



# ncma and home-based childcare





## NCMA – today and tomorrow

It's an exciting time to be part of the National Childminding Association. As the ten-year childcare strategy rolls out, the government has made it clear that registered childminders will play a key role in helping local authorities secure childcare places for every working family. For almost three decades, NCMA – the only national charity that speaks on behalf of home-based childcare professionals – has worked with government and registered childminders to put childminding on the agenda. Our challenge is to ensure that childminding moves to the forefront of childcare provision.



Registered childminders and other home-based professionals have a huge amount to contribute, whether that's wraparound care for extended schools, support for children with disabilities or flexible care for families. Today's registered childminders are trained professionals who have chosen childminding as a career in its own right. From all walks of life, they share a commitment to the value of one-to-one care of children in a home environment.

Now, more than ever, parents need real choice when faced with the critical decision of who will take care of their children. Since 1977, NCMA has helped to drive up standards in home-based childcare to give families flexible childcare that's second to none. We will continue to develop and train registered childminders and other home-based childcare professionals so that children receive the quality of care they deserve.

Liz Bayram  
Chief Executive

# The role of NCMA

The National Childminding Association (NCMA) is the leading national charity and membership organisation supporting home-based childcarers in England and Wales. We work in partnership with government and other childcare organisations to ensure that registered childminders, over-7s childminders and nannies have access to services, training, information and support. On a day-to-day basis this means that we:

“Being a member of NCMA is great. I’m just a phone call away from friendly, practical advice any time I need it.”  
Mark Shepherd,  
Registered Childminder

- promote quality home-based childcare nationally and locally;
- work with central government and the Welsh Assembly Government to make sure our members’ views are heard;
- produce and sell products, tailored to members’ needs, that help them do a professional job;
- set up innovative community projects, for example, to offer services to teenage parents;
- support and encourage childminding groups;
- offer consultancy to local authorities;
- represent home-based childcare on many childcare interest groups and to other organisations.



- invest any surpluses from our work back into home-based childcare;
- campaign on issues members feel strongly about;
- offer essential services such as public liability insurance and legal representation tailored to members’ needs;
- develop and deliver specialist training and quality-assurance packages for home-based childcarers;
- give individual members help through our regional offices, free information line and specialist helplines;
- work with local organisations to recruit new childminders;

NCMA was founded by childminders, parents and local authority workers in 1977. It now has nearly 50,000 members, over 400 staff and offices throughout England and Wales, with childcarers involved as volunteers at every level.



## Home-based childcare

Home-based childcare is provided by registered childminders, over-7s childminders or nannies, who look after children from all walks of life in a family home.

Childminders are usually self-employed and work in their own homes caring for children, whereas nannies work in the homes of the families who employ them.

There are 75,000 registered childminders in England and Wales and 50,000 of them are members of NCMA. Together, they care for over 360,000 children.



“My childminder cared for my two children for 15 years. I went to work each day feeling confident that she was doing everything and more that a parent would do to keep my children safe, stimulated and happy.”  
Eileen Donnelly, Parent

## The benefits for children and families

**Focused individual care** – because childminders and nannies look after small groups of children they can devote more time to each child than carers in other settings. This is particularly beneficial for babies and toddlers learning to walk, talk and feed themselves, and for children with any additional needs.

**Consistency of care** – children often stay with the same registered childminder or nanny from babyhood until secondary school and can form a close relationship with their carer.

**Flexible hours** – childminders and nannies often work hours outside a nine-to-five pattern,

including early in the morning, late in the evening, overnight and at weekends.

**Home comforts** – children are looked after in their own home or in a home-from-home environment, and can easily take part in local clubs and activities in their own community.

**Real-life lessons** – children can take part in everyday domestic activities like shopping, gardening or cooking, which are great ways to learn new skills. Better still, registered childminders can choose to become accredited, meaning they are able to provide the free early education sessions funded by the government.

## Registered childminders

Childminders who care for children under the age of 8 must, by law, be registered and regularly inspected. In England, childminders register with Ofsted, while in Wales, the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales registers and inspects childminders. To be registered, a childminder must:

- demonstrate that they meet national standards for childminding;
- show a childcare inspector how they make their home (and garden) safe and suitable for children;
- have taken introductory childminding training;
- have an up-to-date certificate in first-aid for babies and children;
- have had a health check;
- hold public liability insurance;
- have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (as must every other person over-16 who lives or works in the childminder's home);
- look after a maximum of six children under 8-years-old, including a maximum of three children under-5, including their own children.



