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Guidance

Childcare: application review

Guidance for applicants on what to expect from Ofsted during the childcare application review process.

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Applies to England

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Introduction

This guidance outlines what happens after you submit your application to register as a:

- [childminder](#)
- [nanny](#)
- [nursery or other daycare \(childcare on non-domestic premises\)](#)
- [nursery or other daycare \(childcare on domestic premises\)](#)

Submitting your application form

After submitting your application form, you will receive an email to confirm that we have received your submission. At this stage, we will carefully review your application form.

Returned application forms

We may return your application form for additional information or clarification; your application form will specify the return reason(s). You will receive a link to your returned application form by email. It is essential that you make the necessary amendments and resubmit the application as soon as possible. This link expires after 24 hours but you can continue to access your form through your Government Gateway account.

Accepted application forms

We will call you from 0300 123 1231 to tell you whether we can accept your application form. During the call, we will confirm that you understand the type of service you are registering and outline what to expect.

At this time, we will also schedule a [registration visit](#) (if applicable) with you. The visit will usually be 8 weeks after we have accepted your application. However, if all suitability checks are not complete by week 6 of the application, we may need to reschedule your visit.

We will also write to you using your chosen communication method to confirm that we have accepted your application and provide you with a unique reference number (URN). We aim to complete your application within the following timescales:

- 12 weeks for early years applications
- 10 weeks for childcare register applications

These timescales start from the date we contact you to confirm that we have accepted your application.

If you're already registered and want to add an additional setting, this does not require a full registration. Seeking additional setting approval is therefore not expected to take as long to complete as a full registration.

Please note that applications may take longer in some situations, depending on the number of people

connected to the registration and the type of information we receive.

Adding a new setting

If you're already registered and want to add an additional setting, you do not need to complete a new registration. You can [apply to add a new setting](#) to your registration. Approval of an additional setting does not take as long as a full application to register.

! Providing incorrect information on your application form could lead to a delay in your application.

[Knowingly making a statement that is false or misleading in your application is an offence](#) and you could be prosecuted.

Carrying out suitability checks

You should have obtained most [suitability checks](#) before submitting your application. You can [check what you need](#), depending on your type of registration.

When we accept your application, we will:

- ask you and any other [people connected to your registration](#), to provide your suitability checks
- let you know if there are any additional suitability checks that must form part of your application
- contact your referees and gather your references
- request background checks from all relevant local authority children's services departments

In some cases, we might carry out additional checks or contact you or other government agencies to inform our suitability decision.

To minimise delays, you must supply any information and/or suitability checks that we request from you immediately or as soon as possible.

If you do not already have the checks we request from you, you must obtain them and send them to Ofsted immediately to avoid delaying your application.

The information from local authority children's services is necessary for informing our suitability decision. You do not need to contact your local authority as we will request this information. We will also ask the local authority for regular updates until we receive the response.

We will provide you with written fortnightly updates on your application, through your chosen communication method. You should only contact Ofsted by email to make a change to your application or to send us any information we have requested. This enables us to focus our efforts on processing your application and handling safeguarding concerns. You must contact us from the email address that is connected to your application.

Pre-registration risk assessment

Once we have received your suitability checks, we will then risk assess the information we have gathered before either calling to confirm your [registration visit](#) and what to expect or making a decision to register you.

The registration visit

Your visit will take place on your scheduled date, unless we have agreed to defer it.

Find out how to [prepare for your registration visit](#).

Deferring your registration visit

We will only defer your registration visit in exceptional circumstances.

Situations when we may defer your registration visit are:

- short-term illness, injury or hospitalisation for surgery
- death in the family
- significant building work or planning difficulties
- pregnancy
- if you have not been able to complete a training or first aid course because it was cancelled
- staffing – for example, if you are applying to register as childcare on non-domestic premises and have not yet appointed a manager
- exceptional personal circumstances

Requests should be made at the earliest opportunity, in writing from your registered email address. We will consider each case separately and on its own merits.

If you fail to attend your registration visit or do not provide us with sufficient information, we may have to make a suitability decision using the limited information we hold. This is likely to lead to your [application being refused](#). You may wish to consider [withdrawing your application](#) instead.

If your application to register is granted

If we grant your application to register, you will get a certificate. You can display this at your setting.

We will publish your URN and [inspection reports](#) online. If you are a childminder or childcare on

domestic premises provider, we will also:

- publish your name and address unless you have asked us not to
- send you a certificate that contains the details of all premises, including [approved non-domestic premises where you can work up to 50% of your time](#)

If your application to register is refused

We will send you a [notice of intention](#). This will tell you why we are intending to [refuse your application](#). You have 14 days from the time when we serve the notice of intention to [object to our decision](#).

We will serve a [notice of decision](#) 14 days after service of the notice of intention, unless an objection is received.

If you disagree with Ofsted's final decision, you can [appeal to an independent tribunal](#). You must appeal within 3 months of the date that we sent you the notice of decision.

You'll be [disqualified from applying again in future](#) if we refuse your application. If you are part of an organisation such as a partnership, charity or company, the organisation becomes disqualified. When disqualified, you must apply for, and be granted, a [disqualification waiver](#) before you can reapply.

If Ofsted closes your application

We may close your application if:

- we are unable to contact you
- you do not pay your daycare application fee within 7 days from the date your application is processed
- you do not supply us with information we have

requested within 8 weeks

Your fee will not be refunded if we close your application.

If we close your application and you still want to register, you must:

- complete a new application
- submit the relevant forms
- pay a new application fee

We can re-use any suitability checks we have already completed, as long as you re-apply within 3 months.

Withdrawing your application

You can request to withdraw your application at any time, unless we have taken steps to [refuse your application](#). You will need to contact us from your registered email or phone with your URN to request a withdrawal.

If you withdraw after the application fee has been paid, your fee will not be refunded.

If you withdraw your application and want to re-apply in the future, you must:

- complete a new application
- submit the relevant forms
- pay a new application fee

We can re-use any suitability checks we have already completed, as long as you re-apply within 3 months.

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