



care
inspectorate

Registering
and running a
childminding
service: what you
need to know



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Contents

Introduction	1
Section 1: What is childminding?	2
Section 2: What should I consider before I apply to register as a childminder?	4
Section 3: What should I expect when I apply to register as a childminder?	6
Section 4: What should I expect as my application is being assessed?	14
Section 5: What happens after I am registered?	16



**Keeping The Promise at
the heart of what we do**

Introduction

This booklet will help you if you are:

- applying to register a childminding service
- running a childminding service.

By law, childminding services in Scotland must be registered with the Care Inspectorate. You cannot run a childminding service if you are not registered.

The Care Inspectorate regulates childminding services across Scotland in line with legislation (Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010). This means that once your service is registered, we will inspect your childminding service to assess the quality of the childcare you provide, taking account of the [Health and Social Care Standards](#) and best practice guidance.

Providing care for other people's children is a big responsibility and there are various requirements that your childminding service must meet before you can begin.

This booklet explains the requirements of the Care Inspectorate, so that you can make sure you meet them before we register your service. It provides you with information that you will find helpful when running your service and what to expect when you are inspected.



Section 1: What is childminding?

Childminding is the provision of childcare in a domestic setting. By law, childminders must be registered with the Care Inspectorate. We regulate services to make sure that children and families experience high-quality outcomes and children are kept safe. The Care Inspectorate has legal powers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. These powers are set out in the [Public Services Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

In the legislation, childminding is defined as 'looking after one or more children on domestic premises for reward for a period of more than two hours in any day'.

This does not include:

- caring for children closely related to you
- fostering children
- caring for children in their own home
- kinship care.

But it may include:

- caring for children who attend boarding school over weekends and holiday periods.

If you need more advice on what is defined as childminding, please contact us.

Phone 0345 600 9527, Monday to Friday 09:00-16:00

Email enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

There are different options to consider if you want to deliver a childminding service.

- **As an individual** – you can operate a childminding service alone and this is known as an 'individual applicant'. In this situation you are solely responsible for the care of the children. You would be known as the registered provider of the childminding service, and you would be self-employed.
- **Going into a partnership with someone** – you can apply to register with another person, and this is known as a childminding partnership. We would register you as a partnership and you would complete the application form together. If one of you decides to leave, the business will no longer legally exist. The remaining childminder would need to apply for a voluntary cancellation and apply to register again but as an individual childminder. In this case, we would not cancel the childminding service until the new childminding application had been processed. This means that children and families have consistent care.
- **Working together** – you can be a registered childminder and work from the home of another registered childminder but your registrations would be separate. This would not be a partnership. In this situation, you would complete separate childminding registrations. Once registered, you would be inspected separately by the Care Inspectorate, and you would be required to pay your own fees. You would each have your own group of minded children with separate contracts with their children's parents or carers. You would each have your own policies and procedures for your service. You would each have your own business insurance and your own banking arrangements. You would be self-employed.

- **Employing an assistant** – as a registered childminder, you can employ an assistant to support your service. You would be responsible for recruiting, inducting and training the assistant in line with best practice. Our guidance [Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment](#) gives advice on what steps to take when recruiting.
- **Registering as a company** – a registered company can apply to register as a childminder and we would process the application in the same way as a partnership. In this instance, the registered provider of the childminding business would be the company and not an individual. The company would need to be registered with [Companies House](#).

You can find more information on our website's [Register a childminding service page](#).



Section 2: Before you apply to register

If you are thinking about becoming a childminder, you can contact us for general advice through our contact centre 0345 600 9527 or through the registration enquiries mailbox: regenquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

When you are ready to apply to register, you can also ask us for pre application advice. This can be done through our [digital portal](#). The digital portal is the entry point for making your application and you can create an account to access your application as you go through the process. By creating an account, you can save your progress and return to complete your application at any time.

Before you apply to register as a childminder, read our guidance documents listed below. They give advice about planning your childminding service as well as what to expect once you are initially registered.

