

INSPECTION PROCESS FOR CHILDMINDERS

Policy and Procedure

Requirement to Inspect

Article 130 of the Children (NI) Order 1995 gives Trusts a duty to inspect domestic premises in which childminders are working and non-domestic premises where day care for children aged under twelve is being provided at least once per year. Article 130(5) requires the Trust to notify each registered person in advance that the inspection is being carried out. Trusts may also decide to carry out inspections with no advance warning.

Policy

Childminding for children under the age of twelve is registered in accordance with the requirements specified in the:

- Children (NI) Order 1995
- The Children Order Regulations and Guidance Vol 2 Family Support, Childminding and Day Care
- Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 - Minimum Standards July 2012. Likewise, Sessional Day Care and Full Day Care for children under the age of 12 will be inspected in accordance with the above legislation and Standards.

The purpose of inspection is:

- To enable the Trust to satisfy itself that children are appropriately cared for and services are being provided to an acceptable standard
- To provide reassurance to parents
- To ensure that the facilities provided are in accordance with the information held on the register
- To maintain minimum Standards and encourage providers to work towards raising Standards
- To ensure that the children are well cared for and that the standard of care provided is acceptable having regard to their needs, including their religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.

The Children (NI) Order gives the person carrying out the inspection power to examine the premises, the children, the arrangements for their welfare and the records which registered persons are required to keep under the provisions of Article 125 (c) of the Children (NI) Order 1995 and the Childminding and Day Care for Children Under age 12-Minimum Standards July 2012.

Procedure

Prior to Inspection

1. Two months prior to an inspection being due, the Social Work Manager identifies which childminders require inspection. This is carried out with assistance from the team secretary who will print off the list of registered childminders from Soscare. The inspection takes place within a calendar year of the previous inspection.
2. The Social Work Manager allocates the inspections to the inspecting social workers and provides a list of allocations to the team secretary.
3. The team secretary records the name of the inspector on soscare.
4. The team secretary sends out an inspection self-evaluation form to the childminder accompanied by the following:
 - a) A letter from the inspector explaining the requirement on the childminder to complete the self-evaluation form and giving a date for the form to be returned. The letter will give a date when the inspection will take place and a list of documentation the childminder will be required to send with the self-evaluation form and produce on the day of inspection. If the childminder employs an assistant then the letter will ask for the assistant to be present at inspection. The letter will also ask the childminder to inform the social worker if they are currently minding and if children will be present at the time of inspection. The date of inspection may require to be changed if no children are due to be present and a telephone discussion may need to take place of times to ascertain when the childminder is minding.
 - b) Leaflet entitled "Understanding your inspection".
 - c) Assistant's questionnaires to be returned in the stamped address envelope (if assistants are employed).
5. Team secretary records date of inspection on Soscare.
6. Team secretary records receipt of documentation from the childminder on Soscare.
7. If information is not returned by the setting in a timely fashion, this should be followed up by the inspector/administrator.
8. Team secretary checks the household members, assistants and regular visitors list provided against the list of recorded vetted persons.

9. Team secretary carries out Soscare checks on the childminder, household members and regular visitors, records the outcomes on file and informs the inspector of outcome. Any soscare issues of concern may need addressed immediately with the childminder/individual concerned. (SOSCARE checks to be carried out if inspecting Quality of Staffing, Management and Leadership).
10. Team secretary sends out a minimum of two parental questionnaires to the parents identified on the form. An accompanying letter will inform the parent that their childminder is due for inspection and ask for the questionnaires to be returned by a specific date. Forms are returned using a freepost arrangement. Parents should be advised that they can complete the questionnaires anonymously.
11. The team secretary forwards to the childminder any vetting forms that are required. These will be required if a household member reaches the age of criminal responsibility or there is a proposed new regular visitor or household member.
12. The Team secretary records the receipt of these questionnaires on Soscare, files all documentation and forwards the file to the inspecting social worker.
13. The inspecting social worker reads the Self Evaluation form and questionnaires and makes notes of specific areas for discussion at inspection.
14. The inspecting social worker reads the previous inspection, taking specific note of any actions that were to be taken following the previous inspection and any issues/complaints that have arisen since the last inspection.

Inspection Visit

Inspections of childminders will be carried out by one inspector and is likely to take one to two hours. The full inspection will take approximately 5 hours to complete, which includes preparation, the inspection visit and report writing.

Inspectors will adhere to the Early Years Code of Conduct.

