

Becoming a Childminder

Frequently Asked Questions

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Do West Sussex County Council offer a pre-registration course?

We do not provide a course prior to registration. Refer to Ofsted's online [pre-registration course](#) if you wish to take one.

Childminder Agencies may also offer support prior to registration. You should contact the agencies for further information. A list of agencies is available on the GOV.UK [webpage](#).

Do I need to register as a childminder?

If you want to be paid to look after children under 8, you might need to register with Ofsted or a childminder agency.

- [Become a childminder or nanny \(England\): Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

What is a Childminder Agency (CMA)?

CMAs register childminders and providers of childcare on domestic premises (a group of four or more childminders) and may help them with training, business support, advice and finding parents. CMAs may also cover some of the upfront costs involved in becoming registered.

Childminder agencies are required by law to register with and be inspected by Ofsted.

Childminder agencies are obliged by law to:

- ensure a childminder's suitability, including, where appropriate their capacity to deliver the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS),
- support the training and development of childminders,
- help parents find and work with a suitable childminder,
- improve the quality of provision, and
- monitor the standard of care provided by the childminders they register.

Any organisation that meets the requirements outlined in Ofsted's [childminder agency handbook](#) can register to become a childminder agency.

Childminder agencies will be inspected by Ofsted directly and a selection of its registered childminders may be visited. The grade given by Ofsted to the childminder agency will be applied to all within those registered with the agency.



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If I join a childminder agency, will I be inspected by Ofsted?

Childminders who are registered with a childminder agency will no longer be inspected by Ofsted. Instead, their performance will be assessed by their agency, which has a statutory duty to monitor the standard of care provided by the childminders it registers and improve the quality of provision. Each agency will have a different means of doing this, but it is likely agencies will carry out their own inspections of the childminders on their books.

The agency may give a grading to childminders who are registered with them, but this is not the same as an Ofsted grading.

What order do I need to do things in?

There is no set order for the things you must do before you can register as a childminder, but note that you must be within eight weeks of completing your Paediatric First Aid qualification and your chosen childminder training course in order to apply.

Where can I find an appropriate Paediatric First Aid course?

You may choose to use any training provider whose course satisfies the requirements of Ofsted registration. Check this with them before you enrol. The [EYFS Statutory Framework](#) explains what the course should cover. West Sussex County Council provides local courses - refer to the [Early Years and Childcare Course Brochure](#) for dates. You pay the training provider directly for this course. It is renewable every three years.

Where can I find an appropriate introductory childminder training course that satisfies the requirements of Ofsted registration?

There is no specific introductory training course that you need to complete. The EYFS states that '*childminders must have completed training which helps them to understand and implement the EYFS*'. Ask your local college what they offer, or undertake an online learning course through organisations such as [PACEY](#). You pay the training provider directly for this course.

If you choose to register with a childminder agency, they may also offer training and support prior to registering with them.

Does it matter what kind of home I live in?

No – but the amount of space you have available may limit the number of children you can be registered to care for.



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You do not need a garden, but it is really important that children have access to outdoor spaces every day. Your home must be a safe environment for young children.

Do I need planning permission to run a childminder business?

Each district or borough will give individualised advice on a case-by-case basis. You should check with your [local district council](#) planning department to find out if planning permission is required for the size of your business or property.

Additionally, if you rent your property, check with your landlord or letting agency whether you have permission to operate a childminding business from the premises.

When do I notify HMRC that I am working as a childminder?

Notify [HMRC](#) as soon as you begin working. They provide [webinars](#) (live or recorded online tutor-led seminars) to help you understand how to register for tax, calculate, and pay your bill.

What are the local safeguarding/child protection procedures?

You will need to be aware of the [Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures](#). These include all the procedures you are expected to follow in West Sussex. Every childcare practitioner has a duty to report all concerns regarding the welfare of any aged child. This must be reported to Children's Services, in line with the Childcare Act 2006 and Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Do I need to do safeguarding/child protection training?