[Guidance for applicants on applying to register a care service](#)

[Guidance for providers and applicants on aims and objectives](#)

[Your Childminding Journey](#)

Children and their rights should be at the core of every aspect of the care, play and learning that you provide. [Children's Rights and the UNCRC in Scotland: An Introduction](#) tells you more.

Scotland made a commitment that all children would grow up feeling loved, safe and secure. This is called [The Promise](#).

During the registration process, your inspector will expect you to be aware of the following best practice guidance and how it will relate to your service. You will need to operate your service within the guidance, so you should take time to read and understand it.

- [Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#)
- [Self-evaluation for improvement – your guide](#)
- [Realising the ambition](#)
- [Health and Social Care Standards](#)
- [The Scottish Social Services Council codes-of-practice](#)

Once you are a registered childminder, it will be your responsibility to keep up to date with current guidance. This will ensure that you can meet the needs of the children and families you care for and provide high-quality experiences.

Visit [our website's professionals pages](#) for a wide range of operational guidance and information. You can also visit our knowledge and improvement website [The Hub](#), for a wide range of resources.

Planning permission

You will need to check you are allowed to run a childminding business from your home.

If you rent your home from a landlord

If you rent your home, you might need permission to operate a childminding business. Sometimes, landlords or local authorities will not grant you permission to operate a business from your home.

If you are given permission to operate a business, there can sometimes be restrictions placed on how many children you can look after. We will ask you if you have applied to your landlord or local authority for permission to operate your business. It is a good idea to find out about this before applying to register.

If you own your home

If you own your home, we would advise you to check that your title deeds allow you to operate a business from your home. Sometimes, title deeds will place restrictions on running a business or certain types of business from your home. It is a good idea to find out about this before applying to register.

Whether you own or rent your home, you should be aware that some local authorities might require you to have planning permission to employ people, paid and unpaid, to work in your home. If you require planning permission, you will need to get this before we approve your assistant. If you employ an assistant, this will not automatically increase the number of children you can care for. We will assess the size and numbers of rooms being used for the children in your care along with the individual needs of the children.



Section 3: What should I expect when I apply to register as a childminder?

When you apply to register, you will have to complete an application form and pay a registration fee before we can begin the registration process. You must complete the application form to the best of your knowledge.

The whole application and registration process may seem daunting to you, but we can help you understand what you need to do. Our [Guidance for applicants on applying to register a care service](#) gives you useful information about the process.

! How much will applying cost?

You will need to pay a fee when you apply. This is non-refundable and we will not be able to process your application until we receive your payment. For more information, please visit the [fees page](#) on our website.

We are required to carry out a check on you through the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme. This will tell us if you have any criminal convictions that might prevent you from registering as a childminder. There is a fee to be paid for carrying out this check. You must apply to join the PVG Scheme through the Care Inspectorate.

For all members of your household who are over the age of 16, we carry out a Disclosure Scotland criminal records check. This includes adult children who live with you. You will have to pay a fee for the checks to be carried out.

Visit www.disclosurescotland.co.uk to find out more about these fees.

As part of the registration process, we need to make sure you are fit and healthy to look after other people's children. We ask you to complete a health declaration and obtain a reference from your GP. Some GPs may charge you a fee for this service. The fee would be paid by you directly to your GP at their request.

Depending on your individual circumstances, there may be additional costs, for example applying for planning permission.

Once registered, we ask all care services to pay an annual continuation fee. For more information, please visit the [fees page](#) on our website.

! What information is included when I complete the application form?

When completing the application form, you will be asked to provide information and documentation in support of your application. This is because we need to ensure that you have the right skills, knowledge and experience to care for children and that your home is a safe environment. Information we will ask for will be about:

- [your details](#)
- [your training and experience](#)

- aims and objectives for your proposed childminding business
- your home
- fitness checks
- previous cancellation or refusal of registration.

Your details

We need to know who you are, where you live and other details about you. These are legal requirements.

Your training and experience

We ask for details of any training and experience you have in child development and working with children.

Aims and objectives for your proposed childminding business

Your written aims and objectives will tell us how you will provide your childminding service and what children and families can expect from your service.

