

## **RAG inspections**

A RAG inspection is a Local Authority inspection - it has nothing to do with Ofsted although you will be able to use it to show evidence to your Ofsted inspector of continued professional development (CPD).

RAG stands for 'red', 'amber' and 'green' and relates to the outcome of your inspection...

- Red - you must do something quickly to improve your provision
- Amber - you need to put together an action plan for the future
- Green - this area of provision is fine

Some childminders are required to have a RAG inspection - this will depend on your Local Authority and / or whether you are working as an accredited childminder.

A RAG inspection will usually take place after you have worked through a pre-inspection document which asks you questions to check that required documentation, equipment, resources etc are all in place. However, for some childminders, there is no pre-inspection document and Local Authority inspectors simply come to their provisions and check their compliance with the requirements.

During the RAG inspection, the inspector will need access to your files and documents - however, confidential information such as completed contracts should be stored securely for data protection purposes and you should only show blank samples. There might be other documents personal to your business which you are not happy with the inspector seeing - you should discuss this on the day and work out a compromise if necessary.

At the end of the inspection, your inspector will give you grades depending on evidence they have seen on the day. If they do not see evidence they will not be able to grade you highly, so make sure you are able to provide written documentation where possible. Along with the grades you should be given an action plan for the future.

Action plans are mentioned in the Ofsted inspectors guidance as important for showing evidence of CPD - so you should use these in a positive way, ensuring you work through the suggested actions and use them to improve your provision and the ways you work. If you do not feel an action is necessary or justified, then you should take the opportunity to reflect on it and discuss your non compliance at your next RAG inspection.

If you do not understand any of the actions you have been given, speak to your inspector on the day or request a meeting at a later time and ask for further guidance - it is very important that you see these action points as positive and that you use them to enhance and inspire you in the future.

Some RAG ratings are used for nurseries as well as childminders and many childminders report feeling cheated at the end of their inspection because they found it impossible to have the same space, resources, equipment, documentation etc as a big nursery provision. If this happens to you be prepared to complain! Changes will not be made unless childminders make their voices heard.