

## APPROVAL OF CHILDMINDERS ASSISTANTS

### **Policy**

The Childminding and Day Care Standards for Children under Age 12 - Minimum Standards allow for a registered childminder to employ an assistant to assist them with the care of the minded children. The Standards go on to say in Standard 11 that "Where a childminder employs an assistant, the same ratios are met for any additional children. There is compliance with the Trusts registration decisions regarding the ages and total number of children up to a maximum of eight". The Standards also state that "The childminder supervises and is accountable for the work of any assistant". The Childminding and Day Care for Children Under age 12 - Minimum Standards Implementation Guidance goes on to determine two category's of childminders assistants.

Category 1 is where an assistant is employed to carry out short time tasks eg school runs. These assistants require to be vetted and receive pre-approval training in the mandatory core areas.

Category 2 is where an assistant is employed to work alongside the registered childminder on a consistent and substantial basis. This may enable the childminder to care for more children or for a child with particular needs. These assistants require to be vetted, receive pre-approval training in the mandatory core areas and undergo a Fit Person assessment.

### **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 Social Worker and passed to secretary).
2. The applicant is directed to the Childminding Assistants Application Form on the Trusts website or sent this by post along with all vetting documentation.
3. On return of the Application Form and all vetting documentation the team secretary forwards the applicant's details to the agency providing the 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.

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. The team secretary requests character references for the applicant and also Health Visiting reference if the applicant has a child under age 5 years. Trust and interagency checks are completed for the applicant. The outcome of these checks is recorded on file.
7. Upon receipt of all documentation, the folder is passed to the Senior Social Worker and applicants are allocated to a social worker. The social worker advises the team secretary who opens on Soscare in the social workers name.
8. Within 15 working days of allocation, the social worker contacts the applicant and makes arrangements to meet with the applicant either at the applicant's home, the registered childminders home or the Early Years office. The social worker also consults with the Registered Childminder to confirm the role of the assistant.
9. Category 1 applicants. The social worker interviews the applicant using the Report for Approval of a Childminders Assistant - Category 1 Form.

Category 2 applicants. The social worker interviews the applicant using the Report for Approval of a Childminders Assistant - Category 2 Form. Consideration should be given to the childminders ability to manage more children and an assistant, the size of the home and the arrangement for transporting children.

If the applicant 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.

10. The social worker confirms that all outstanding issues have been addressed and all documentation is in order and in the folder and all training attended.
11. The social worker forwards the completed Report for approval of a Childminders Assistant to the Senior Social Worker for approval (or presented to the next early Years Panel).
12. If approval is granted, the team secretary, in consultation with the social worker, makes amendments to the Childminders Certificate of Registration.
13. A letter of Approval of an Assistant is forwarded to the registered childminder.

14. 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 registered childminder. A copy is held on file.
15. The Team secretary notifies any relevant departments of the approval eg Child Care Partnership and Family Support NI.
16. Soscare is updated by the Team secretary.