More information about how to develop aims and objectives is in our [Guidance for providers and applicants on aims and objectives](#).

About your home

We will ask about your home, the rooms you want to use and the garden/outside space. We ask you to declare that the home where you will provide the childminding service is suitable for that purpose. The home must be of sound construction, kept in a good state of repair and have adequate and suitable ventilation, heating and lighting. Other things to consider when deciding whether your home is suitable include:

- safety and fire prevention
- the facilities and equipment available
- access to a garden or outside space.

We will arrange to visit your home to make sure it is suitable and safe or discuss your plans to make it suitable and safe, before we complete your registration.

Fitness checks

We will ask you for information so we can carry out a range of checks to ensure you are of good character and integrity. This is because we need to make sure you are a suitable person for the role of a childminder. To help us with this assessment, we will ask for the following information.

- Two references: references cannot be from relatives. Where you have been employed by an employer for longer than three months in the last five years, one of your references must be from them. Usually, we expect a reference from your most recent employer (if they have employed you for longer than three months).

- Criminal records checks: PVG Scheme record checks or their equivalents. This will contain relevant non-conviction information that is not in the public domain as well as spent and unspent convictions. If we decide that any person being checked is an unsuitable person, we will refuse the application. So, it's very important to talk with partners and others in the household before completing an application. Once registered, the provider of the childminding service must not allow any person who is not suitable to be around children to live in the home.
- Proof of identity: birth certificate, change of name, photographic identification.
- A signed declaration that the information you have given us is accurate.

Previous cancellation or refusal of registration

You must tell us if you have operated a childminding or other care service that has been subject to enforcement action by us or any previous authority. For example, cancellation of registration because of enforcement action. You must also tell us if you have had any previous application to register any care service refused. We would have to take this history into account when considering your new application. It is an offence to knowingly put wrong or misleading information in your application to register or for a variation once you are registered.

We may also undertake other checks such as social work background checks. If we do, we will ask your permission first.

Where the applicant is not an individual (for example a partnership) the above checks will be completed for all the partners in the partnership, then the process described in Part 2 of the application form will apply.

It is important that you complete the sections of the form that are relevant to your choice of service.

How many children can I apply to care for?

When considering the numbers of children a registered childminder can care for, we must include your own children up to the age of 16 in the overall numbers. This means we will include all children in your family, regardless of whether they are present in the home or not. For example, if a child of the family is at nursery, school or with a relative, they are still counted in the numbers you can care for as a registered childminder.

We will take account of the Health and Social Care Standards and our quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare, along with your own circumstances. We also look at other factors, for example the specific features of the home where you intend to childmind, and additional needs of your own children or those who may be in your care.

We would normally register a childminder for:

- no more than six children under the age of 12.

Of those six children:

- no more than three have not yet started primary school.

Of those six children:

- no more than one is under the age of 12 months.

Can I offer overnight care?

If you want to provide overnight care, you must discuss this with us during the registration process. If we agree you can provide overnight care, the conditions on your registration certificate will say this. There are additional, more stringent fire safety requirements for overnight care and your home risk assessment will have to be based on these requirements.

We will carry out a risk assessment of your home with you that will include the sleeping arrangements and access to other household members, friends or extended family. You will have to amend your child protection policy and emergency contact procedures to include that you provide overnight care.

I am a foster carer, can I still childmind?

You can still register as a childminder if you are a foster carer. We would talk to you about how many children you foster and about any potential impact on the minded children. Your foster children would be included in your overall numbers.

What documents do I need to provide at the point of registration and why do I need to provide them?

When you apply to register as a childminder, you are legally registering as a care service and so we need various documents from you to help us assess the application. The documents we ask you to develop will support you to run your business. Core policies we ask for when you apply to register are listed below. Please remember that you may need additional policies that are personal to your service, for example a pet policy. These additional policies may be at the point of registration or as an update in the future if your circumstances change.

- Child protection policy
- Medication policy
- Recruitment policy (if employing an assistant)
- Infection prevention and control policy
- Fire safety risk assessment
- Providing meals and snacks
- Complaints policy
- Promoting positive behaviour policy.

