

New Funding Model for ELC and SAC
Expert Group Meeting
Wednesday 2nd September 2020
9.00 – 13.30
Skype for Business
Minutes

Participants

Michael Scanlan (Chair)
Tove Mogstad Slinde
Eva Lloyd
Edward Melhuish
Tim Callan
Rory O'Donnell
Niamh Callaghan (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)
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)
Andrew Burrows (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)
Chris Chapman (Change Exploratory)
Nicole Gervais (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, New Brunswick)
Ashley Counsell (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, New Brunswick)

Welcome

The Chair welcomed the Expert Group to the meeting.

Minutes from last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 29th July 2020 were adopted.

Topical Issues

Anne-Marie Brooks provided an overview of recent developments in the sector. Three significant projects relevant to the work of the Expert Group have commenced or are soon to commence – the Review of the Operating System, the Evaluation of the Access and Inclusion Model, and the Evaluation of Better Start. The Secretariat undertook to provide periodic updates on the progress of these projects.

An overview of the recent funding package for ELC and SAC services was also provided alongside available data on services reopening following the COVID-19 closures, and Tusla data on notified service closures and new services. The Secretariat undertook to undertake and circulate additional analysis of Tusla data on service closures and new services.

It was noted that a report is being prepared for Government by the National Competitiveness Council which identifies early learning and care and school-age childcare as a competitiveness challenge for Ireland. Recommendations arising from that report may have implications for the work of the Expert Group.

Discussion on the Fair Deal Scheme

As a follow up to a presentation on the Fair Deal Scheme at the last meeting, Laura McGarrigle facilitated a discussion on the presentation. Greater detail on elements of the Fair Deal scheme was provided and some parallels and key learnings identified which could inform the work of the Expert Group.

Stakeholder engagement and consultation

Anne-Marie Brooks provided an update on the upcoming stakeholder engagement and consultation process. A call for submissions on both the Funding Model and the Workforce Development Plan has been published. Separately, an Ipsos MRBI poll for parents is in the field, with results expected in midSeptember.

The next steps include a series of focussed discussions and webinars with providers/practitioners and parents between September and November. The Chair introduced Chris Chapman, Change Exploratory, who is contracted by the Department to facilitate these events. The discussion guides for this process will be brought to the Expert Group at future meetings.

The Chair asked the Expert Group to provide any feedback on this proposed process. The Chair also encouraged members of the Group to attend the planned webinars and focused discussions if possible. The Secretariat will share the schedule of events with the Group when it is finalised.

Presentation from New Brunswick

Nicole Gervais and Ashley Counsell from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, New Brunswick, Canada gave a presentation on the New Brunswick Funding Model for Early Childhood Education and Care, followed by a question and answer session. The Secretariat undertook to follow-up with presenters for any additional information.

Research Papers Set 1 (Papers 1-5) finalised & reflections from Expert Group on learnings from Research Papers Set 1

There was a discussion of Set 1 of the Research Papers and the lessons that have been learned from the papers which could inform options for the future funding model.

The revised papers were welcomed and the Group agreed to send any outstanding comments to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will review the revised papers to ensure previous feedback has been incorporated. The Secretariat will also liaise with Frontier to ensure any outstanding feedback is incorporated (where appropriate) prior to publication. The Chair will work with the Secretariat on communications around the publication of these research papers, in consultation with the Group.

The Secretariat will circulate the proposals agreed with Frontier Economics for the next three research papers (working papers 6, 7 and 8).

Reflections on the project to date

There was a discussion on the project so far and next steps.

The Secretariat committed to reviewing the Frontier papers with a view to developing options for consideration by the Expert Group. Options would be considered against agreed Terms of Reference,

draft guiding principles, findings emerged from stakeholder engagement and consultation and, where appropriate scenario tested with real data.

AOB/ CLOSE

The next meeting of the Group will take place on Wednesday 23rd September. The Chair invited members of the Group to make suggestions for agenda items.

ENDS