



Purpose	National Action Plan for Childminding – Steering Group – Meeting 9 (Q1 2023)
Date	15 th March, 5.15pm-6.30pm
Venue	WebEx
	Minutes
Attendance	<p>In attendance: Anne-Marie Brooks (Chair, DCEDIY), Toby Wolfe (DCEDIY), Karen O’Sullivan (National Childminding Coordinator, DCEDIY), Treasa Quigley (CCC Childminding Lead), Michelle Grant (Childminding Development Officer), Martina McGovern (Better Start), Áine Brummell (CCI), Bernadette Orbinski Burke (Childminding Ireland), Julie Ahern (Children’s Rights Alliance), Fiona McDonnell (Tusla EY Inspectorate), Sinéad Moran (Childminder), Graeme McAlister (Scottish Childminding Association), Clare Downey (National Parents Council Primary), Becky Sullivan Lynch (Childminder)</p> <p>Secretariat: Julia Pycinska-Taylor (DCEDIY)</p> <p>Apologies: Marc Bailie (Department of Health, Northern Ireland)</p>

1. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting (23rd February) were agreed. There were no matters arising.

2. Revised proposal for approach to regulations

A revised version of the regulation proposals had been circulated, taking into account the Steering Group’s (SG) feedback from the previous meeting. A number of further suggestions were discussed, including:

- The possibility of redefining childminding to include the employment of assistants and working in the children’s home on a self-employed basis. It was noted that either of these would require a change in national policy as set out in the NAPC, which was agreed by Government. While the NAPC commits to the provision of supports for nannies and au pairs, it does not propose to regulate childminding in the child’s home, as the parent is regarded as the employer and the nanny/au pair cannot be seen as responsible for the child’s home environment. Furthermore, as the NAPC refers to a childminder operating single-handedly within the childminder’s family setting, a provider who employs staff to assist in the operation of the service could register with Tusla but would not count as a childminder under the NAPC.
- The possibility that, given that Core Funding can be used to pay for staff cover for training purposes, an Emergency Back-up Person could be permitted stand in for planned absences. It was noted that the definition of “emergency” will be examined further when drafting the regulations. The SG was also reminded that Core Funding for childminders is a pilot only at this point.
- Ensuring that the regulations proposal document includes a rationale for all statements, including where alternative approaches are set out as options for further consideration.

Agreed: The recommendations were approved pending the circulation of a revised version that includes rationales for alternative statements.

Action: The Regulation and Inspection Advisory Group (AG) will proceed with working with the Department to draft regulations. Draft regulations will return to the SG for approval before going to public consultation in the autumn.

3. Revised proposal for approach to development of foundation training



Based on the SG's feedback, it was proposed that much of the content developed for the Foundation Training Programme be moved to the QDP, with Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) arrangements in place. The Pre-Registration Training Programme would instead focus on the new regulations, which would be unfamiliar to both new and established childminders. The need to incorporate peer learning was emphasised by both the Training and Supports AG and at the childminder consultation. It was discussed that:

- The QDP would be mandatory; childminders would have a period of c. 3 years, throughout the transition phase, to complete it.
- It may be helpful to include information on the NCS and other funding schemes within the Pre-Registration Training Programme, to raise awareness of opportunities and the possibility of financial compliance checks for funding schemes.
- The QDP will be developed in collaboration with the Training and Supports Advisory Group; all material will go back to the SG for approval. The outlines of the QDP and the Pre-registration Training Programme will be developed side by side.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) are represented on the Training and Supports Advisory Group and will advise on RPL throughout. It is intended that the QDP is an accredited programme, and will be smaller in scale than the centre-based major award.

Agreed: The SG approved the proposal.

Action: The Training and Supports AG will begin work with DCEDIY on an outline of what the training will look like; it will only be possible to finalise details once the regulations are agreed.

4. NAPC progress report Q1 2023, including update from the CCC Childminding Lead

- The group was updated that an internal working group has been established to discuss budget requirements and to review implications for the different funding schemes of the move to regulate childminding.
- The 2023 round of the CMDG will be announced publicly early next month.
- The RFT for a communications consultancy has been published; it is envisaged that work on the Communications Strategy will start in Q2.
- There are currently 20 CMDOs in place, with a total of 23 planned. They will receive training in childminder-specific Always Children First Child Protection training starting in summer.
- CCC action research into staffed local networks has been tendered, NUIG were successful. A survey will be posted on the CMDO channels next week; it will be live for a week with an option to extend.
- It was suggested that the CCCs' contact details could be advertised to childminders in their area.

5. National policy updates

- A review of the Child Care Act 1991 is underway. It is intended that the new Child Care Amendment Bill will build in the planned transition process for removal of exemptions of childminders from regulation; subject to Government decision, it is expected that drafting will take place over the summer to go to the Oireachtas in the autumn/winter.
- The programme board overseeing planning for the new agency for ELC and SAC has been established.
- The review of the ECCE programme, including questions that relate to the role of childminders, is continuing.
- Work is underway on developing a comprehensive plan for the Irish language in the ELC sector. CMI sit on a mapping working group; a childminder questionnaire was conducted as part of the mapping exercise, to establish the numbers of Irish-medium childminding services and the supports they require.

6. AOB

There was no other business.

The SG will meet next on Wednesday 14th June at 5.15pm.