## Over-7s childminder and nannies

Unlike registered childminders, nannies and over-7s childminders – who care only for children aged 8 or over – do not have to be registered or inspected. However, in England, they can choose to be approved under the government's Childcare Approval Scheme. To be approved, over-7s childminders and nannies must:

- complete introductory childcare training;
- have a first-aid certificate for people who work with children;
- have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.

## NCMA's Quality Standards

Because over-7s childminders and nannies aren't governed by national childcare standards (unlike registered childminders), NCMA has made it compulsory for these members to follow a model of good practice: NCMA's Quality Standards. These standards are all related to promoting children's wellbeing, keeping children safe and having professional childcare practices. By signing up to these standards, members are able to demonstrate their commitment to providing a first-class childcare service.





## Putting home-based childcare in the picture

NCMA members belong to the only national organisation that aims to put home-based childcare at the heart of childcare provision. In the past five years, in our quest to champion home childcarers, we have:

- Developed the Diploma in Home-based Childcare, a nationally recognised level 3 qualification giving childminders and nannies a clear route to continue their professional development;
- Successfully lobbied government, with the backing of our members, to revise the national childminding standards to ban childminders and their family members from smoking around children;
- Launched a membership package specially tailored to the needs of nannies, providing them with the kind of professional support and services that we have been offering childminders for nearly three decades;
- Pioneered two quality-assurance schemes for childminders – NCMA Children Come First and NCMA Quality First – which have both received endorsement by central government as schemes making a real difference to improving childcare standards;
- Worked with government to ensure that home-based childcarers are a central part of integrated children's centres and extended and community-focused schools;
- Set up [www.childcareplaces.co.uk](http://www.childcareplaces.co.uk), a free online vacancy service matching NCMA members with parents;
- Created new materials to help childminders and nannies looking after disabled children;
- Secured a contract with the Welsh Assembly Government to deliver comprehensive training and business support to childminders in Wales;
- Promoted home-based childcare across England and Wales by collaborating with high profile organisations like I Can, the leading charity for children with speech and language difficulties.

## Working in partnership

NCMA ensures that the many organisations responsible for childcare provision can benefit from the flexible care that childminders provide. We have developed NCMA Children Come First – a quality assurance scheme for childminding networks. These networks work in partnership with, or are set up by, organisations requiring childcare.



Organisations currently working with NCMA Children Come First networks include local authorities, employers, NHS trusts, social services, integrated children's centres, extended and community-focused schools, emergency services and many more.

These organisations appreciate that childminding networks can offer reliable childcare at little capital cost. Networks can also tailor the care provided, for example, subsidised childcare for a particular employer. And, because NCMA Children Come First network childminders are quality-assured through regular monitoring and support, organisations can feel confident in the quality of care that they provide. (Turn over to read more about NCMA's Children Come First networks.)

## Campaigning for change

NCMA is continually lobbying to get a better deal for childminders and the children they support. Recent successes include persuading central government to revise the national standards to prohibit childminders from smacking children, and making introductory training for childminders compulsory.

"Because NHS staff provide a 24-hour service, they need childcare that's highly flexible. Registered childminders fit the bill perfectly. NCMA made it easy to set up a network of childminders who could meet the specific needs of our staff. The service they offered was excellent."

Susan Kenny, Working Family Adviser, Wirral NHS

## Raising awareness

Regular press coverage and training seminars across England and Wales help to promote the valuable work of childminders and nannies. And in June each year, as part of National Childminding Week, members put the spotlight on home-based childcare by organising fun events in their local communities.

Members also get together once a year for NCMA's Annual Conference. This is a great chance for childminders and nannies to network and share ideas with other childcare professionals, and to have an influence on the running of the association.



# Improving the quality of home-based childcare

All parents want the best for their children. NCMA's mission is to improve the quality of home-based childcare so that more children get a good start in life and more parents feel confident in the quality of care their children receive.

"The early years sector is always changing so it's vital to keep training. When it comes to children's welfare, you can never learn enough."