Child protection policy

We will ask you to tell us how you will keep children safe. For example, how you will record concerns, and where and how you will proceed with any child protection concerns you may have. It is essential that you are aware of your duty to protect the children in your care. Every child has the

right to expect protection from abuse and harm. You will need to know what to look for and what to do if you are worried about a child. We will assess your understanding of what to do if you have concerns about the protection of a child.

! Medication policy

There might be times when you will be asked by parents to give medication to their child. This includes inhalers, antibiotics, Calpol, children's Nurofen or antihistamine. You will need to have a clear policy and procedure that details the information you are required to keep and permission from parents. As part of this procedure, you will need to keep records of the medication, which should include the name of the medication, why it is being given, the dose, how often it is to be administered, your signature and parents' permission. More information can be found in our booklet [Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services](#).

! Recruitment policy (if employing an assistant)

If you want to have a childminding assistant(s) (paid or voluntary) even if it is a member of your family to help you provide your childminding service, you must discuss and agree this with us first. Any assistant will be named on your certificate of registration. Assistants, paid or voluntary must be Disclosure Scotland checked. You will have to provide us with a recruitment policy and procedure in line with best practice. You will also have to tell us your plans for staff development, induction and training for any assistant.

As part of your recruitment policy, you will be responsible for making sure the assistant(s) are suitable people.

We regard childminding assistants as employees and so you will be responsible for making sure they have the suitable skills and knowledge. You will also need to have employers' liability insurance whether your assistant is paid or not.



Infection prevention and control policy

You will need to think about how you will keep children safe and healthy in your home. We will ask you to develop a policy and procedure about the actions you will take to have a safe and clean environment for the children. This should include information about the personal protective equipment (PPE) that you will use when changing children's nappies, helping children with toileting and dealing with sick children. Your policy should detail the measures that will be put in place to minimise potential risk to children from infection. You can find out more in our booklets [Infection prevention and control in childcare settings](#) and [Infection prevention and control policy: guidance for applicants](#).

Fire safety risk assessment

Childminding applicants are required to carry out a fire safety risk assessment of their homes and prepare an emergency escape plan. You can find out more about fire safety and what you will need to do on our website page [Register a childminding service](#).

Food policy

To provide food including meals and snacks to the children you care for, you will need to register with your local authority's environmental health department as a food business operator. You can find details about how to do this on the Food Standards Agency website www.food.gov.uk.

You will still require a food policy even if parents are providing meals and/or snacks for their children. This also includes milk (formula or breast milk) for babies and young children.

Complaints policy

Parents and children can complain directly to the Care Inspectorate if they wish but it is preferable that they raise concerns with the service in the first instance. This is often the best and quickest way to resolve a problem.

We will ask you to develop a complaints policy that should give parents information about how you will deal with their complaints and concerns. It should detail how you will record complaints, the action you will take and record any outcome. Your complaints policy should provide the address and telephone number of the Care Inspectorate.

Promoting positive behaviour policy

As a registered childminder, you will need to consider how you will engage with children and promote positive behaviour. When children become uninterested in activities or disengaged with the environment around them, they can often act out their frustrations in a highly emotional way. You will need to consider what action you would take in these circumstances. Parents should be provided with a copy of this policy and agree that the actions in your policy and procedure are in line with the actions that they would also take. We would not expect any form of restraint or restriction of liberty to be used in any circumstances. Restraint includes strapping children into prams, buggies, car seats or highchairs to manage their behaviour.

! What other paperwork do I need?

Personal plans

Each child in your care needs to have a personal plan. This is so you can help parents keep track of how their child is developing when the child is with you. It also helps the parent and the child to contribute to the plan. You can develop your own plan to meet the requirements of the regulations. You must review the plan with parents every six months, or sooner if there are changes to a child's development, home life or need. Some childminding services use an 'All about me' format. This, reviewed regularly, would also be considered a personal plan. More information about developing personal plans, can be found at Care Inspectorate Hub [Personal planning guides for providers](#) or from other organisations that support childminders for example, SCMA.

