



**New Funding Model for ELC and SAC
Expert Group Meeting
Wednesday, 22 January 2020
Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Miesian Plaza
Minutes**

In attendance

Michael Scanlan (Chair)
Tove Mogstad Slinde
Eva Lloyd
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)
Gillian Martin (Secretariat, Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Laura Brady (Secretariat, Department of Children and Youth Affairs)

Also in attendance (for relevant parts of day)

Nuala Connolly (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Oonagh Fleming (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
Catherine Rogers (Crowe Consulting)
Gillian Paull (Frontier Economics)
Susan Mulhall (Department of Education and Skills)
Sam McKay (Apteligen, via Skype)

Apologies

Edward Melhuish
Philip Crosby (Department of Education and Skills)

Welcome

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

Minutes from last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 12 December 2019 were adopted. It was agreed that the minutes and agenda would be published. It was also agreed to consider publishing other documentation from the December meeting at the next meeting in March.

Updates from Secretariat

Website and members' portal

The Group welcomed the new public facing website (www.first5fundingmodel.gov.ie) developed by the Department. It was agreed to review the position in relation to a private members' portal/platform at the next meeting.

Visits to settings

The Secretariat will arrange visits to ELC/SAC settings for the morning of the 24th March. Members expressed an interest in visiting a variety of settings that reflect the diversity of ELC/SAC providers. The visits may also be an opportunity to hear from staff and management in a selection of different settings. The Secretariat will liaise with ECI on organisation.

Inputs into Early Years Sector Profile Survey

Suggested areas for inclusion in the Early Years Sector Profile Survey 2019/20 from Expert Group members were discussed and agreed. Among the proposed areas for inclusion was an open-ended question, which would seek views from ELC/SAC providers on 'how quality should be measured'. The Secretariat undertook to submit this feedback to Pobal.

Workplace Development Plan (WDP)

Anne-Marie Brooks briefed the Expert Group on recent discussions at the Workforce Development Steering Group about the importance of aligning the work of both groups, including the possibility of a joint meeting of the two groups. The need for alignment was agreed. It was noted that Anne-Marie Brooks, Bernie McNally and Philip Crosby are members of both groups. The proposed joint approach to the nationwide consultation events with practitioners and providers (dealt with under Stakeholder Engagement) was welcomed, and the Expert Group agreed that any working papers produced by the Research Partner that were relevant to the Workforce Development Plan should be shared with the Steering Group. The Expert Group confirmed that it would welcome other initiatives which would support the effective working of both groups and suggested that one option might be for a sub-group of the Steering Group to present at an Expert Group meeting and *visa versa*. It was agreed that the timing, nature and purpose of any such joint interactions should be explored.

ECI Conference

The Secretariat confirmed that it will host a consultative workshop on the development of the funding model at the ECI Conference taking place on the 3rd and 4th April 2020.

Topical Issues

Anne-Marie Brooks provided an overview on the issues currently facing the sector. It was agreed that a similar update should be included as a standing agenda item.

It was also agreed that the relevant parts of the political party election manifestos would be forwarded to the Expert Group for information.

Project Plan and Timeline

Anne-Marie Brooks provided an overview of the project plan and timeline, with a focus on the inputs and expected output during 2020. The six work packages were outlined and discussed in terms of coverage across meetings, research papers, and the general project plan. The suite of research papers (Set 1 and Set 2) were discussed with particular reference to the timing of the May to September break.

It was noted that the project plan calls for a more formal six-month review of the project plan (due April/May 2020) which will be carried out after the next meeting.

The Chair indicated that further work had been done on developing guiding principles. These would be circulated shortly, and comments invited from individual members ahead of the March meeting. Following a discussion about how to make best use of the expertise within the Group, it was also agreed that individual members would be invited to identify key issues to be addressed in a new funding model and, if they wished, initial ideas for how these might be tackled: a simple template to assist in this regard would be circulated to members and the Chair asked that responses be submitted to the Secretariat for discussion at the March meeting. The Chair also invited members to reflect on whether presentations and/or papers from individual members on any particular areas of expertise or topics might help advance the work of the Group.

Sustainability in the ELC/ SAC sector

Oonagh Fleming presented on sustainability in the ELC/SAC sector covering the existing sustainability policy and funding, as well as the case management activities undertaken by the Department, Pobal and the City and County Childcare Committees. Ms. Fleming undertook to reflect further on how a new funding model could best address sustainability and revert to the Expert Group on the matter.

Review of Costs

Catherine Rogers provided a summary of the findings of the report on the Review of Costs and Sam McKay provided a demonstration of the Cost Calculator.

A discussion around the future use of the data, relevancy for the new funding model and possible additional areas of research followed. The Expert Group expressed an interest in receiving further information and Anne-Marie Brooks undertook to share a more detailed summary of the key findings.

DEIS Model in Schools

Susan Mulhall presented on the Department of Education and Skills DEIS Identification Model covering the existing system of identification and allocation, as well as possible refinements to the model in the future. This agenda item informed discussion on Working Paper 5 that followed.

Proposed Working Paper 5

Anne-Marie Brooks presented a proposal for Working Paper 5 (i.e. approaches to identifying children and/or services in need of additional supports) and the Expert Group agreed that DCYA should engage with the Research Partner to progress this paper as part of Set 1.

