

## Models of ELC and SAC

The Terms of Reference for the Expert Group states the following:

“In delivering on these Terms, the Expert Group is not asked to propose changes to the current model of delivery (i.e. privately-operated provision) rather the Group should seek to further achieve policy objectives of quality, affordability, accessibility and contributing to addressing disadvantage in a privately-operated market through increased public funding and public management.”

The draft Guiding Principles of 21 February 2020 included the following for consideration:

“While recognising the reality of the existing “marketized” approach to ELC/SAC, the funding model should address any perceived deficiencies in this approach by supporting best use of available public management tools.”

The template on possible themes and issues of 21 February 2020 included the following for consideration:

“It seems that our terms of reference do not allow us to recommend that ELC/SAC be publicly provided. However, we could explore what policy goals would be delivered by public provision that are not being met by the marketized approach and which, if any, of these might be supported via the funding model?”

Should the State at least be responsible for availability/accessibility? This could encompass capacity planning, establishing market interest/gaps and actions to address gaps (e.g. via State build and lease and start-up supports). It could include a State provided/supported information source on provider fees, vacancies, parental reviews, etc. It could also cover centre closures, e.g. sourcing alternative places, alternative providers and supports for re-opening. It might even entail the State becoming a provider of last resort where necessary. “

For this agenda item, Expert Group members are asked to reflect on and be prepared to discuss what a public system or publically funded system might look like in order to clarify the perceived benefits.

The following issues, including advantages and disadvantages, should be considered for discussion:

- Employment in a public model
- Ownership in a public model
- Management in a public model
- Profit in a public model
- Fees in a public model
- Quality in a public model
- Oversight and accountability in a public model

For consideration, we include the below table 1 of the status quo in ELC and SAC in Ireland pre-COVID 19. This may be useful for comparison with other models as we consider comparators in Ireland and Internationally.

**Table 1: Existing model of ELC and SAC in Ireland**

	<b>Model 1: Existing model of ELC and SAC in Ireland (Private infrastructure, independent provision)</b>
Ownership/ management of building	Privately owned (but may have been partially or fully publicly funded)
Provider of service	Independent
Employer of staff	Provider
Salary scales	None
Fee caps	No restriction
Profit level	No restriction
Quality measures (for example)	Minimum regulations
Funding structure	NCS + ECCE + PSP. No direct grants for operational or staff costs.