

The difference between registering with Ofsted or a childminder agency (CMA)

August 2022

So, you've made the leap and decided to become a childminder. But who should you register with?

Did you know that childminders can register with either Ofsted or a childminder agency (CMA)? This blog explains the main differences between the two, to help you decide which route you want to take.

What are CMAs?

CMAs are private companies that register childminders. They choose their own business model and create a bespoke service for their childminders. More information about [what CMAs are responsible for and what they have to do legally](#) is on GOV.UK.

Ofsted inspects CMAs, and you can find all of the reports for the agencies we have inspected so far [on our reports website](#). CMAs can make use of two official Ofsted logos, one which says they are registered and one which says they have been inspected and have been judged to be effective. We inspect them to make sure that they are complying with the regulatory requirements. We do not inspect individual childminders registered with agencies – that's down to the agency.

You can find the list of [CMAs open to applications](#) on the Department for Education (DfE)'s website.

The [Foundation Years website](#) also includes further information about registering with an agency and becoming a CMA.

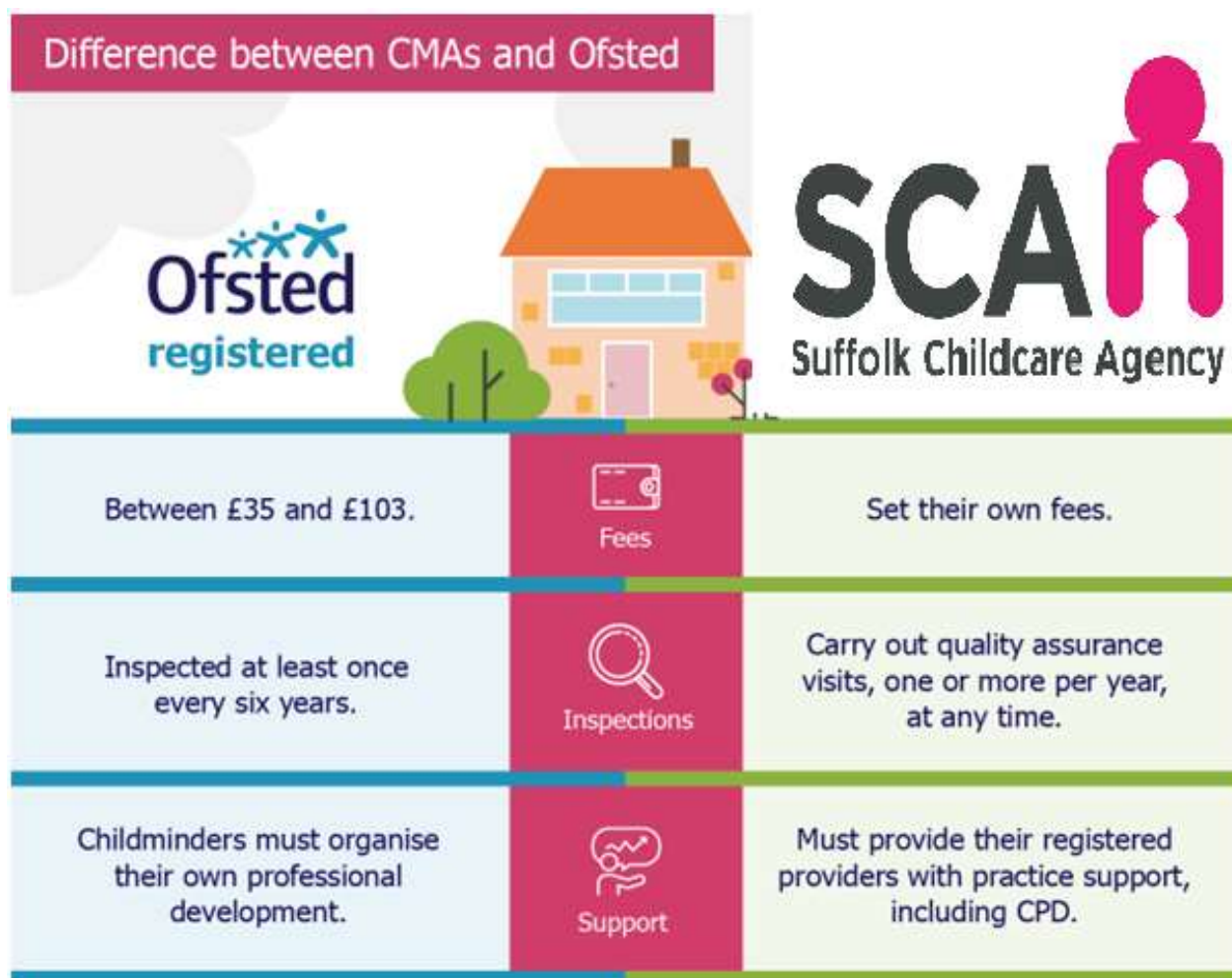
If you decide you want to register with a CMA, you might want to contact each of them to figure out which one will work for you. CMAs have their own fee structures and offer different levels of support, including administrative and financial support to help you get started as a new business quickly.

Differences between registering with Ofsted and a CMA

If you register with Ofsted, you will organise your own support, finances, record-keeping and all general administrative tasks involved with managing your own business. You will have to pay an annual fee and you will receive your first inspection usually within 30 months, and then every 6 years afterwards as a maximum. There are no additional costs for registering with Ofsted.

If you register with an agency, you'll still be a self-employed childminder running your own business, but you'll have additional support when it comes to regulation, safeguarding,

finance, continuing professional development (CPD), marketing and finding new clients. Partnering with an agency typically involves paying a monthly fee or a percentage of your earnings in exchange for this support.



We are always striving for continuous improvement, and so we regularly meet with representatives from CMAs along with the DfE to improve our ways of working together. You can keep up to date on new developments through the [Organisation for Childminder Agencies \(OFCMA\) website](#) or on [Ofsted's Childcare Registration Facebook page](#).

What CMAs have told us

Some of the CMAs that are registered with us have shared a bit about their agency below: **Claire Chapman**, [SCA Childcare](#)

'SCA Childcare aims to offer parents high-quality childcare by registering quality childminders and assistants on domestic and non-domestic premises. We provide regular support, training, and networking opportunities to SCA registered childminders and other professionals working in the childcare sector.'