



Purpose	National Action Plan for Childminding – Steering Group – Meeting 6
Date	7 th September
Venue	WebEx
	Minutes
Attendance	<p>In attendance: Karen O’Sullivan (National Childminding Coordinator, DCEDIY), Anne-Marie Brooks (Chair, DCEDIY), Michelle Grant (Childminding Development Officer), Clare Downey (National Parents Council Primary), Julie Ahern (Children’s Rights Alliance), Fiona McDonnell (Tusla EY Inspectorate), Martina McGovern (Better Start), Sinéad Moran (Childminder), Bernadette Orbinski Burke (Childminding Ireland), Becky Sullivan Lynch (Childminder), Treasa Quigley (CCC Childminding Lead), Toby Wolfe (DCEDIY)</p> <p>Secretariat: Julia Pycinska-Taylor (DCEDIY)</p> <p>Apologies: Graeme McAlister (Scottish Childminding Association), Marc Bailie (Department of Health, Northern Ireland)</p>

The Chair welcomed the Group and in particular the new Children’s Rights Alliance representative and the new Childminding Coordinator.

Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting (8th June) were reviewed. It was noted that a few typos had been present in the original draft minutes circulated to the Steering Group members, and that another copy with tracked changes, for ease of reference, had been sent out the week beforehand. The minutes were approved.

Matters Arising

Amongst the matters arising, data had been checked with Pobal in response to a request for the number of childminders taking part in the National Childcare Scheme; currently 37 childminders have a NCS contract with DCEDIY, up from 34 last year (to be able to provide the NCS subsidy, these childminders must be Tusla-registered).

Another matter arising was a request for updated CCC data on the location of over 1,000 CCC-engaged childminders; the Childminding Coordinator shared a breakdown of the total number of childminders at the end of May, June, and July per county. By the end of July, there were 1075 childminders (up from 1057 in May) spread across all 30 CCC areas. Updates on this figure will be reported in future meetings.

The Childminding Development Grant 2022 round is nearing completion. 218 grants have been approved; Cavan CCC are now awaiting return of receipts to issue payments.



Childminding Ireland will share data with DCEDIY on why childminders cease operations.

Tusla EY Inspectorate provided updated data on Tusla-registered childminders: 74 childminders were registered in June; 1 additional childminder registered in July and 1 in August.

Advisory Group Updates

○ **Training and Supports Advisory Group**

Work is continuing on the foundation training. It is envisaged that a broad outline of the content will be presented to the Steering Group at its next quarterly meeting. A tendering process is underway for an e-learning developer, which will work with DCEDIY to turn the training content into online / blended training format once the Steering Group approve the Advisory Group's proposal for the training programme.

○ **Regulation & Inspection Advisory Group**

The Regulation and Inspection Advisory Group has now been established. The Advisory Group has agreed to a schedule of meetings and topics to the end of 2022. It is envisaged that the broad parameters of the new regulations will be presented to the Steering Group at its final meeting of 2022, or the first meeting of 2023.

○ **Stakeholder Engagement, Communications & Consultation Advisory Group**

The Advisory Group has agreed a transparent and consistent consultation process that can be used by the other Advisory Groups for consultation with childminders, pending the development of the Engagement, Communications and Consultation strategy.

○ **Funding and Financial Supports Advisory Group**

The Funding and Financial Supports Advisory Group has now been established. Seven different childminder profiles have been developed to be used by the Advisory Group to test against childminding supports.

NAPC progress report Q3 2022

The progress report, which had been circulated to the Steering Group in advance of the meeting, was presented. With regard to Quality Supports, it is envisaged that a piece of action research will commence next year to inform the development of local staffed childminding networks.

The Steering Group noted that a significant amount of work is under way. The next Steering Group meeting is expected to take longer due to a number of Advisory Group deliverables scheduled for presentation.

CMDO Team – Updates

The full team of 12 CMDOs is now in place since May. They cover 2-3 counties each, and their work also includes carrying out research for the Advisory Groups. The Facebook page is growing. The CMDO team provides information on Core Funding, school transitions, heatwave advice, etc. The team have developed information sessions on the business aspect of childminding in both a face-to-face and online format. Childminder-specific Core Funding Workshops were delivered, with nearly 50 childminders attending. The number of childminders engaging with CCCs had risen in July to 1075. Ukraine-related supports have been developed.



Cavan CCC is running the CMDG for 2022, with 218 grants approved. Childminders may apply for up to €1,000 over a two-year period.

There was a discussion around communication of Core Funding information to childminders. DCEDIY will revert to Pobal and bring to their attention issues surrounding Core Funding information for childminders not being available on the Hive.

National Policy Updates

Core Funding will commence on 15th September, as this is the day that the Employment Regulation Orders for the ELC/SAC sector will come into effect. 25 registered childminders have applied for Core Funding so far, and the numbers could rise. Core Funding will provide additional funding where a number of conditions have been fulfilled, which include reporting on actions to improve the quality of the service.

Implementation of Nurturing Skills is under way. A monitoring committee was recently established.

A review of ELC regulations is underway, with a view to possibly strengthening the Tusla Inspectorate's abilities to take a range of actions. The final stage of the review process in consultation with focus groups will take place later this month; proposals to reform legislation will be brought forward following this. This potential reform of the Child Care Act will inform the Regulation and Inspection Advisory Group's development of childminding regulations, and may be an opportunity to amend the childminding exemption in the Child Care Act.

It was noted that there has been a large amount of media coverage on the affordability of ELC/SAC. It was emphasised that the National Childcare Scheme remains the vehicle for affordable ELC/SAC and will continue to inform the National Action Plan for Childminding's policy approach.

Childminders reported experiencing delays and large amounts of paperwork when accessing the Core Funding application system. It was acknowledged that Core Funding had to be delivered in a short time frame and as a new system there have been some challenges for people engaging with it. Regarding NCS, it was noted that it is still a relatively new scheme and that commitments have been made to streamline it following recommendations of a review published in December 2021. Difficulties for childminders in completing the Sector Profile were noted; DCEDIY will revert to Pobal with this feedback.

The importance of consulting childminders was noted, as was the delay in the process of tendering for development of the Engagement, Communications and Consultation Strategy. It was agreed that engagement and consultation are of key importance. It was noted that extensive consultation has already shaped the Action Plan, and that there are childminders on all four Advisory Groups as well as the Steering Group. Research is being considered on engagement with hard-to-reach childminders, which will inform the engagement and communications strategy. It was agreed that consultation with childminders should continue in the short term, and it was noted that the current work of the Advisory Group on Engagement, Communications and Consultation will support this.

AOB

There was no other business.

Date for next meeting



The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 30th November at 5pm. A schedule of meetings for 2023 will be discussed, in addition to regulation- and training-related deliverables for the Steering Group's review.