Some local authorities have childminding development staff you can contact for help to develop your plans.

Your plans should be written with the SHANARRI indicators at the heart. This is described by Scottish Government in [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#), which uses eight indicators of wellbeing.

The eight indicators are referred to as SHANARRI:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included.

One way to organise your plans would be to record the progress of each child under each indicator. Find out more in our [Guide for providers on personal planning: early learning and childcare](#).

! Accidents and incidents

You must keep records of any accidents. You must also keep records of any incidents that have had an effect on the health or welfare of the children being cared for. You will need to notify us about other specific events, for example child protection. More information on what you are required to keep and what you need to notify us about can be found here. [Rcds cm services must keep and notification reporting guidance COVID-19 \(100320\).pdf \(careinspectorate.com\)](#)

Other considerations

! Vehicles to be used

If you intend to use a vehicle for transporting children, find out how you should be keeping children safe by visiting the www.goodeggcarsafety.com website. The website gives you guidance on choosing, buying and fitting a car seat. It also offers printed copies of The Good Egg Guide to Child Care Seat Safety.

You must also make sure that you have appropriate business insurance for transporting children in your car. Contact your insurer for more information on this.

Emergency procedures

You must have an emergency procedure that details what would happen if there was a fire or other type of emergency such as you or your assistant being unwell. Your plans must ensure the safe supervision of children in your care in any emergency, and that the Care Inspectorate and families are kept informed.

Confidentiality

As a registered childminder, you must always be aware of the need for confidentiality with information about children and their families. Think about a private space when speaking to parents about their children and be aware of other parents and children potentially overhearing your discussions. Personal information should be out of public view and stored safely and sensitively.

It is important that you are clear about how and where you will store information, including photographs, that you will use for your work. You should share how you will use the information you hold with the parents who use your service. This includes use of social media platforms to advertise your business and group chats to pass on information.

Data protection

You need to be aware of data protection law and how it affects you, the children in your care and the families and assistants you work with.

Every organisation or sole trader who processes personal information needs to register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and pay a data protection fee to, unless they are exempt. Visit their website at www.ico.org.uk to find out more.

Accounts and contracts

By law, self-employed people must keep some form of accounts. Properly recorded financial transactions and written agreements with parents will help everyone to be clear about the terms of the service and help to avoid disputes.

Whistleblowing

If you employ an assistant, or you work alongside another childminding service, you will need to give them a written statement that explains how they can contact the Care Inspectorate if they have concerns about the quality of care provided to children.

Smoking

Second hand smoke is extremely harmful to children. Children should be cared for in a smoke-free, vape-free environment indoors and outdoors. You should consider developing a 'no smoking/no vaping' policy for parents and carers.

Section 4: What should I expect as my application is being assessed?

Home visits

As part of the assessment process, we will arrange to visit you at the home you intend to run your childminding business from. At the visit, we will discuss with you how you will meet the needs of the children and their families. This discussion will include how you will provide care to the children and how you will plan and arrange activities for them. We will make sure that the home is suitable and safe for caring for other people's children.

We will look at:

- availability of resources, equipment and activities
- the space available for looking after children inside and outside
- health and safety issues
- any pets you have and how you keep them
- provision for children with special needs
- insurance arrangements – public liability insurance and employers' liability insurance if applicable.

During this visit, we will discuss the conditions of registration relevant to your application.

Questions and additional information

During the registration process, it is normal for the registration inspector who is assessing your application to ask further questions or ask for clarity on specific details of the application. This might include asking you about your training, knowledge and understanding of child development, values and relevant experience. This helps the inspector to assess your application. This might be discussed during your home visit or at a later date by email, telephone or video call. The inspector would contact you directly about this and explain the reasons for their requests.

Our decision

Once we have all the information we need and we have carried out all the necessary checks, we will decide whether to grant or refuse your application for registration.

When we grant registration, it is usual for us to put conditions on registration. This will include things like the number and ages of children you can care for, whether overnight care is provided, the names of assistants and, where necessary, any conditions unique to your childminding service. We will ask you to agree to the conditions before we grant registration.

