

Guidance on the Ofsted Voluntary Register

Ofsted registered care for children and young people: Peace of mind AND financial benefits for parents.

Ofsted registration helps to make sure children and young people are cared for in the safe environment they need.

Most childcare providers are already required to register with Ofsted. Changes in the law mean that those not obliged to register can now choose to join the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register.

These include childcare providers who:

- Provide care for children aged eight and over (such as childminders or care provided in out-of-school clubs, holiday clubs, playschemes, playcentres and open access play provision);
- Offer activity-based care (such as sports, drama, language or arts clubs); or
- Provide care in the child's own home (for example, nannies and au pairs – unless they look after the children of more than two families; or home-based care for disabled children).

Schools offering childcare before or after school, or during school holidays for school age children, where that care is provided by the school's own board of governors, cannot register on the Ofsted Childcare Register. However, eligible parents using this provision will still be able to claim Working Tax Credit or join employer-supported schemes.

Why Register?

If you register on the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register:

- Parents will know that you have met basic standards designed to safeguard children.
- Eligible parents will be able to get help with the costs of their childcare through Working Tax Credit and employer-supported childcare schemes.
- Local authorities offer support and training to registered providers and pass on their details to parents who are looking for childcare.
- Schools that use external organisations to provide an extended service are encouraged to work only with registered providers.

What are the requirements for Voluntary registration?

The care must be:

- Provided for at least two hours a day;
- Joined up to the beginning or end of the school day; or
- Part of an arrangement whereby care is provided for a continuous period of at least two hours (for example, part of extended schools activities or childcare).

All staff with unsupervised access to children must undergo a check with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

Staff, premises, equipment and care provision must be safe and suitable.

At least one staff member who is caring for children must have an appropriate first aid certificate, and one member of staff must have had appropriate training covering the common core skills. (As described in the document 'Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce', available at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/commoncore)

The registered provider must have public liability insurance.

How much will it cost?

The fee for registration is:

- £100 for childminders or people providing care in the children's home.
- £110 (plus the cost of CRB checks) for other childcare on domestic or non-domestic premises.

Registration will be subject to an annual fee and continued ability to meet the requirements (These fees, including those for CRB checks, may be subject to change over time).

Will providers registered on the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register be inspected?

Ofsted will select a proportion of providers for inspection at random, and there will always be an inspection following a complaint. After inspection, Ofsted will write to childcare providers to tell them if they have met the requirements for registration.

How can I apply or find out more?

To make an application, or for more information, contact Ofsted:

- Call: 08456 404040
- Visit: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Additionally, local authorities have a duty to provide information, advice and training to carers who wish to be registered by Ofsted. Contact the local authority for more information.

Parents who want further information about Working Tax Credit or employer-supported childcare schemes should contact HM Revenue and Customs.

Call 08456 300 3900
Visit www.hmrc.gov.uk

Other changes that may affect you

The Childcare Approval Scheme: Childcare providers working in the child's home or childminders caring for children over seven can no longer apply for approval under this scheme, but they can apply to join the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register. Existing approvals under the scheme will expire one year after they were issued.

The over sevens quality assurance scheme: Childcare approved under these schemes no longer qualifies for Working Tax Credit and employer-supported childcare vouchers. Childcare providers offering care under these schemes are encouraged to join the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register.

Changes for childcare providers who are required to register with Ofsted: The introduction of the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register is the first stage of major changes arising from the Childcare Act 2006.

The second stage will change the compulsory registration arrangements for care for children under eight. From September 2008, Ofsted will operate two registers:

- The Early Years Register will be compulsory for most*

* from September 2008, in addition to the care that is currently exempt from compulsory registration, some crèches will also be exempt. For more information see the response to the exemptions consultation www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations

- The Ofsted Childcare Register will be compulsory for most providers working with children from 1 September following their fifth birthday (i.e. the end of the Foundation Stage) up to seven years. Other providers who are not required to register will be able to join the voluntary part of this register if they meet the requirements.
- Providers on the Early Years Register are automatically eligible for the Ofsted Childcare Register and won't have to apply separately.

Voluntary Registration information taken from:

'Looking after children for a living or as a volunteer?' 2007

Copies from DCSF Publications Tel: 0845 60 222 60

For more information contact Ofsted.

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Useful document: Local Authority briefing sessions; the Voluntary part of the Childcare Register – questions and answers.