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Guidance

Registering children's homes in an emergency: priority applications

Guide for local authorities and providers on when Ofsted will prioritise applications to register children's homes services.

From: [Ofsted](#)

Published 11 May 2020

Last updated 25 February 2022 — [See all updates](#)

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Applies to England

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We will prioritise applications to register children's homes that are needed urgently to provide placements for children. These can only be from:

- local authorities (LAs)
- private/voluntary providers, if LAs can confirm the application has been directly commissioned by them
- providers who are accommodating a child, who is subject to a deprivation of liberty order from a court, in an unregistered children's home

Our approach to prioritising applications

Prioritising does not mean that we will reduce our examination of your suitability to operate. We will not register any premises, providers or individuals that we do not consider to be suitable. We cannot relax or disapply any element of the [Care Standards Act](#) or the requirements of the associated regulations when considering a priority application.

We will take a reasonable and proportionate view of any application and will amend the processes we use to reach a decision about registration. The safety and well-being of children remain paramount in our decision-making.

If you already have registered provision with Ofsted, we will use the information you have previously supplied. We will also consider the quality of any existing registered provision in our decision-making.

Before you apply

We have made some temporary changes to our registration process for all children's social care. You may submit your temporary health self-declaration form at the same time as submitting the full health declaration form to your GP.

We can only prioritise your application if your proposed service is ready to provide care and accommodation and has staffing in place, as far as is reasonably practicable.

Contacting your Ofsted region

You must contact your local Ofsted region and speak to a Senior Her Majesty's Inspector (SHMI) or Regulatory Inspection Manager (RIM) to explain your intention to register. If you are a private or voluntary provider, you must ask the commissioning LA to email confirmation to Ofsted that the application relates to a specific child or children. The SHMI/RIM will not be able to give any guarantee that the application will be successful.

If you are a LA wanting to apply to register, you should email the SHMI/RIM to let them know what you intend to do.

If you are a provider who has been directly commissioned by a LA, the LA should email the SHMI/RIM. The LA should confirm that they are directly commissioning you to accommodate a specific child or children.

If you are applying because you are providing care and accommodation for a child who is subject to a deprivation of liberty order from a court, you should email the SHMI/RIM. It is also helpful to ask the child's local authority to email Ofsted to alert us that your application is being submitted.

Include in your email:

- the name of the LA/provider making the application

- the name of the person within the LA/provider organisation who is responsible for the application
- the name of the proposed manager
- the name of the proposed responsible individual
- any detail about timescale
- a number that the SHMI/RIM can contact you on to discuss your intention to apply

If you decide to pursue the application, the SHMI/RIM will email you a self-declaration form for you to confirm that your application is urgent.

We can consider accepting the application without a named proposed manager if both the following apply:

- we have received confirmation that the High Court has used its powers of inherent jurisdiction to authorise the Deprivation of the Liberty of a child (DoL)
- the child is placed in an unregistered children's home

This means that we will consider accepting an application without a manager's SC2. However, we cannot accept an application without a completed SC1.

We expect to receive the manager's SC2 application within 12 weeks, or we will consider sending back the whole application.

Important temporary process for submitting documents

Before you fill out your online application, you must complete the statement of self-declaration form.

When you are completing your online application, you will be asked the following question: 'Do you have these policy documents to upload for your new children's home?'

Priority applicants must tick 'yes, I have these documents', even if you do not have all of them ready yet.

It will ask you to upload the following documents:

- statement of purpose
- equalities policy
- copy of certificate of insurance
- children's guide
- missing child policy
- safeguarding policy
- behaviour management policy
- prevention of bullying policy
- complaints procedure
- location assessment of the local area

Each time, you must either upload the document that has been requested or a copy of your completed self-declaration form.

You must upload the self-declaration form at least once. If you have prepared all the requested documents, please choose 1 to submit to us later and upload the form in its place.

This is so that we can receive your self-declaration form with your application, and avoid any potential delays to your registration.

Once you submit your application, email the Ofsted applications team on SCadmin@ofsted.gov.uk to confirm that you have submitted it. This will ensure that your application is prioritised.

Applications from those that already have registered provision (LAs or private/voluntary providers)

If the information relating to people connected with your previous application has not changed, we do not need that information again. If you put forward people who are currently known or registered with us, this will speed up the application.

You must [complete the online SC1](#). You must also submit a signed and dated cover statement with the SC1, to provide a brief explanation of the reasons why the application is urgent and meets the priority criteria.

The following information is essential for us to accept your application:

- the relevant fee
- the name and address of the property
- the number and needs of children you want to register for
- for each person who is part of the registration, either the number from their last DBS certificate (with an update service reference number) or a new DBS certificate
- the names and contact details of the referees (if these are the same as those used in your last application, we will not contact them again but use the information they previously supplied)
- a completed additional [health self-declaration form](#) that confirms you have submitted a health declaration form to your GP
- address and employment details of your last post of employment before your current one

Applications from LAs that do not already have registered provision

You must [complete the online SC1](#). You must also submit a signed and dated cover statement with the SC1, to provide a brief explanation of the reasons why it is urgent and meets the priority criteria.

The following information is essential for us to accept your application:

- the relevant fee
- the name and address of the property
- the number and needs of children you want to register for
- for each person who is part of the registration, either the number from their last DBS certificate (with an update service reference number) or a new DBS certificate
- the names and contact details for referees for provider, responsible and individual and proposed manager with those referees willing and able to provide a prompt response to our requests for information

- a completed additional [health self-declaration form](#) that confirms you have submitted a health declaration form to your GP
- address and employment details of their last post of employment before their current one.

Your responsible individual and the proposed manager should [complete an online SC2](#). This includes:

- the relevant fee
- the names and contact details of the referees used in your last application. We will not contact those referees but draw from the information they previously supplied. If the manager is not already registered with Ofsted, they should have identified two appropriate referees who are willing and able to provide a prompt response to our requests for information.
- a completed additional [health self-declaration form](#) that confirms you have submitted a health declaration form to your GP
- address and employment details of their last post of employment before their current one
- a pre-interview questionnaire (fit person and suitable person questionnaires)

Documents

If you already have registered provision, you may want to adapt existing documents, policies and procedures to make them specific to the proposed provision.

You do not need to submit the following documents in your initial application. You can present these later during the registration process:

- the certificate of insurance
- statement of purpose
- children's guide
- location risk assessment

These documents must be specific to this application.

We need to see evidence of either planning permission or evidence that it is not required, but you can send us this while the application is processed.

You can adapt policies already in operation in your other registered provision, with appropriate amendments as required for the new provision. This includes policies on safeguarding; complaints; missing children; behaviour management (including restraint); and prevention of bullying.

Private providers need to submit financial referees, business plans and annual accounts in relation to the income and expenditure for the proposed setting. They should also update any previously submitted financial information that may be out of date. LAs do not need to do this.

The application process

If you have given us all the necessary information in your application, we will notify you that the application can be progressed.

If information is missing and we cannot accept the application, we will contact you quickly to see how we can resolve this.

Once the application is accepted, we will send out all necessary checks. We will chase responses from referees and may ask you to do so too.

The allocated inspector will then contact you and help you to ensure that all other required documentation, staffing details and information will be available at the registration visit and interviews.

Timeframe

If you give us the right information at the right time and demonstrate that you are fully prepared and ready to open, we will determine your application as soon as possible.

Refusing applications

We are legally unable to grant your application to register if it has not demonstrated that your proposed arrangements will comply with the relevant regulatory requirements.

Published 11 May 2020

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