check for childcarers and any other person in regular contact with children (eg the family of a childminder), a health check and qualifications check. Providers also need to demonstrate that they meet all the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, or of the Childcare Register (compulsory or voluntary).
- **Inspection** – Childcare providers on the Early Years Register are normally inspected within seven months of registration. They are then inspected at regular intervals, at least once every three to four years. After inspection Ofsted will issue the provider with an inspection report relating to the quality of care, what it does well and what it needs to improve. You can ask a provider directly to show you their last inspection report or you can view the reports on Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Sheffield Information Link can provide you with the childcarer's Ofsted registration number to enable you to see a providers report.
- **Investigation** – Ofsted will ensure that any complaints or concerns about a childcare provider, that relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage and/or the Childcare Register requirements, are investigated to make sure the provider continues to be suitable for registration. This will include a visit to the provider followed by a letter detailing the outcome of the investigation, including any actions or recommendations. These letters will also be posted on the Ofsted website.
- **Enforcement** – Ofsted uses information gathered during an inspection or

A random selection of providers on both parts of the Childcare Register is inspected each year to check they comply with requirements. After these inspections a letter is issued. Any requirements not met are requested to be put right. Copies of the letters can be viewed on Ofsted's website.



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investigation to take action to ensure that childcare providers meet the requirements. In most cases this can be done by setting actions for the provider to meet. If Ofsted have reason to believe that children may be at risk of harm they will suspend the registration pending investigation. Ultimately registrations can be cancelled and, in rare cases, prosecutions carried out under the Children Act 2006. Those who are on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register can continue to operate without registration. Providers should let parents know if they cease to be registered, particularly for Working Tax Credit purposes.

### **How do I know if a day care provider or childminder is registered with Ofsted?**

All registered providers have a certificate of registration which should be visibly displayed in the setting. Home childcarers must show their certificate to parents on request. Providers who cease to be registered are required to return their certificates. You can also check directly with Ofsted whether a provider is registered (contact numbers are given at the end of this factsheet) or Sheffield Information Link can check for you.

### **How do I complain about a childcare provider?**

Discuss any difficulties with the childminder, home childcarer, or staff at the childcare

provision to start with as concerns can often be resolved at this stage. If the difficulty cannot be resolved or you cannot talk to the childcare provider, you can contact Ofsted or the City Council's Early Years Education and Childcare Service (EYECS). See contacts below. However, Ofsted will only become involved in concerns about the quality of care being provided; they will not be able to get involved in concerns about fees or contractual arrangements, as this is a private arrangement between yourself and the person you pay to provide your childcare.

**If you have concerns that a child or children is in danger of being harmed you should take action straight away, regardless of whether the provider is registered.** You can contact the Children's Social Care Services Emergency Duty Team on 0114 273 4855 or the police on 0114 220 2020. (See our factsheet 'Safeguarding Your Child')

### **What do I do if I want to become a childminder or day care provider?**

The first thing you should do is contact us at Sheffield Information Link. We will explain the process and provide you with an information pack with useful local contacts and the links to the relevant Ofsted publications. Applications can also be made directly online at the Ofsted website (see below). Help and support in setting up childcare provision is also available from EYECS, see contacts below.

## Useful contacts and information

### Sheffield Information Link (SIL)

Tel (0114) 275 6699 ● Textphone 0114 249 4939

11 Leopold Street, Sheffield, S1 2GY

Drop-in Service & Library Opening Hours:

Mon: 9.30am to 5.30pm, Wed: 9.30am to 6.00pm,

Fri: 9.30am to 4.00pm

(Telephone service available daily. Out of hours answerphone.)

Email: [info@sheffinfoolink.org.uk](mailto:info@sheffinfoolink.org.uk)

*For information and guidance on finding childcare and services for children and young people in Sheffield. SIL produces a range of useful factsheets, including one on Children's and Young People's Rights, these can be viewed on our website: [www.sheffinfoolink.org.uk](http://www.sheffinfoolink.org.uk)*

### SIGN Information Service

Ryegate Children's Centre, Tapton Crescent Road, Sheffield S10 5DD

Drop in service Monday – Friday 10.00am – 1.00pm

Tel: (0114) 266 9476 (out of hours answerphone)

Email: [sign@sheffinfoolink.org.uk](mailto:sign@sheffinfoolink.org.uk)

*Free information for parents and carers with children or young people with special needs or disabilities*

### OFSTED

Tel 08456 404040 Helpline & Complaints

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

*Access to inspection reports and useful publications for parents/carers.*

### Early Years Education and Childcare Service (EYECS)

Children and Young People's Directorate

Tel (0114) 281 1881 (out of hours answerphone)

Cathedral Court, 1 Vicar Lane, Sheffield, S1 1HD

Monday – Thursday 9.15am – 5.15pm; Friday 8.45am – 4.45pm

Email: [eyecs@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:eyecs@sheffield.gov.uk)

Website: [www.sheffield.gov.uk/eyecs](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/eyecs)

*Part of Sheffield City Council's Children and Young People's Directorate. EYECS is the service responsible for helping to deliver the government's childcare strategy throughout Sheffield. Their responsibilities fall under four main areas - to maintain the city's childcare places, to fund and ensure there's enough nursery places for eligible 3 and 4 year-olds, to help develop the childcare workforce, and to deliver the city's Children's Centres.*



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