

**National Collaborative Forum for the Early Years Care and Education Sector.**

**(The Early Years Forum)**

**Minutes of meeting – Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2.30pm**

**Bedford Hall Suite, Dublin Castle**

**Attendance list: See Appendix 1. Apologies were noted.**

**1. Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read and agreed with no amendments.

**2. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**3. Updates/recommendations from sub groups**

**3.0. Welcome**

Bernie McNally opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. The Minister was in attendance and stated that the Forum was gathering at an important time and that it had to look at ways in which to address the challenges that are being faced. The Minister also stated that her focus is currently on Budget 2018 noting that although there are a range of areas requiring additional funding the limited fiscal space at present means that many expectations will not be realised in budget 2018.

As the Minister was only available for half an hour it was agreed to discuss three items of the agenda out of sequence (9. Report on the Estimates workshop from previous meeting and discussion regarding the 2018 Estimates, 4. Update from the Chair of the Child-Minding working group and 3.3 Professionalisation sub group update). Following conclusion of these updates the Minister was thankful for all the points raised and stated that she is looking forward to receiving the report of this meeting. The Minister left at this point.

**3.1. 0-3 sub-group**

Margaret Rogers provided an update on the work of the 0-3s sub-group. She stated that there are challenges in getting data of any change in provisions for under 3's. They have received data from Pobal, however, this data has yet to be analysed.

She also highlighted that there is a need to rebalance the 0-3s with ECCE and higher Caps.

**3.2. Irish language sub-group.**

Suzanne Níc Géidí presented the Forum with the Irish language sub-group's final report.

(See Appendix 5)

**3.3. Update from Professionalisation sub-group.**

Ian McKenna provided an update for the Professionalisation sub-group. Both Dr. Mary Moloney and Ian McKenna prepared a paper on professionalization issue. Some of the key points raised related to salaries for Early Years workers, fragmentation between 0-3 and ECCE workers and professional identity.

(See appendix 4)

### **3.4. Communications Sub-Group**

Michael Keenan provided an update on the work of the Communications sub-group. He informed the Members that a communications protocol would be drafted for the early years' sector. He also stated that DCYA may need to procure expertise in relation to the drafting of the protocol.

### **4. Brief Update from the Chair of the Child-minding Working Group**

Bernadette Burke, Chair of the Working Group, informed the Member that a survey of parents who use childminders was conducted recently. The findings of this survey are being finalised and should be available shortly.

The group is hopeful of having something to feedback to the Minister in the near future.

### **5. Update on the Affordable Childcare Scheme and More Affordable Childcare 'Roadshow'**

Mark Considine provided an update on the September developments.

He outlined the following:

- PIP development is on schedule (21<sup>st</sup> August);
- grant agreements have been published;
- There is an upswing in child registrations (CCSP) compared to this time last year;
- The targeted programme has been expended (CCSR);

The new rules have been published and the Department will perform a 'health check' on them at the end of September.

Eugene Waters provided an update on the Affordable Childcare Scheme.

An ACS website has been created to ensure that the information can be easily accessed. This has received over 215,000 visits.

Information has been sent to childcare providers.

Eight Information 'roadshows' have taken place which were supplemented by local sessions.

The scheme will continue to be advertised to ensure that there is full awareness among parents and providers.

## **6. EY Forum Priority Issues list update**

Michael Keenan provided an update on a selection of issues from the Early Years Forum Priority List.

- 6.1. **Garda Vetting:** The Department received two submissions in relation to additional funding which have been approved. A meeting is being scheduled with the head of Garda vetting to discuss any relevant issues.
- 6.2. **Commercial Rates:** A meeting has been arranged between the DCYA, the Dept. of Justice and Equality and the Dept. of Communication, Climate Action and Environment to discuss the issue of commercial rates with regard to childcare services.
- 6.3. **Learner Fund:** With the introduction of the Regulations there can no longer be support for those wishing to obtain a Level 5 Qualification. As such, the DCYA is looking at assisting those wishing to progress to Levels 6, 7 or 8. The Department is currently examining all feasible options on how it can best assist childcare workers in this regard..
- 6.4. **Development of Work Force Plan:** The development of the Work Force Plan has commenced. DCYA is working with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in developing a new workforce plan for the Early Years sector which will provide objective evidence and analysis regarding supply and demand issues to inform future capacity planning by both Departments. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs has undertaken to carry out a workforce planning exercise for the sector and DES and DCYA are now working with the secretariat in the initial stages of the analysis.

## **7. Review of EY Forum Membership**

Bernie Mc Nally stated that the time was now right to review the membership of the Forum. The question of what groups could be invited to join the Forum as well as the question as to who would best represent children and parents was posed. In this regard DCYA proposed the CRA, Primary Parents Council and the National Women's Council to do so. Since it is not intended that there will be an increase in the number of members on the Forum the existing membership will also need to be reviewed. This matter will be on the agenda for the next EY Forum meeting.

