

**New Funding Model for ELC and SAC
Expert Group Meeting
Thursday 25 March 2021
Webex
Minutes**

Participants

Michael Scanlan (Chair)
Eva Lloyd
Edward Melhuish
Tim Callan
Rory O'Donnell
Tove Mogstad Slinde
Niamh Callaghan (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)
Anne-Marie Brooks (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)
Hazel O'Byrne (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)
Gillian Martin (Secretariat, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)
Andrew Burrows (Secretariat, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)

Apologies

Philip Crosby (Department of Education and Skills)

Welcome

The Chair welcomed the Expert Group to the meeting. He congratulated Hazel O'Byrne on her recent promotion to Principal Officer and her appointment as a member of the Expert Group.

Minutes from last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 24 February were adopted. The minutes and agenda will be published.

Topical Issues

Gillian Martin provided an overview of developments since the last meeting, including an update on the Workforce Development Plan; the Review of the Operating System; the statutory 12-month review of the NCS; the extension of COVID-19 restrictions and related support measures; and the ongoing JLC process between employers and employees in the sector. The Department had also recently presented on the work of the Expert Group at a meeting of the Labour Employer Economic Forum.

Affordability Work Strand

The Chair provided a brief overview of updates in the ESRI draft report on affordability and work incentives. Gillian Martin presented a discussion paper prepared by the Secretariat on the affordability work strand. These inputs were discussed, covering how affordability measures should be targeted,

achieved, and protected, and how affordability and quality can be linked. The composition of the sector was also discussed.

The Secretariat will work to develop options for addressing affordability based on feedback from the Expert Group. A further report from the ESRI on this topic will be available in April.

Update on Quality and Inclusion Work Strands

Hazel O'Byrne updated the group on ongoing work in relation to the quality and inclusion work strands. Work is ongoing with the Revenue Commissioners, Pobal, the Department of Education and the Central Statistics Office to develop understanding and gather information of relevance to these work strands.

The Secretariat will continue to develop proposals and options for consideration at future meetings of the Expert Group.

Consultation and Engagement Work Strand

The reports from Phase 1 of the stakeholder consultation will be finalised and published shortly. Phase 2 commences on Wednesday 31 March with an introductory session for participants of the Early Learning and Care Stakeholder Forum. Frontier Economics will be facilitating the sessions, and are preparing materials for the sessions informed by their expertise and research.

The Expert Group will discuss the approach for Phase 3 at a future meeting.

AOB/Close

The Expert Group was asked to provide any feedback on the second draft of Frontier Working Paper 8 by Thursday 1 April.

The meeting of the Expert Group concluded.