

**New Funding Model for ELC and SAC
Expert Group Meeting
Wednesday 28 October 2020
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)
Philip Crosby (Department of Education and Skills)
Bernie McNally (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Anne-Marie Brooks (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Gillian Martin (Secretariat, Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Laura Brady (Secretariat, Department of Children and Youth Affairs)

Present (for relevant parts of meeting)

Gillian Paull, Frontier Economics
Cavin Wilson, Frontier Economics
Katharine Lauderdale, Frontier Economics
Martin Quigley, Pobal

Welcome

The Chair welcomed the Expert Group to the meeting.

Minutes from last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 23rd September were adopted. It was agreed that the minutes and agenda would be published.

The revised meeting schedule for 2021 was discussed briefly and no objections in principle were raised to the structure and plan suggested. The Expert Group members were asked to review dates and revert if they had any difficulties with dates proposed. The Secretariat will review the project plan and provide more details before the end of the year.

Anne-Marie Brooks indicated that Minister O'Gorman has been presented with the first suite of five working papers from Frontier Economics and explained the intention to publish these in early November.

Topical Issues

Gillian Martin provided an overview of developments since the last meeting, including Budget 2021, the Transfer of Functions, the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS), the launch of the Independent

Review of the Cost of Providing Quality Early Learning and Childcare on 19th October, and other related matters.

Stakeholder Engagement and consultation update

Anne-Marie Brooks provided an overview of Phase 1 of Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation, including the following information.

Opening Information Webinar

Phase 1 opened with an information webinar on 22nd September, with 700 people in attendance.

Call for Submissions

A call for submissions opened on 19th August and closed on 2nd October. 168 submissions were received in respect of the Funding Model. An independent researcher has been contracted to analyse the findings and a draft report is due on 20th November.

National Household Survey

IPSOS/ MRBI were contracted to conduct a national household survey, which took place from 23rd August to 21st September. 503 telephone interviews were conducted and data on 905 children under the age of 15 was collected.

Online Consultation Events

Nine consultation events with providers and practitioners took place from 12th- 23rd October, with approximately 20 participants attending each session. The event themes were as follows:

- ❖ Addressing Affordability
- ❖ Improving Access
- ❖ Raising and Supporting Quality
- ❖ Ensuring availability
- ❖ Sustainability
- ❖ Administration
- ❖ Role of capital funding
- ❖ Insights from practitioners (2 sessions)

A series of consultation events specifically targeted at parents will take place over the coming weeks, commencing 29th October.

Closing Information Webinar

The report of Phase 1 will be disseminated through a closing information webinar, which will take place in December.

The Expert Group, some of whom attended the consultation events, commented on their success and the insights provided and requested that the content of the closing webinar be discussed at November's meeting. The Secretariat undertook to circulate the materials used for each session.

Working Paper 6: ELC/SAC Funding Models which Respond to Early Childhood Disadvantage

Cavin Wilson from Frontier Economics outlined the context of Working Paper 6 and summarised the key findings.

The Expert Group welcomed the paper and discussed various options presented in the paper, including the advantages of using a conditional model in the context of Ireland. The Expert Group noted that the new Funding Model should be future-proofed.

Working Paper 7: ELC/SAC Funding Models which Support Provision Quality

Gillian Paull from Frontier Economics summarised the preliminary outline of Working Paper 7 and asked the Expert Group for feedback on the following questions:

1. Are the eight preferred policies identified in the paper adequate?
2. Are the individuals identified for key informant interviews representative?

The Chair asked the Expert Group to revert to the Secretariat with comments/ suggestions on the questions posed.

Access Work Strand: Identification model for children/services for additional support

Anne-Marie Brooks gave a presentation on addressing early disadvantage, outlining three priority cohorts and existing supports (both access and enhanced provision), acknowledging that the cohorts still need to be explicitly defined.

The Expert Group welcomed the presentation, agreeing that further definition of these cohorts is required.

Martin Quigley gave a presentation on a proof of concept analysis for identifying disadvantage.

The Expert Group welcomed the presentation and discussed the use of existing administrative data for targeting disadvantage. Tim Callan offered to discuss the “at risk of poverty” data with Pobal. Edward Melhuish suggested that learnings from research carried out in the UK could be helpful in developing the identification model.

The Expert Group agreed to revisit this topic at November’s meeting.

AOB/Close

Due to time constraints it was agreed that the Affordability work strand would be discussed at November’s meeting.

Anne-Marie Brooks indicated that hard copies of the Review of Costs, AIM Review and Working Papers 1-5 could be sent to members of the Expert Group.

The Chair asked members to consider possible gaps in areas covered by the Expert Group to date and suggest possible topics for the agenda and for additional working papers before the end of the year. School-Age Childcare was noted as one area that required further attention.

The next meeting of the Expert Group will take place on 25 & 26 November.

ENDS