

New Funding Model for ELC and SAC
Expert Group Meeting
Wednesday 29th July 2020
9.00 – 13.30
Skype for Business
Minutes

Participants

Michael Scanlan (Chair)
Tove Mogstad Slinde
Eva Lloyd
Edward Melhuish
Tim Callan
Bernie McNally (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Anne-Marie Brooks (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Philip Crosby (Department of Education and Skills)
Gillian Martin (Secretariat, Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Laura Brady (Secretariat, Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
David Carabini (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)

Also in attendance (for parts of day)

Laura McGarrigle (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Gillian Paull (Frontier Economics)
Cavin Wilson (Frontier Economics)

Apologies

Rory O'Donnell
Niamh Callaghan (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)

Welcome

The Chair welcomed the Expert Group to the meeting and noted the apologies as indicated above.

Minutes from last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 25th June 2020 were adopted.

The Chair indicated that he had spoken with Minister O'Gorman who had conveyed his thanks to the Expert Group for its work to date.

Topical Issues

Anne-Marie Brooks provided an overview of recent developments in the sector following the re-opening of services on 29 June. There was also an update on the new Government, and the extended remit of the Department.

Anne-Marie Brooks confirmed that plans to commence a Review of the Operating System were announced in recent day. It was agreed to provide an update on this review when the Inter-Departmental Group to oversee the review has been appointed and terms of reference agreed.

Presentation on the Fair Deal Scheme

Laura McGarrigle gave a presentation on the Fair Deal Scheme, drawing parallels with the National Childcare Scheme. This was followed by a short question and answer session. The Group felt further discussion and information on this topic would be beneficial.

Research Paper: Set 1, Working Paper 5, Approaches to identifying children and/or services in need of additional support

Frontier Economics provided an overview of WP5, including a summary of key findings relating to approaches to identifying children and/or services in need of additional support.

Frontier Economics responded to issues raised and agreed to consider any further written comments received. Members of the Expert Group undertook to revert to the Secretariat with observations in writing on WP5 by 5th August.

Research Papers: Set 2 proposals

The Expert Group discussed the revised proposal for the second set of working papers. There was broad agreement that paper 6 could proceed (subject to further discussion between the secretariat and Frontier) and that papers 8 and 9 could proceed with some minor refinements. It was agreed that the merit of proceeding with paper 7 could be revisited in September.

Independent Review of Costs

Anne-Marie Brooks provided an overview of key findings from the Independent Review of Costs and some preliminary data on income to the ELC and SAC sector, which was gathered as part of the Independent Review of Cost. It was noted that further work will be progressed on the income paper.

Anne-Marie Brooks welcomed the comments made on the preliminary data, responded to the points made and agreed to discuss further with the data analysts.

Stakeholder Engagement

Anne-Marie Brooks provided an overview of revised plans for Phase 1 stakeholder engagement and consultation (below) and invited feedback from the Expert Group:

- ❖ Call for Submissions from providers and practitioners (mid-August to mid-September)
- ❖ Parents Survey (mid-August to mid-September)
- ❖ National Conversation Series (mid-September to end-October)
- ❖ Draft Report to Expert Group by end November

The Expert Group suggested a number of changes to the draft call for submissions, including a shorter introduction, distinguishing between ELC and SAC in the questions, including an additional question on the role of providers, and replacing the first two questions with an expanded section on the guiding principles.

Anne-Marie Brooks explained that participants in Phase 1 will be asked if they want to be kept informed of future consultation events. This list could be used to identify possible appointees to the stakeholder panel for Phase 2 and 3: the selection process for this needs further consideration.

AOB/ CLOSE

The next meeting of the Group will take place on Wednesday 2nd September.

The Chairperson suggested that the following items could inform the Agenda:

- ❖ Discussion/ Presentation on Childminding Action Plan
- ❖ Further discussion on Fair Deal Scheme
- ❖ Presentation from New Brunswick
- ❖ Research Papers 1-5 presented to the Expert Group for adoption and publication
- ❖ Reflections from Expert Group on learnings from Set 1 of the Research Papers
- ❖ Reflections on the project to date

A joint meeting between the Expert Group and Workforce Development Plan Steering Group would be planned for Q4.

ENDS