

Contact Us



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ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018



Foreword



I am delighted to deliver my first Annual Report as the CEO of NICMA. My first year has been challenging, interesting and great fun.

One of my first priorities I set myself was to meet as many Childminders as I possibly could. This was to introduce myself but also to hear first-hand what issues Childminders faced and how NICMA could continue to support them. I met many NICMA members and some non-members during the year.

As a membership organisation, it is important that the voice of the Childminder is at the centre of all that we do, from representation of Childminders on the Board of Trustees to the important work delivered by the Childminding Advisory Council, which brings Childminders together from across Northern Ireland.

Over the year I have also made it a priority to raise the profile of NICMA by ensuring that Childminders are seen as professional childcare providers and not just glorified babysitters. I have engaged in new working partnerships with many organisations and individuals such as PlayBoard looking at outdoor play for older children to MTCNI which was a music therapy workshop.

I want to thank all the Staff and the Board of Trustees for their hard work and support during this first year. I look forward to the challenges that the next 12 months will bring to both myself and the staff of NICMA.

Patricia Lawsley-Mooney CBE
Chief Executive Officer



Childminding Development Officers

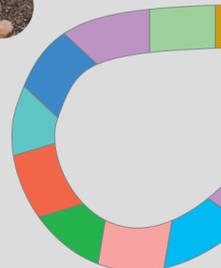


NICMA have a team of five Childminding Development Officers working across Northern Ireland promoting the benefits of registered childminding to individuals considering registration and to parents looking for childcare.

Childminding Development Officers provide support and advice from the very beginning of the childminding registration process. They facilitate Pre-registration Briefing Sessions in partnership with the Health and Social Care Trusts and offer support right through to completion of registration, always offering a friendly face to turn to with any queries or concerns. Assistance is also given with NICMA membership.

The team continues to support registered childminders and NICMA members, dealing with queries by phone, text, email and face to face at a range of Buddy Groups and Childminding Support Groups across the province.

Childminding Development Officers also represent registered childminding in the community, liaising with Health Visitors, Jobs & Benefits offices, Sure Start and other stakeholders to promote Registered Childminding.



Edita's Story

Before coming to live in Northern Ireland, I worked as a Speech Therapist and Educator in a Kindergarten in Lithuania.



Becoming a Registered Childminder has allowed me to continue to use these skills while caring for children in my own home; this childcare option is unavailable to parents in Lithuania.

I have been a NICMA member for the past 11 years and have encouraged others to consider registered childminding as a career. NICMA have supported me from the beginning of the process. I have accessed a range of training courses and appreciated the support and advice of office staff along with my local Childminding Development Officer when required.

By being out and about with my minded children, I have met people in my local area and raised the profile of registered childminding.

Registered Childminder, Portadown



Adam's Story

I recently registered as a childminder after 25 years in my previous career.

Although it has been a huge transition, I thoroughly enjoy my new role as I find spending time with children very rewarding. Working from home has also enabled me to spend every day with my daughter.

Being a male in a mostly female dominated profession has required a bit of effort. However, completing a Level 3 Diploma in Child Care Learning & Development has helped to enhance my childcare skills and it is also a good marketing tool. Initially I had some difficulty getting children to mind, but happily have now overcome this problem and am working at full capacity.

Being a NICMA member gives me the support and experience from a professional organisation, during and after the registration process has been of great benefit to me.

Registered Childminder, Bangor



Training and Quality Initiatives

Minimum Standards in Childminding and Day Care Core Training

NICMA has had yet another successful year in delivering the three core elements – Safeguarding Children, Health & Safety in the Childminding Setting and Introductory Paediatric First Aid to prospective childminders. We were delighted to obtain further funding from the Health & Social Care Board which enabled us to deliver **39** courses to **214** prospective childminders.

We are also still meeting the needs of the childminding sector by delivering refresher core training across Northern Ireland. Over the last year, we have delivered **26** Health & Safety in the Childminding Setting courses to 402 childminders as well as **27** Safeguarding Children courses to **464** childminders. The training was delivered to both NICMA members and non-members.

Quality Assurance Programme

A programme delivered over a series of four sessions to **12** childminders in the Southern Trust area to help professionalise their childminding service and keep up to date with current childminding practice.

Supporting Children's Speech, Language and Communication

This course looks at how speech, language and communication impacts on children's overall development. A session was delivered to Shankill Women's Centre with **8** participants attending.

Business Management

This three hour course covers the importance of keeping up to date records, negotiation with parents, including legal requirements for HMRC and Data Protection. Three courses were delivered with **27** participants attending.



