

Childminders

Tips for marketing and advertising your business

As a registered childminder, you are responsible for ensuring that your business is sustainable. Marketing is about ensuring you get the right type of service to the right people at the right price. Only by selling the benefits of your childminding service and raising your profile will you reach the people you wish to and deliver the service you want.

Being a childminder is a valuable and very special vocation. Parents and carers trust you with their children. The children you care for need help, support and care, not to mention your unending attention and patience.

STEP ONE: Here are some important initial considerations:

Who will be your customers?

It is important to think about the area you live in and any areas that are easily accessible by road or rail links.

- Find out about large employers in your area
- Is there a large retail complex or office complex in the area?
- What hours do employees work?
- How much do other local childminders charge?

What is the level of demand?

- What is the general area like?
- Are there lots of new housing estates aimed at families?
- Are you close to lots of schools?
- Are there any large day nurseries nearby?
- Are there lots of Out of School clubs nearby?

You will need to tailor what you offer to what is needed. For example, if there lots of Out of School clubs in your area, there may be less demand for out of school childminding places and you may need to tailor your service for pre-school children.

STEP TWO: Here are a few steps that you can take to successfully advertise your service and attract new families:

Local register and Childcare Directory

The council holds a register of childcare providers within the Family Information Service (the Childcare Directory) and you are entitled to a free listing in the Childcare Directory on the council website. Please complete and return the database form included in this pack to be included on local registers- you are able to withhold certain information if you wish to do so (e.g. home address).

Work together

Speak with other childcare providers. Parents looking for a place may approach childminders/settings who do not have vacancies, so they may recommend yours. Participate in local childminder networks/groups and join the Herefordshire Childminding Association: <https://www.charitychoice.co.uk/herefordshire-childminding--association-88979> (they also have a Facebook page).

Use the grapevine

Let parents know about your vacancy, they in turn will talk to other parents and make recommendations.

Get noticed

Put a card in the newsagent's window or on local public noticeboards. Consider noticeboards in doctors' surgeries, libraries, community centres and village halls.

Dare to be different

You'll be competing against other childcare providers. Try and make your service stand out by adding points that make it unique, eg qualifications, out of school care, overnight, unsociable hours etc.

Will you name your business?

As a childminder, you do not have to give your childminding business a name, but you can do so if you wish. You do not need to register your business name but can if you choose to. It is important that you make sure that your name isn't the same as another registered business. You can do this by checking on the Companies House website.. It also shouldn't be too similar because you will be asked to change the name if someone makes a complaint.

Advertise yourself

- Yell free listing: 0800 777415
- Thomson Directory: <https://www.thomsonlocal.com/product/freelisting>
- Community/Church Newsletters: you can often advertise in these for a small donation
- Local newspapers (usually for a fee)

In general

You can start to advertise your childminding business before you register with Ofsted, providing you don't indicate that you are registered already. Consider terms such as "soon to be a registered childminder" or "soon to be registered with Ofsted" or "currently going through the inspection process with Ofsted". You cannot start to childmind until you have received your childminding Registration Certificate.

When advertising keep the message short and mention key points such as age range, hours, etc. Build trust by mentioning that you are Ofsted registered, qualified/experienced and currently have children in your care. You can also say if you are registered with the Local Authority to take children on Nursery Education Funding (2 year olds/3-4 year olds/universal 15 hours/extended 30 hours).