Yes, undertake an 'Introductory' training course before your first full Ofsted inspection following registration. West Sussex County Council provides local courses, refer to the [Early Years and Childcare Course Brochure](#) or the [Local Safeguarding Children Board \(LSCB\) website](#). You pay the training provider directly for this course.

It is essential that you know what to do if:

- you have concerns about a child, or
- an allegation is made against you.



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View the [guidance](#) Ofsted inspectors use when inspecting safeguarding.

Please note, depending on where you access your training, this may not include the procedures specific to West Sussex which you would be required to know and follow as per the previous question.

Can I offer Early Years Funded Entitlements?

From April 2024, in line with the updated [statutory guidance](#), West Sussex County Council will fund places for children eligible for the 2 year old LA issued Funded Entitlement (disadvantaged 2 year olds) at new providers **who have yet to be inspected by Ofsted**, alongside providers rated, Good or Outstanding, or equivalent ratings. **In addition, all providers may offer 2 Year Old EYFE for Working Families as long as they are not rated Inadequate.**

Childminders will now not be required to hold a level 3 qualification to offer EYFE for either Working Families or the LA issued Funded Entitlement, however we encourage working towards gaining a full and relevant level 3 qualification, if you do not already hold one.

To offer EYFE you must contact free.entitlement@westsussex.gov.uk and request information on how to sign up. The sign up process can take up to half a term

Links:

- [General information about EYFE](#)
- Full information about being an EYFE provider is laid out in the [Provider Declaration](#).

Do I need public liability insurance?

You will need to show that you have made provision for Public Liability Insurance. Some organisations have dedicated products for childcare professionals. Some may also offer start-up paperwork such as attendance registers, accounts books and accident/incident records.

Do I have to cater for children with special educational needs or disabilities?

All early years providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors that are funded by the local authority must adhere to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 2015. Chapter 5 of the Code of Practice explains the actions early years



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providers should take to meet their duties in relation to identifying and supporting all children with SEND, whether or not they have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP).

Many needs can easily be met by adjusting practice or undertaking training. Read more about [support available to you](#).

Do I need special motor vehicle insurance or car seats?

If you plan to use your vehicle as part of your childminding business, you must inform your motor insurer to arrange business insurance cover for your vehicle. Advise them that you will be using your vehicle as part of your childminding business.

Ofsted inspectors or the Childminding Agency may ask to see your MOT certificate, Insurance Policy document and Driving License as part of your registration process.

If are you going to use your car to carry minded children, you will need to use [appropriate car seats](#).

How do I ensure good practice?

To ensure that your childminding practice is high quality and meets all legislation, make use of [our website resources](#) covering:

- The EYFS
- Health and wellbeing
- Diversity and inclusion (inclusive practice)
- Legislation (including Data Protection and GDPR)
- Safeguarding
- Supporting families

Are there any grants that I can apply for to help with start-up costs?

At the [Spring Budget](#) on 15 March 2023, the government announced start up grants for childminders.

These will be:

- £600 grant for those who register with Ofsted, and
- £1200 for those who register with a childminder agency.

These grants will be payable to any individual who has completed their childminder registration on or after 15 March 2023. New childminders will be able to apply for the grant from autumn 2023.



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The aim of this funding is to support childminders by helping with the costs incurred when registering, and giving them the flexibility to choose their own pathway into the sector. As it is more expensive to register with a childminder agency, the grants reflect this to ensure that prospective childminders have the choice of the route that best suits their needs.

Do I need to register as a food provider?

Once registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency, your [local district or borough council](#) may contact you directly with regard to food provision, and tell you if you need to register with them.

Food hygiene regulations say that childminders have to keep records to show what they do to keep food safe. The Food Standards Agency pack [Safer food, better business for childminders](#) enables you to do this with as little paperwork as possible.

Can I have my own children at home?

Yes - depending on the age of your children it could impact on the number of children you could be registered to care for.

You may want to think about how your own children may feel about other children sharing you, their home and their toys! We recommend that the whole family is involved in the decision to become a childminder.

Is there a lot of paperwork involved?

You will be required to keep some written documents and records. You will need to have a good standard of English and be able to share information effectively. Good communication skills are vital.

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