Acknowledgements

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of a large number of organisations who have funded staff posts and supported childminding initiatives over the last year. We would like to extend our thanks to those organisations and to childminding members whose commitment and support is very much appreciated. In 2017/18 our stakeholders included:

- Arke SureStart
- Blossom SureStart
- Childcare Partnerships
- Childminding members
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Early Years Organisation
- G-old SureStart
- Health & Social Care Board
- Health & Social Care Trusts
- NICMA Board of Trustees
- NICMA Childminding Advisory Council
- NICMA Childminding Buddy/Support Groups
- PlayBoard
- Shantallow SureStart



NICMA Staff Team

Patricia Lawsley-Mooney Chief Executive Officer
 Karen McElean Deputy Chief Executive Officer
 Valerie Earney PA to Chief Executive Officer

CHILD MINDING DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Liz Brown Childminding Development Officer, BCCP
 Childminding Development Officer, NCCP
 Childminding Development Officer, SECCP Resigned February 2017
 Fiona Clendinning Childminding Development Officer, SCCP & Arke SureStart
 Michelle Grant Childminding Development Officer, WCCP
 Maria Magee Childminding Development Officer, NCCP
 Clare McKay Secretary, Development Team
 Lyn Bradley

TRAINING & QUALITY TEAM

Susan Anderson Training Manager
 Gail Trainor Trainer/Assessor
 Claire Vittti Training Co-ordinator

CHILD MINDING NETWORKS

Joanna Legg Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Shantallow SureStart
 Tina McKeown Childminding Network Co-ordinator, G-old SureStart
 Katie Turkington Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Blossom SureStart
 Una Leonard Childminding & Play Advisor, Clogher Valley SureStart Resigned August 2017

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Joan Hewitt Finance & Administration Manager
 Catherine Rogers Finance & IT Officer
 Briony Simpson Finance & Web Development Resigned March 2018
 Emma Bayliss Finance Assistant
 Sonia Tomblin Membership Administrator

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Suzi Gray Chairperson
 Norma Shearer
 Dr Margaret Baumann
 Catherine Cooke
 Karen Hanna
 Marlene Kington



Summary of Annual Accounts and Report 31 March 2018

NICMA's total income dropped by just under £10,000 for the year. Expenditure also reduced by £33,500, the reduction in expenditure is partly due to a refund of £10,000 for Employers Allowance previously not claimed by the Association, we also lost a Childminding Network, which is reflected in both income and expenditure decreases. Despite savings having been made, the organisation still found itself in a deficit position at the end of the year of £40,810, this was a better position than we were in the previous year, when there was a deficit of £64,445.

Due to the good financial planning NICMA practiced in previous years we have the reserves in place to help weather the turbulent economic and political environment all charities are currently finding themselves in. However, Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team need to look to the future and alternative funding sources in order to continue the essential work that is carried out by the organisation for Childminders, children and parents in Northern Ireland.

Statement of Financial Activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2018	Total 2017
Incoming Resources	£	£	£	£
Donations and legacies	3,273	-	3,273	3,749
Charitable activities	276,027	288,202	564,229	573,796
Investment Income	126	-	126	57
Total Income	279,426	288,202	567,628	577,602
Expenditure				
Expenditure on charitable activities	299,077	309,361	608,438	642,047
Total Expenditure	299,077	309,361	608,438	642,047
Net Expenditure	(19,651)	(21,159)	(40,810)	(68,445)
Transfer between reserves	(25,452)	25,452	-	-
Net Movement in funds	(45,103)	4293	(40,810)	(64,445)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	344,685	-	344,685	409,130
Total funds carried forward	299,582	4293	303,875	244,685



THE WAY FORWARD

NICMA believe that the recommendations in the State of the Sector Report 2017 cannot be taken forward by the organisation alone. Responsibility for the development and implementation of all recommendations and tackling the main issues highlighted regarding the childminding sector is a shared one between a number of Northern Ireland Executive Departments as well as relevant stakeholders within early years. NICMA believe there are four key issues emerging from this research regarding childminding in Northern Ireland. These are:

> **Affordability** > **Accessibility** > **Flexibility** > **Quality**



> Affordability

This research has highlighted how the main reasons for Childminders being unable to fill their vacancies is due to parents preferring to use informal childcare such as grandparents or Childminders competing from one or more unregistered Childminders in their area who charge less than they do. The average hourly rate charged by respondents for both full time and part time is between £3.00 - £3.99. If Childminders were to reduce this rate further then many would struggle to sustain their business and would be unable to survive financially.

Another issue regarding affordability of childcare is highlighted in the Childcare Research Final Report (OFMDFM 2014). It outlines how parents would like more financial support for childcare as affordability is a major barrier to them actually using the childcare they would prefer. Affordability of childcare is also highlighted in the Childcare Research Final Report which outlines how parents would like more financial support for childcare as affordability is a major barrier to them actually using the childcare they would prefer.

