

## REGISTRATION OF CHILDMINDERS

### Policy and Procedure

#### Requirement to Register

All persons who provide care for one or more children under the age of twelve for reward, for two or more hours in a day, on domestic premises, must be registered by the Trust in whose area the premises are situated (Articles 118 (1) (a) and (2) and 119 (1) Children (NI) Order 1995.

#### Policy

Those who mind children under the age of twelve on domestic premises are registered in accordance with the requirement specified in the Children (NI) Order 1995, the Children Order Regulations and Guidance, Vol. 2 Family Support. Childminding and Day Care and the Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 - Minimum Standards 2012. This is to protect the rights, welfare and development of young children and their families. It is also to ensure equal access and treatment for all children regardless of background, ethnicity and disability.

All enquiries are dealt with promptly and information supplied enables the potential applicant to make an informed decision about proceeding with registration. Decisions about applications are dealt with where at all possible, within the legislative time frame.

#### Procedure

1. The initial enquiry by telephone or in the office is taken by the team secretary who keeps a record of the enquiry on Soscare (or Duty SW and passed to secretary).
2. The applicant is directed to the Trusts Early Years website for the Registration Process for Prospective Childminders – Guidance Document **OR** if they do not have access to this, the team secretary promptly sends this out by post and is sent along with a Childminding Enquiry Form.
3. On receipt of the completed Enquiry Form the enquirer receives an invitation to a Pre-Registration Briefing Session and is advised that attendance is compulsory if they wish to proceed. This session will be provided by either an outside agency or Trust staff (to be agreed). If the session is provided by an outside agency then the names of all applicants will be forwarded to the agency and they will invite the enquirer to the session and make all arrangements.

At the end of the Pre-Registration Briefing Session the enquirer will be issued with an application form and all vetting documentation. The applicant will receive a letter with the application form advising that the application form and all documentation must be returned in person so that their identification and all those connected with the application can be verified and that this commences the application process. They will also be advised that all others associated with the application who require vetting (family members and assistants) must also present to the Early Years office to have their identification verified before the Access NI Checks can commence. Regular visitors to a childminding setting must complete a self-declaration form.

4. The team secretary will record the receipt of the application form and all vetting documentation on Soscare. The team secretary checks that all forms are completed correctly and any that are not are returned to the applicant. The team secretary verifies the identification of the applicant and all those associated with the application and signs to say all documentation has been seen. The Regional Vetting Process should always be followed.
5. The names of all those who attended will be forwarded to the agencies providing the mandatory introductory pre-registration training in the three core areas of safeguarding, first aid and health and safety and attendance at this training will run alongside the application process.
6. The team secretary creates a file for the applicant and files all documentation as it arrives. A checklist sheet should be added to all files/folders in order to keep track of all paper work.
7. The team secretary ensures that the Enhanced Disclosure Applications for Access NI are countersigned by the lead/counter signatory and sends the Enhanced Disclosure applications to Access NI.
8. The team secretary requests character and health visiting references for households where there are children under 5 years. Trust and interagency checks are completed for all those living in the household and any others that are requiring vetting. The outcome of these checks is recorded on file.
9. Four weeks after the instigation of the vetting procedure the team secretary checks the file to ensure all documentation has been returned and issues reminders to ensure the required information is supplied. Checklist should be updated. Access NI checks to be stored confidentially.
10. Upon receipt of all documentation, the file is passed to the Senior Social Worker and allocated to the registering social worker. The registering social worker advises the team secretary who opens the file on Soscare in the social workers name.

11. Within 15 working days of allocation, the registering social worker contacts the applicant and makes a date to visit the applicants' home. Any arrangements made by phone should be followed up in writing. A copy of the short guide to Regional Child Protection Policy & Procedures should be sent out.
12. At the applicant's home, the social worker carries out interviews to determine the fitness of the applicant and the premises using the Report for Registration as a Childminder document. See also Appendix A. The social worker will discuss with the applicant and any other relevant parties, issues that may have arisen through the vetting process. (Please note in some Trusts, Assessment of Fitness of Premises is carried out by a Health Visitor).

If the applicant or any other person resident on the premises is disqualified under the Disqualification for Caring for Children Regulations, the applicant must be assessed and made aware of this and if they still wish to proceed the matter must come before an Early Years Panel for a decision to be made before the application can be progressed. The number of visits required will be determined by the issues that arise with vetting and safety issues that need addressed. A minimum of two visits is most likely.

13. The applicant should be advised in writing of any undue delay or difficulties which occur on either the part of the Trust or the applicant if the application proceeds beyond the 3 month time scale.
14. The registering social worker confirms that all outstanding issues have been addressed and all documentation is in order and on file and all training attended.
15. The registering social worker writes the assessment report which includes any requirements and recommendations. This is then forwarded to the team leader for approval.
16. If registration is approved the team secretary, in consultation with the social worker completes a Certificate of Registration.
17. The team secretary forwards the Certificate to the designated senior manager for signature. The signed copy is returned to the team secretary who issues to the applicant. A copy is held on file.
18. The Team secretary notifies any relevant departments of the registration eg Child Care Partnership and Family Support NI.
19. The public list of childminders is updated.
20. Soscare is updated by the team secretary.