

1 minute guide: DBS and Suitability checks

What is a DBS check

The EYFS states 3.10 Childminders and any assistants must be suitable; they must have the relevant training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. Childminders must also ensure any person who may have regular contact with children (for example, someone living or working on the same premises where the childminding is being provided), must also be suitable

The EYFS states 3.9 Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable; they must have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. Providers must take appropriate steps to verify qualifications, including in cases where physical evidence cannot be produced. Providers must also ensure that any person who may have regular contact with children (for example, someone living or working on the same premises the early years provision is provided), is suitable

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in England and Wales provide criminal background checks known as DBS Checks to provide safeguarding reassurance when recruiting people for roles in nurseries and early years childcare. The DBS should help to identify people who might pose a risk to children. DBS checks must form an essential part of deciding whether a prospective employee is suitable to work in your setting.

Who needs a DBS check?

To ensure that children are safe an enhanced DBS check with barred lists is necessary for all those working in childcare and anyone who works in the setting who has regular contact with the children.

If you work within a nursery setting a DBS check would be required for all staff members, for example the manager, owner, committee members, nursery practitioners, volunteer, student, apprentice, cleaner or cook. It would be useful to use the tool below to check which is right for you and the setting.

[Find out which DBS check is right for your employee - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Committee-run childcare – what you need to know - Ofsted: early years \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk)

A DBS check will form part of your safer recruitment procedures and ensures that staff and volunteers are recruited safely and fairly, and that children's safety is being considered at every stage of the process. Alongside this you are required to gain suitability checks to support part of this process this can also be found in the links above.

Suitability checks for childminders

3.11 Ofsted, or a childminder's CMA, is responsible for checking the suitability of: The childminder, every other person looking after children on the premises, every other person aged 16 and over living or working on the same premises the childminding is being provided.

If you are a childminder looking after children at home, then any adults who live with you or work there regularly during childcare hours will also need a DBS check. This could include your partner, cleaner, housemates, lodgers and children over the age of 16. Find out more about this by clicking on the link [people connected with Ofsted-registered childcare](#)

Ofsted will also need to check a person even if they only live there for some of the time. For example, They are studying at university but come
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back during the holidays, stay in the childminder's home regularly (such as if you split their time between 2 households). This applies even if you live elsewhere most of the time or are not there during childcare hours.

Childminder do not need to obtain DBS checks for

- frequent visitor (for example, you are a relative or friend who comes round for lunch once a week)
- people who stay overnight with a childminder occasionally (for example, a friend sleeping over)
- people who are completing building work or repairs in the childminder's home
- people who work in the home outside childcare hours, so there are no children there (for example, cleaning in the evenings or at weekends)

The Childminder is responsible for these people whilst in their home and must ensure there is no unsupervised contact with the children.

Alongside the DBS check, Ofsted also carry out suitability checks for anyone who lives or works on the premises who is over 16 years old. [Childminders: report new adults in the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childminders-report-new-adults-in-the-home)

Ofsted send childminder assistants and family members a suitability letter once they have finished their checks. You should not include them in the ratios, or leave them alone with the children until they get this letter.

What information do I need to record?

Other than childminders, providers must record information from the DBS including the reference number, the date a check was obtained and details of who obtained it.

Can staff start without a DBS

If an early year setting allows an individual to start work before their DBS certificate is available, they should ensure that the person **does not** have unsupervised contact with children at any time, or be included in ratio or carry out any intimate care routine or first aid. They must also be in the process of obtaining a DBS certificate for that individual. Unsupervised contacts means that they should never be left alone with children and be fully supervised at all times by a member of staff. For Childminders who work alone this will mean if you leave the room they must leave too.

However due to the nature of these roles, you may be naturally more cautious about putting anyone in contact with vulnerable children without first obtaining the proper disclosure information. Any issues that occur as a result of you starting work early could create significant safeguarding concerns.

Registering on the update service?

You may be able to use an existing DBS certificate if you have an enhanced certificate for a childcare role.

It will have to say it's for a home-based position if you are applying to be a childminder.

We can usually accept existing certificates of this type if you're signed up to the DBS update service.

If you're not signed up to the DBS update service, we can only accept your certificate if both apply Ofsted will only accept a DBS certificate within 3 months of the issue date. Because of this, Ofsted strongly recommends that you sign up for the DBS update service to keep your certificate up to date. This costs £13 a year. Further information can be found here [DBS Update Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childminders-report-new-adults-in-the-home)

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