Inspectors will focus on the Quality Areas for inspection agreed by their Trust for that year, insuring that all four sections of the Childminding and Day Care Standards for Children under the age of 12 and review of the action plan from the previous inspection, are inspected on a four yearly cycle. An example of a Quality Area is Quality of Care or Quality of Physical Environment, **the Standard on Safeguarding must be inspected yearly.**

1. On arrival at the childminders home the inspector will show their ID, introduce themselves to the childminder (and assistant/s if applicable) and explain the format of the inspection.

2. During the inspection the inspector will:
 - a) Talk to the childminder, assistants, children and any parents.
 - b) Check registration details and assess compliance with and understanding of the requirements of registration.
 - c) Follow through on previous recommendations and progress made.
 - d) Focus on agreed Quality Areas of inspection.
 - e) Address any issues that arise during the inspection that are not part of the agreed Quality Areas.
 - f) Assess on a sampling basis that policies are completed in line with the Minimum Standards.
 - g) Acknowledge examples of good practice and draw attention to any perceived weaknesses.
 - h) Address any Soscare issues.
 - i) Complete the inspection form.
3. At the conclusion of the inspection, oral feedback should be given to the childminder (and assistant if appropriate) with particular emphasis on areas of good practice, areas for improvement and non-compliance of registration. The childminder should be clear about what happens next in relation to process for receiving the inspection report and any requirements that must be complied with immediately. Any issue of significant concern should be followed up in writing by the inspector within 24 hours of the inspection. Written correspondence on how they plan to follow through on these issues should be received from the Registered Person and returned to the inspector by return.

Following Inspection

1. Inspector records confirmation on Soscare that the inspection took place.
2. Inspectors completes a report within 10 working days of the inspection which includes information from the self-evaluation form, the inspection form, Trust records, staff questionnaires (if applicable) and parental questionnaires. Support for completion of this report will be provided by the team secretary.
3. The report is forwarded to the Senior Social Worker for approval.

4. The report is sent to the childminder within 20 working days of the inspection.
5. Team secretary records date of issue on soscare.
6. If any conditions of registration are to be varied, imposed or removed, or if there have been non-compliance of registration at inspection, the inspecting social worker takes this forward to the Early Years Panel (if resources allow, this may be carried out by the link social worker).
7. Team secretary files report and stores file.

Process for inspection when a childminder is not minding

If a childminder is not currently minding but wishes to remain registered an inspection must still be carried out and the above procedure is followed.

If a childminder is not minding for a period of more than 12 months since the previous inspection, the process of cancellation of registration is followed unless certain circumstances pertain such as pregnancy and long term illness.

Process for dealing with a childminder who cannot be contacted at the time of inspection

If a childminder does not respond to the information sent informing them of their inspection a further letter should be sent informing them if they do not respond within two weeks of receiving this letter then the matter will be taken to the Early Years panel where a decision will be made to cancel their registration.

If a response is received the childminder should be given an opportunity to be inspected.

If no response is received the matter should come before the Early Years panel and a decision reached to cancel the registration.

A Notice of Intention to Take a Step should be issued allowing the childminder 14 days to appeal the decision.

If an appeal is requested, the appeals Panel Procedure should be invoked.

If no appeal is requested, the childminder receives a letter to advise that he/she is no longer registered and to resume childminding constitutes an offence under Part XI of the Children (NI) Order. The childminder is also asked to return their registration Certificate.

The inspector completes the closure form which is signed by the team manager and the file is returned to the team secretary for closure.

Process for dealing with Childminders who are found only to be minding relatives

If the Trust is informed about, or if a childminder is found at inspection to be only minding children who are relatives, the childminder must be informed that if by the time of the next inspection, he/she has not secured a non-relative placement, that their registration will be cancelled (relatives as defined in Guidance and Regulations Vol 2 6.20).

Process for dealing with Childminders Inspection if the Childminder has children on his/her records but no children are present

Every effort should be made to carry out an inspection with children present. However if the inspection has to go ahead as a last resort, the evidence for the inspection is based on the information reported on in the Self-Evaluation Form about the minded children, questionnaires and the inspection visit.

Glossary of Terms

- Link Social Worker - this is the person who may visit your facility throughout the year, who you contact for advice and who carries out ongoing vetting
- Social Work Manager - this is the person who manages the Early Years Team
- Sector - this term includes all registered childcare provision
- Soscare - this refers to the computer system that records all information on your registration and inspection