



Purpose	National Action Plan for Childminding – Steering Group – Meeting 5
Date	8 th June 2022
Venue	WebEx
	Minutes
Attendance	In attendance: Sharon Boles (National Childminding Coordinator, DCEDIY), Anne-Marie Brooks (Chair, DCEDIY), Michelle Grant (Childminding Development Officer), Clare Downey (National Parents Council Primary), Graeme McAlister (Scottish Childminding Association), Fiona McDonnell (Tusla EY Inspectorate), Martina McGovern (Better Start), Sinéad Moran (Childminder), Bernadette Orbinski Burke (Childminding Ireland), Karen O’Sullivan (CCI), Becky Sullivan Lynch (Childminder), Marc Bailie (Department of Health, Northern Ireland), Treasa Quigley (CCC Childminding Lead), Toby Wolfe (DCEDIY) Secretariat: Julia Pycinska-Taylor (DCEDIY) Apologies: Saoirse Brady (Children’s Rights Alliance)

Minutes/Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

It was noted that Saoirse Brady has moved on from her position with Children’s Rights Alliance and DCEDIY will be writing to Tanya Ward CEO to seek a replacement.

The Chair thanked Sharon Boles for her work as National Childminding Coordinator over the last year and congratulated Karen O’Sullivan on her appointment as the National Childminding Coordinator.

Advisory Group Updates

- **Stakeholder Engagement, Communications & Consultation Advisory Group (SB)**

SB noted that the SECC Advisory Group are in the process of developing an RfT for a stakeholder engagement strategy. The next meeting of the SECC Advisory Group will be on 14th June.

- **Funding & Financial Supports Advisory Group and Regulation & Inspection Advisory Group (SB)**

SB noted that the two new advisory groups’ inaugural meetings will be held in the week starting 20th June and that the invitations had been sent out.

- **Training and Supports Advisory Group (TQ)**



TQ shared a presentation on an update from the Training and Supports Advisory Group. The Advisory Groups are supported by the CMDO team, which has recently expanded from 6 to 12, with each CMDO working across 2 or 3 counties.

CMDOs and CCCs have started rolling out small online information sessions on a regional basis. In sessions so far, 111 childminders registered, 53 attended, and 27 responded to their survey: 82% wanted their contact details to be added to the CCC database, and 53% wanted more information regarding training. Two more information sessions are planned in the short-term.

The foundation training programme has started to be developed and the first consultation with childminders has been held: there was robust conversation with an agreement on getting the language right. Participants in the consultation suggested that authentic pictures and videos were a key training tool for childminders.

A workshop on Core Funding for childminders is nearly at the stage of finalisation with the Department. The CMDO team will deliver the workshop with CCCs online both regionally and locally.

983 childminders engaged with CCCs in the four month period between January and April; in that period 31 childminders had ceased engagement and 81 new childminders engaged, bringing the total at the end of April to 1033.

Actions:

- Data on where the 1033 childminders are located around the country will be shared with the Steering Group by the CCC Childminding Lead.
- CMI will share data with DCEDIY to help understand the reason for childminders ceasing operations.
- The Steering Group will have the opportunity to review the proposed training content when developed.

NAPC DCEDIY progress report Q2 2022 (SB)

SB presented the Progress Report for Q2 2022, focusing on two items in particular.

- The Childminding Development Grant 2022 will be launched on 9th June with a total budget of €250,000. While the NAPC commits to a review of the CMDG, the grant will remain largely the same for 2022, and the review will take place once the Advisory Group on Funding and Financial Supports is in place. For 2022, the CMDG will for the first time allow for the purchase of small-scale IT to support childminders' engagement with online training and with online consultation processes as part of the NAPC.
- The Children First Foundation Programme specifically for childminders is nearly ready to launch. This programme was developed with specific childminding scenarios. Four Children First trainers will be upskilling in this area. The programme will be rolled out in Q3. The scope to train more childminders to deliver the Children First programme will continue to be considered.

Actions:

- The Funding and Financial Supports Advisory Group will review the Childminding Development Grant for future years.



National Policy Updates (TW)

TW updated the Steering Group on Core Funding. Partnership for the Public Good noted that, in principle, Core Funding could be available to registered childminders – though some modifications may be needed. The opening up of Core Funding to the small cohort of childminders currently registered this September provides an opportunity to examine Core Funding in a childminding context and determine modifications needed, if any. He informed the Steering Group that more public information is to be issued next week and over the coming weeks. TW noted that while very few childminders are registered with Tusla and eligible for Core Funding at the moment, Core Funding presents an opportunity to raise awareness among childminders of the benefit of coming into regulation.

Work is underway through a Joint Labour Committee to agree new minimum pay for early years educators and school-age childcare practitioners. TW noted that this relates to payment rates for employees rather than childminders.

The Review of the Operating Model has been completed and published. The Review proposes establishment of a statutory agency to take over many core functions that have been carried out until now by Pobal and the City/County Childcare Committees. The establishment of a new agency is expected to take several years.

Nurturing Skills, the Workforce Plan for the sector, published last December, contains many commitments around the development of a CPD infrastructure. A monitoring committee will be established in the coming weeks.

TW also provided an update on Ukrainian refugees: 36,000 Ukrainians have arrived over the last few months. While the number of Ukrainian children seeking a place in ELC settings is so far relatively small, numbers are expected to rise in September with the new ECCE programme year. DCEDIY are working with CCCs to put supports in place for refugees and are actively looking at what further supports are needed. CD noted that the National Parents Council have launched a Ukrainian helpline which is available and free for ELC settings requiring translation work.

Actions:

- DCEDIY will examine whether data on childminders costs and incomes, arising from the Sector Profile linked to Core Funding, can assist the work of the Advisory Group on Funding and Financial Supports.
- DCEDIY will examine Core Funding in a childminding context and determine modifications needed.
- DCEDIY will consider feedback from childminders on difficulties for childminders in responding to survey questions in the Sector Profile linked to Core Funding.

Childminding Ireland (CMI) presentation (BOB)

BOB delivered a presentation on the work of Childminding Ireland. She noted that CMI is the only organisation in the country solely focused on childminding. It was noted that CMI supported the Working Group that fed directly into the development of the NAPC, and that CMI representatives are actively engaged in the Steering and Advisory Groups.

BOB explained that the work of CMI is continuously changing and evolving, and that quality assurance continues to improve: Garda vetting, paediatric first aid training, Child Safeguarding etc. are all membership



criteria for CMI. CMI has gone from 700 childminders to 2500 childminding contacts and has also begun to work more closely with parents using childminding services while continuing to focus on its outreach to childminders. In terms of training, BOB explained that CMI provide courses in paediatric first aid, manual handling, and provide webinars that include nutrition and self-care. CMI's business development includes daytime helplines manned by former childminders, and out-of-hours helplines manned by working childminders. CMI offers discounted insurance and discounted cost of training. CMI produces research including an annual survey and sponsored a PhD on childminding. CMI also advocates for childminding on a national level.

Actions:

- In response to a query raised in discussion, DCEDIY will gather and share data with the Steering Group on the number of childminders taking part in the National Childcare Scheme.

AOB

There was no other business.

Date for next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th September at 5pm.