Registration and Ofsted Guide

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills) 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.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was introduced in September 2008 and was updated in September 2014. The Early Years Foundation Stage sets standards requiring early year’s 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 31st August after their fifth birthday.

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 child care providers, 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 suitability checks by Ofsted before they can be included on any of the Ofsted registers. These checks include a criminal records check for child care providers and any other person in regular contact with children (e.g. the family of a childminder), a health check, a social care check and a 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). Providers registering on the Early Years Register also have an inspection of their premises and equipment before they are registered. Applicants to either part of the Childcare Register do not have their premises inspected prior to registration, but are subject to random inspections at little or no notice.

- **Inspection** – Childcare providers on the Early Years Register are normally inspected within a short period 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). First Point can provide you with the child care provider’s Ofsted registration number to enable you to see a providers report.

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 must be put right. Copies of the letters can be viewed on Ofsted’s website.

- **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 may 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 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 childcare provider 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.

### 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. However, Ofsted will only become involved in concerns about the quality of care being provided or
registrations; 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 Safeguarding Children Advisory Service on 0114 2053535 or the Police on 101.

Registered Childcare

- Under the Childcare Act 2006 most childcare services seeking to care for children under 8 years old, for more than 2 hours a day, away from the child’s own home, must be registered.
- Registration is carried out by Ofsted, who then inspect the service regularly to ensure that quality standards for childcare are met.

Services not required to Register

- Some crèches such as shoppers’ crèches.
- Certain activity based clubs.
- Services operating for 14 days or less in a year.
- Carers employed in the child’s home as Nannies are not required to register unless they work for 3 or more families at one time.
- However, childcarers and groups who are exempt from registration can now opt to go on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register where they will also be checked and regulated by Ofsted.

Non-registered children’s activities

- We list lots of leisure activities for toddlers, children and young people on the Sheffield Directory. We cannot vet non-registered activities or clubs.
- Inclusion on our Directory website does not amount to a recommendation.
- You may also be able to find out about non registered activities and clubs through word of mouth, local parents’ newsletters, local newspapers, noticeboards at schools, churches and community centres and adverts in shop windows.