Bernie Taylor,  
Registered Childminder

NCMA leads the field in developing and delivering training and quality assurance schemes for childminders. Three major initiatives are:



## Diploma in Home-based Childcare

This nationally recognised qualification, developed in association with the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE), provides the underpinning knowledge for NVQ level 3 in Children's Care, Learning and Development. Most childminders in England and all childminders in Wales, along with many other home-based childcarers, achieve the first of the five units of the diploma as part of their registration or approval. As a result of NCMA's pioneering work, childminders and nannies now have a clear training path to follow and their own nationally recognised award.





### NCMA Children Come First childminding networks

NCMA Children Come First is a nationally recognised quality assurance scheme for childminding networks. A childminding network is made up of a group of registered childminders who are supported by a network coordinator. Over two-thirds of the childminding networks in England and Wales have been quality-assured by the scheme.

Before a network can be approved and call itself an NCMA Children Come First network, it must have shown an independent assessor how it meets the NCMA Children Come First criteria. The criteria relates to good practice, the standard of childcare offered, the provision of early years education and how well the coordinator supports the childminders involved. Networks have to be reapproved every three years to keep their NCMA Children Come First status.

Childminders wishing to join an NCMA Children Come First network must show the coordinator that they meet the NCMA Children Come First Quality Standards. If accepted on to the network, the network coordinator will continue to visit them regularly to make sure they continue to meet these standards and to help the childminder identify how they can improve their service even further. Read more about the scheme at [www.ncmacf.org.uk](http://www.ncmacf.org.uk).

### NCMA Quality First

NCMA Quality First is our quality assurance scheme for individual childminders. It has been developed specially for childminders who can work flexibly, filling in a portfolio at convenient times, helping them plan and develop their business to stay competitive and continuously improve the quality of their service. Many local authorities fund childminders to take part in NCMA Quality First, recognising that quality assured childcare is not only good for business, but good for families too. You can find out more about the scheme at [www.ncmaqualityfirst.co.uk](http://www.ncmaqualityfirst.co.uk).



## Working for NCMA

NCMA employs over 400 members of staff, with 40 offices across both England and Wales. Staff at the central office in Bromley, Kent manage members' needs, produce publications, develop training programmes and liaise with the press, while regional staff develop and promote home-based childcare locally.

"I've always enjoyed working for NCMA. My personal development has been great, from being a childminder, to committee member and then a member of staff. It's very much an empowering organisation for personal and professional growth."

Pat Evans, Development Manager for Wales



### National awards

In 2006 NCMA was ranked one of the UK's top 25 companies to work for, in an annual poll commissioned by the Sunday Times. We were the first early years charity to gain the Investors in People (IiP) standard, which we continue to hold. And in 2005, JobCentre Plus awarded NCMA Two Ticks, in recognition of our commitment to the employment, training and career development of disabled people.



# NCMA regions and offices

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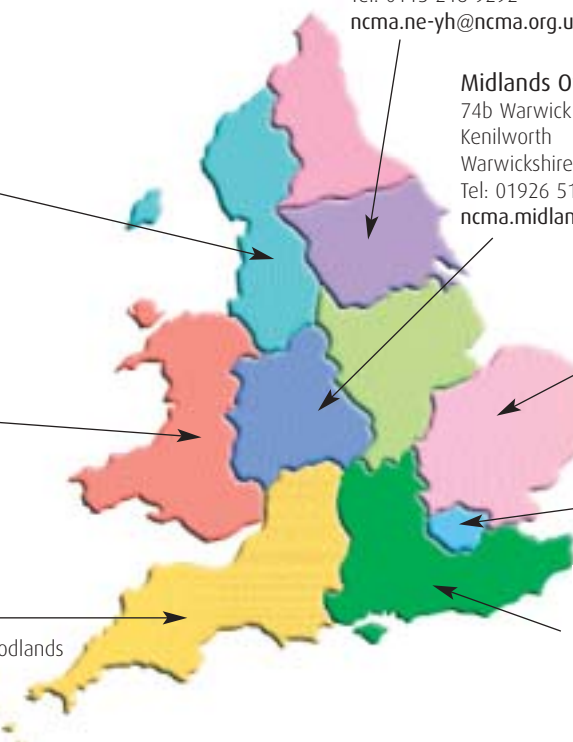
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"I like to play with toys.  
I like to play games.  
I like to colour.  
I like to play with my friends.  
But most of all,  
I like my childminder, Sharon."

Oliver Beckett, age 5





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