Research carried out by the Child Poverty Alliance (2014) research highlights a further issue by stating:

"The lack of affordable childcare therefore contributes to the unemployment rate, the economic inactivity rate and the number of people working part-time" (p.85).

The Child Poverty Alliance research highlights how childcare impacts on the rate of poverty in three ways. It states:

"Firstly the lack of available childcare is a barrier to employment for parents. Secondly, the high cost of childcare places pressure on family incomes. Thirdly, childcare is essential for early intervention, particularly regarding the developmental needs of children" (p.83).

Another finding from the research is that there are over 14,700 people who are economically inactive but would like to be in work but the lack of affordable childcare is a major barrier to employment.



> Accessibility

Findings from the Childcare Research Final Report (OFMDFM, 2014) highlight how there is an unmet need for childminding services across Northern Ireland.

Findings from the Employers for Childcare: Choosing Childcare in Northern Ireland - Experiences of Local Parents (2016) research has also highlighted this problem and states that 15% of parents said there is a lack of childminding services. The accessibility of childcare and in particular childminding is a huge "social problem" due to this unmet need. This is therefore a huge challenge that needs to be solved.



> Flexibility

Many parents are now working hours which can involve working shifts, weekends, overtime, on-call working etc., which can cause problems with childcare requirements. The Employers for Childcare: Choosing Childcare in Northern Ireland - Experiences of Local Parents (2016) research states that "in addition to problems with availability of childcare places, childcare provision can also be unaffordable and inflexible" (p.5).

Although some Childminders will adapt their working hours to allow for flexibility with parents working hours it can cause an issue with the number of vacancies they have available. Findings from this research highlight the restrictions Childminders have with their vacancies, as it shows they may only have a few mornings or afternoons free or a limited number of days which is possibility due to the flexibility allowed for other parents. However, for parents who require full time care or more hours in the week this causes an issue and may influence the number of parents who have stated in the research that there is a lack of childminding services available in their area. Taking this into consideration we need to consider whether the lack of childminding services is due to affordability, accessibility or flexibility.



> Quality

This research has highlighted how the quality of all early years settings is a constant debate. There needs to be a change of outlook to ensure that childminding is seen as a career within the sector, with a clear pathway to progression linked to qualifications.

As there is no legal requirement for Childminders to have any formal early years training other than health & safety, safeguarding children and paediatric first aid. NICMA believe that funding should be made available for all newly registered Childminders to undertake a more comprehensive induction training package. Introducing this package as a mandatory requirement will not only increase Childminders educational levels it will ensure they provide a high standard of provision which is vital for improving children's educational standards, and hence contributes to raising workforce productivity and driving economic growth. This is reiterated in research by the Child Poverty Alliance (2014) who state that due to the links between childcare and development needs of children investing in good quality childcare services is beneficial for children, particularly those from disadvantaged areas.

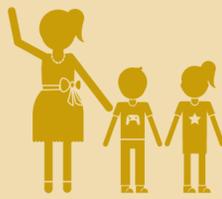
Without the investment of funding to increase the number and quality of care provided by registered Childminders and to ensure sustainability there is no doubt that the early years sector will lose a potentially available, affordable, sustainable, and high quality workforce.



CHILDMINDING ADDITIONAL SERVICES STATS



8% of respondents stated that they would be willing to care for a child with additional needs. 15% of respondents stated they are currently caring for a child with additional needs with Autism being identified as the most common additional need.



A high percentage of Childminders are willing to offer either a short term childminding service and/or an emergency service for parents.



Respondents care for children from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. The most common is Polish with 33 children being cared for in childminding settings.

CHILDMINDERS QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING STATS



40% of respondents are interested in attending training in a range of topics.



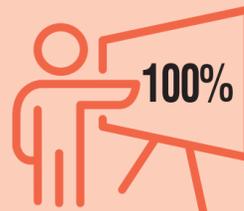
41% of respondents hold a formal early year's qualification. 24% hold a qualification at Level 3.



The main barrier to Childminders accessing training is having to pay for it themselves.



The main factor that would encourage respondents to undertake training is if it was delivered free of charge.



100% of respondents have attended CPD training since becoming Registered Childminders.

CHILDMINDERS SUPPORT STATS



83% of respondents stated they receive enough support in their role as a Childminder. They identified the main source of support comes from other Childminders.



54% of respondents identified NICMA as a source of support.



However, nearly half of the respondents had considered giving up childminding at some stage. The main identified reason for this was due to the increasing requirements linked to the introduction of the Minimum Standards Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 in 2012.

