



## Policy paper

# Inspection of childminder agencies: requirements for Ofsted

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## Background

Childminder agencies (CMAs) were introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2014. Childminders can register with CMAs as an alternative to registering with Ofsted. As well as carrying out inspections, CMAs also provide childminders with training, advice, administrative support, and marketing to families, as well as providing a valuable service to parents who may be looking for a childminder in their area.

## Requirements from April 2018

In 2018, Nadhim Zahawi MP wrote to the Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman setting out revised inspection requirements for childminder agencies from 1 April 2018. The inspection requirements are detailed below.

### Inspections timetable and cycle

The Secretary of State requires that the inspection of registered early and later years childminder agencies commence from 1 April 2018.

Under sections 51D (1) (a) and 61E (1) (a) of the [Childcare Act 2006](#), the Secretary of State requires the Chief Inspector to undertake the first inspection of newly registered agencies within 12 months of the date that an agency registers its first childminder.

In terms of a cycle of ongoing inspections, the Chief Inspector is required to inspect childminder agencies within 36 months of their first or previous inspection.

If, however, a registered agency has no childminders registered with it at the time an inspection is due, then the Secretary of State does not require the Chief Inspector to carry out an inspection. If an agency has 3 or fewer childminders registered, Ofsted should undertake a risk assessment to decide whether or not it is viable for the inspection to go ahead. In such circumstances, other action may be considered, such as a regulatory visit, to check whether or not the agency continues to meet the requirements for registration, and operates at the required level. Ofsted should review this approach after 2 years to assess whether it maintains Ofsted's high standards for agencies and their registered childminders.

With regard to inspections, there is no expectation for CMA inspections to be Chief Inspector led. However, inspections should continue to be robust, and inspectors who lead them should have had the appropriate training.

### Copies of inspection reports for agencies to local authorities

The Secretary of State requests that a copy of an inspection report (or such parts of the report as the Chief Inspector considers appropriate), made under sections 51E and/or 61F of the Act, be sent to the relevant local authority.

These arrangements will be kept under review.

## Requirements from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018

In 2015, Sam Gyimah wrote to the Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw to set out the necessary inspection requirements for childminder agencies from 1 April 2015. The inspection requirements are detailed below:

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