If you do not agree with the proposed conditions, you can ask us to reconsider. If we then decide to impose them, you can appeal. If that happens, we will give you details of how the appeals process works.

If we refuse to grant registration, will write to you with reasons why and you will have the right to appeal.

! The registration certificate

When we register a service, we send a letter granting registration that tells you how to download your certificate of registration from our digital portal. You must follow these conditions of registration to legally provide your childminding service.

This certificate must be displayed in the home while the service is provided so that the children's parents and carers can read it. It is a legal requirement under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 to display your certificate while providing the childminding service.



Section 5: What happens after I am registered?

! Is there paperwork I need to keep after I am registered?

If you are registered as a childminder, your aims and objectives document are set up as part of the registration process. Your aims and objectives will only need to be reviewed if you change the service that you are offering.

We would advise you to review your policies annually to make sure they are up to date and in line with best practice.

When you are registered, it is a legal requirement that you keep up to date records of the following.

- Child protection records
- Daily attendance registers
- Personal plans
- Records of accidents and incidents
- Self-evaluation of your service/improvement plan
- Policies and procedures
- Contracts with parents
- Medication records

Each year, we will ask you to submit an annual return. This is usually between December and February each year. This is information that we gather about you and your service. We collect this information on behalf of the Scottish Government.

! Do I have annual costs to stay registered as a childminder?

You must pay an annual continuation fee to remain on the register as a childminding service. Our financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March and we will invoice you annually.

! What type of changes do I have to tell Care Inspectorate about?

Once you are registered, you must notify us about certain events and changes to your service. For example, when:

- someone living in the house reaches 16 years of age
- anyone living in the house moves out
- someone moves into the house (if they are over the age of 16, you will need to do a Disclosure Scotland check)
- death of a child while being minded
- change of name of the childminder (for example as a result of marriage).

Find out more by reading our guidance document [Records that all registered children and young people's care services must keep and guidance on notification reporting](#).

Can I change or remove conditions of my registration?

If you want to change or remove a condition of registration on your certificate, you will have to complete a variation application form through our digital portal. An example of requesting a variation would be if you want to increase the numbers of children you are registered to care for or if you want to add a new aspect to your service such as providing overnight care. You will also have to apply for a variation if you are moving home. We will consider your application and let you know whether we are going to grant or refuse it.

You can find out more on our website page, [Changes to registration, variations and cancelled services](#).

What happens during an inspection once I am registered?

Once you are a registered childminder, there are a number of different aspects of your service that you will need to think about.

To ensure children are safe and experiencing high-quality outcomes, we will inspect your service. During the inspection, we will work with you to assess the quality of care, play and learning, the environment and how well you lead and improve your service. If you employ an assistant, we will look at how you recruited your assistant and how you assess their knowledge and skills when caring for children. We will also ask parents for their views on the service you provide and how you observe and engage with the children you care for. We understand that some people find inspection an anxious time. Please be assured our inspectors want to engage positively and find out about the good work you do with children and families. We will always be respectful that you offer a service from your home.

To assess the quality of your service, we will inspect against our [quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#). The framework is a self-evaluation tool for you as well, that can support you to deliver good experiences to children. You can use the framework to self-evaluate how well you are doing and how you can improve outcomes for children. Inspectors will use this framework when they are registering and inspecting your service.

We encourage all services to self-evaluate. This means you are thinking about how well you are doing and how you know, and about your plans for further improvements. Find out more by reading our document [Self-evaluation for improvement – your guide](#).

What are key questions and quality indicators?

When we inspect your service, we look at quality indicators for the four key questions. These are the key questions.

- How good is our care, play and learning?
- How good is our setting?
- How good is our leadership?
- How good is our staff team?

We evaluate against a six-point scale and award an evaluation for each quality indicator we look at. The six-point scale ranges from six – excellent, 5-very good, 4-good, 3-adequate, 2-weak and one – unsatisfactory.

An overall evaluation is given for each key question that we look at. This will be the lowest of the evaluations we awarded for the quality indicators for the key question.

Following an inspection, your inspector will draft a report that includes evidence to support findings, as well as the evaluations.