## **8. Terms of Reference**

Bernie McNally stated that a review of the terms of reference was due to be carried out a year after the first meeting of the Forum. She also asked the Members for ideas on how to encourage and foster debates within the parameters on the Forum.

She confirmed that the Terms of Reference will be emailed to all members requesting that proposed amendments be submitted by way of track changes in the document being returned.

## **9. Report on the Estimates workshop from previous meeting**

Tim Heneghan from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, gave a presentation on the findings of Estimates Exercise from the previous Forum meeting. This Estimates Exercise entailed

the attendees dividing into 4 groups to discuss options in relation to possible future investment in the sector. The proposed budget was €100m.

Of the 16 options available, the groups only reached a consensus on one. (Supports towards Regulation of Childminders)

If all options chosen by the groups were implemented it would cost €353m.

(See Appendix 3)

## **10. AOB**

Heino Schonfeld had prepared a document entitled “Code of Ethics For Early Years Teachers in Ireland”, however, as there was not enough time to discuss the paper it was agreed that it would be included on the agenda for the next Forum meeting.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Attendance List**

**Department of Children and Youth Affairs**

Minister Zappone

Bernie McNally

Michael Keenan

Mark Considine

Eugene Waters

Tim Heneghan

Paul Pentony

**The National Quality Support Service**

Margaret Rogers

**Childcare Committees Ireland**

Claire Woods

Trish McLaughlin

**Early Childhood Ireland**

Frances Byrne

**National Children's Network**

Denise McCormilla