Anne- Marie Brooks advised that the Access Inclusion Model (AIM) provides supports for children with disabilities. It was agreed that a background paper on AIM, including the identification and allocation model should be circulated to the Group.

Stakeholder Engagement

Anne-Marie Brooks presented a draft plan for Phase 1 of stakeholder engagement and consultation. This covered a range of activities for consideration including the re-purposing of existing consultations (particularly those with children), nationwide consultation events with practitioners and providers, focus groups with parents, online surveys, and formal calls for submissions. The proposed Phase 1 plan



also incorporated the planned site visits on March 24th and other outreach events such as the ECI conference.

Gillian Paull then outlined the stakeholder engagement proposal which had been developed by the Research Partners.

The Expert Group agreed that the purpose of Phase 1 was to identify the key issues to be addressed in the development of the new funding model and invite ideas for possible practical solutions to these issues. Phase 1 should be broad, open and high level, and should seek to involve as many contributors as possible. Subsequent consultation and engagement phases were expected to be more focussed, specific and detailed, involving a smaller number of representative contributors.

The Secretariat undertook to revise the plan for Phase 1 engagement and consultation to reflect the views of the Expert Group, and to liaise with the Research Partner in that regard. Once agreed with the Expert Group, the proposed schedule of activities will be published on the webpage.

ESRI SWITCH Modelling and NCS data

Tim Callan presented on possible uses of existing and future data sources to support the work of the Expert Group. This included further analysis using SWITCH, an analysis of NCS data to identify disadvantage based on individual circumstances and the availability of, and potential enhancements to, existing data (e.g. EU SILC) to underpin a monitoring and evaluation framework for the funding model. For the latter, it was pointed out that there may be an opportunity for engagement with the CSO regarding new questions in the household survey.

AOB/Close

That concluded the business of the meeting.

ENDS

Appendix I: Actions arising

	Subject	Action	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Minutes of Meeting 3	Draft minutes of meeting produced and circulated	Secretariat	Circulation 29 January
2.	Briefing papers Meetings 1 and 2	Further consideration of publication	Secretariat	Update 29 January
3.	Amendments to papers Meeting 3	Amendment via tracked changes of papers from Meeting 3	Secretariat	Circulation 18 March Presentation 25 March
4.	Presentations Meeting 3	Circulation of presentation slides from Meeting 3	Secretariat	Circulated 29 January
5.	Papers Meeting 4	Relevant papers produced and circulated in advance	Secretariat	Circulation 18 March Presentation 25 March
6.	Political Party Policy Manifestos	Relevant parts of political parties election manifestos circulated to the EG	Secretariat	7 February
7.	ESRI project	Engage with ESRI to finalise SWITCH workplan 2020 and identify possible project relating to the work of the EG	Secretariat	25 March
8.	Refinement of Phase 1 stakeholder consultation plan	In cooperation with Research Partner, propose a clear Phase 1 plan and timeline	Secretariat / Research Partner	As soon as possible
1.	Stakeholder Engagement Plan –Frontier	To be amended as per EG discussion	Secretariat / Gillian Paull	As soon as possible
2.	Principles Paper	Further development of Principles paper	Chair / Secretariat	Circulation 18 March Presentation 25 March
3.	Project Plan	6 month review of project plan for discussion	Chair / Secretariat	Circulation 18 March Presentation 25 March
4.	Expert Group Members input	EG members draft input for template EG members propose areas / topics for presentation	Secretariat contact EG members	Prompt 29 January
5.	AIM Paper	Paper on AIM circulated to EG	Secretariat	Circulation 18 March
6.	Paper 5 proposal	Proposal prepared Proposal circulate to EG	Gillian Paull Secretariat	As soon as possible
7.	Review of Costs Summary Note	Note to DCYA Management Board circulated to EG	Secretariat	Circulation 29 January
8.	Mandatory training requirements	Information on what mandatory training exists	Secretariat	25 March

9.	Pobal Sector Profile Questionnaire	EG input sent to Pobal for consideration in Sector Profile 2020	Secretariat	As soon as possible
10.	Possible interaction with WDP EG	Draft proposal by member of WDP EG to be shared when drafted	WDP EG	When drafted
11.	Site Visits 24th March	To be confirmed with ECI	Secretariat	As soon as possible
12.	Sustainability	Proposal on how a new funding model could best address sustainability	Oonagh Fleming / Secretariat	Undecided
13.	Sustainability management / case	Share role profile for Pobal Development Coordinators	Oonagh Fleming / Secretariat	29 January
14.	IT Platform	Continue to look into platform for members	I.T. / Secretariat	As soon as possible
15.	Topical issues	Ongoing compilation of topical issues	Secretariat	Circulation 18 March Presentation 25 March
16.	Relevant reading material and upcoming conferences	Relevant reading material / upcoming conferences circulated	EG members / Secretariat	Carry-over
17.	Quality items	List of Quality issues/items that are in scope for the Expert Group	DCYA / Secretariat	Carry-over
18.	ECI Conference	Update on planning for ECI conference	Secretariat	Carry-over
19.	Fees List	Explore the potential of data analysis of fees list data	Secretariat	Carry-over
20.	Legal Advice	Previous legal advice relating to EG project circulated	Secretariat	Carry-over