We will publish the report on our website for the public to read.

What is enforcement?

If we find that a service is not good enough and we have serious concerns about the care children receive or it is not complying with the law, we have several options, depending on the seriousness of the situation.

- Discuss the situation to try to resolve it.
- Re-evaluate the service.
- Impose, add, vary or remove a condition on the registration of the service. In this situation, you could write to us with your views on the change and you could appeal against any decision made.
- Serve an improvement notice which gives you a specified amount of time to improve the situation. If this is not done, we may take steps to cancel the registration. You could write to us with your views on the proposed cancellation and you could appeal any decision to cancel.
- In an emergency, we can take urgent steps to cancel your registration or to impose, vary or remove a condition on the registration of the service. We would only do this when there is a serious risk to a child's life, health or wellbeing.

We tell the local authority where you live and operate from and about any enforcement action that we carry out. This is because the local authority is responsible for the quality of the services being delivered in its area and ensuring people and children are kept safe from harm.

If we have serious concerns about the health and wellbeing of children in your service, we may take action to cancel your registration. Please be assured we do not take any enforcement action lightly. We want to work with services to improve in the first instance. If we cannot contact you, for example to inspect your service, we may take legal action to cancel the registration.

Can I choose to not childmind but still stay registered?

There may be times when you are not caring for any children and your childminding service is not active, but you wish to stay registered. When this happens, you must tell us. You can apply to become inactive through our digital portal. Inactive status can only be granted for a maximum of one year. We will then look at whether your reason for requesting inactive status fits with our criteria. Inactive status reasons may include maternity leave, carer's leave and sickness. We will not approve inactive status if you have been employed elsewhere. If you have another job, we will ask you to cancel your service. You can find out more in our guidance [Changes to registration, variations and cancelled services](#).

If you want to continue your registration, you will still have to pay the annual continuation fee and comply with the regulations, including submitting your annual return and notifying us of significant

changes as listed above. You can be inactive for a maximum of one year. After this you must either start providing the childminding service again or cancel your registration.

What if I decide to stop childminding or want to cancel my registration?

If you want to stop childminding you must complete an application to cancel through the digital portal. You need to tell the people who use your service that you are planning to stop childminding and give us three months' notice (unless we agree a shorter period with you).

What if someone makes a complaint about me or my service to the Care Inspectorate?

We make an assessment about whether we will investigate the complaint or not. If we investigate the complaint, we will visit you and talk you through the elements of the complaint that we are looking at. We will speak to you to get an understanding of the issues identified in the complaint. We might also look at some of your records to evidence our decision making. When we conclude the investigation, we will either uphold the complaint or report that it is not upheld. If we uphold a complaint, we will either recommend or require you to take action to improve the quality of care and service you are providing. A recommendation sets out what a service should do to improve, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

A requirement sets out what a service must do to improve and it must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, regulations or conditions of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

If we find there needs to be a lot of improvement, we might re-evaluate your service. This means your evaluations may go down. For example, if you have been evaluated as 'good' for care, play and learning, we might re-evaluate to 'weak' depending on the level of improvement and risk to children.

We also have a duty to investigate any complaint made about us. If you are not happy with an aspect of our work, you can contact us at concerns@careinspectorate.gov.scot

What happens next?

Once you are registered, you can automatically begin receiving our regular Provider Update e-newsletters for childminders. These keep you up to date with news and information from us that is relevant to you. To do this, go to our website and follow the instructions.

Further support and guidance can always be found on our Care Inspectorate website and Hub websites and through organisations such as the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). Some local authorities have designated development workers who can also offer support and guidance to you as you grow your business and follow your new career path as a childminder.

About our websites

We have two websites. Our main website, careinspectorate.com is the place to go for operational information and guidance, both in our Professionals area and our Publications and statistics area. You will find the public information about your service in our [Find care](#) area.

Our other website, hub.careinspectorate.com is where you will find a wide range of practice and improvement resources.

Headquarters

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY
Tel: 01382 207100
Fax: 01382 207289

Website: www.careinspectorate.com

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