**Barnardos**

Heino Schonfeld

**Childminding Ireland**

Bernadette Burke

**Hightscope**

Marian Baker

**Private Early Education Providers**

Regina Bushell

**National Forum for Community Childcare Services**

Marie Daly

**PLÉ**

Mary Maloney

**Tusla**

Fiona McDonnell

**Pobal**

Sinead McKeon

**Gaeleideachas**

Claire Spainneach

**Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta**

Suzanne Nic Géidí

**Association of Childhood Professionals**

Marian Quinn

**Saint Nicholas Montessori**

Ian McKenna

**Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association**

Ulrike Farnleitner

**Appendix 2**

**Apologies**

**Department of Education and Skills**

Aoife Conduit

**Early Childhood Ireland**

Louise Kilbane

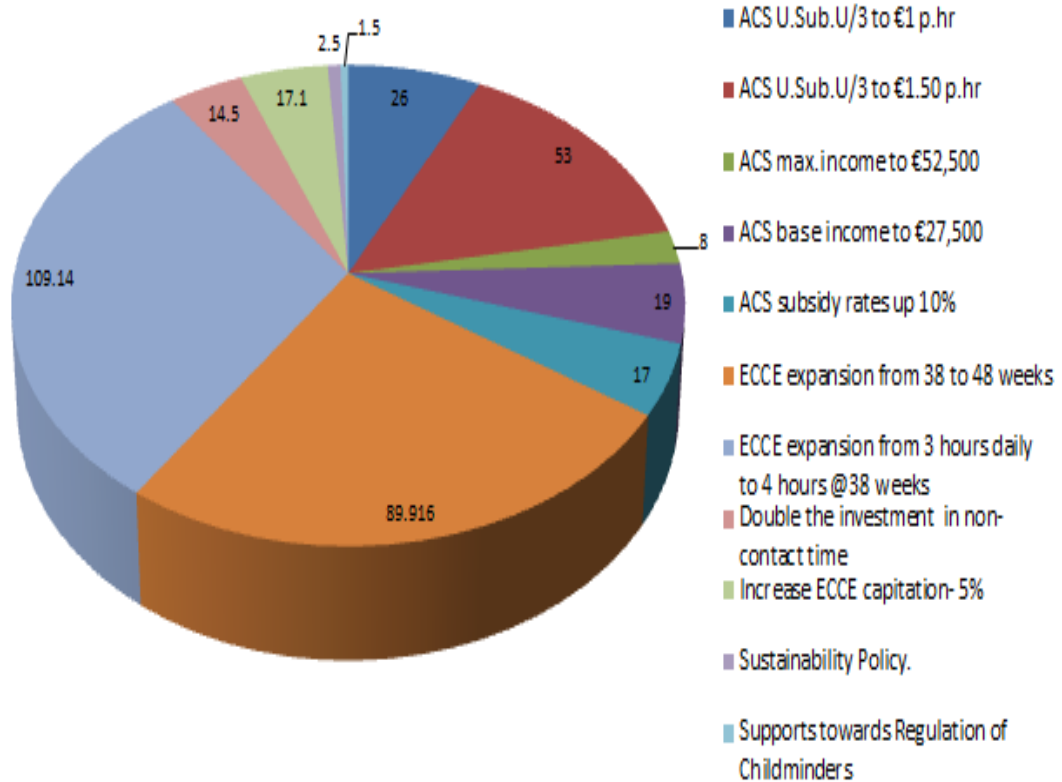
Teresa Heeney

**Appendix 3**

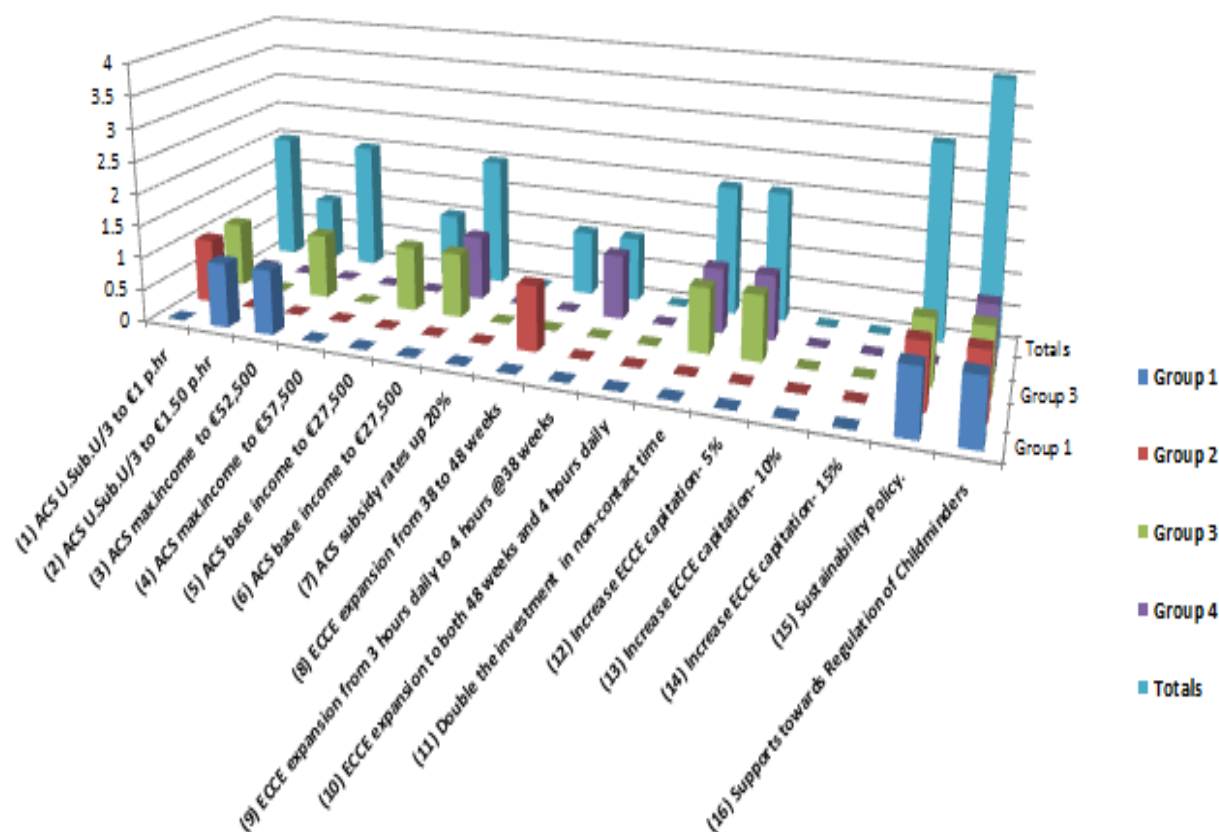
The Early Years Forum Estimates Exercise 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 (PDF).

# Group Options combined.

**Group choices combined (€357.656m)**



# Group options combined – continued.



## Summary:

- Option 16 selected by all 4 groups.
- Option 15 selected by Groups 1,2 &3
- Option 1 selected by Groups 2 & 3
- Option 3 selected by Groups 1 & 3
- Option 6 selected by Groups 3 & 4
- Option 11 selected by Groups 3 & 4
- Option 12 selected by Groups 3 & 4
- Option 2 selected by Group 1
- Option 5 selected by Group 3
- Option 8 selected by Group 2
- Option 9 selected by Group 4
- Options 4, 7, 10, 13 & 14 were not selected by any group.



**Appendix 4**

**Early Years Professionalisation Sub-Group Update (see attachment included with email).**

## **Appendix 5**

**Irish Language Supports Subgroup- Summary Report to the Early Years Forum (see attachment included with email).**