

**New Funding Model for ELC and SAC  
Expert Group Meeting  
Thursday 27 May 2021  
Webex  
Minutes**

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**Participants:**

Michael Scanlan (Chair)  
Edward Melhuish  
Tove Mogstad Slinde  
Tim Callan  
Rory O'Donnell  
Philip Crosby (Department of Education and Skills)  
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)  
Matthew Duffy (Secretariat, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)  
David Carabini (Secretariat, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)

**Present (for relevant parts of meeting):**

Gillian Paull, Frontier Economics  
Nick Fitzpatrick, Frontier Economics

**Apologies:**

Eva Lloyd  
Niamh Callaghan (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)

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**Welcome**

The Chair welcomed the Expert Group to the meeting. Minutes from the last meeting were agreed.

**Topical issues**

Gillian Martin updated the Expert Group on issues including: the progress of the Workforce Development Plan; the Review of the Operating Model; the 1-year review of the NCS; and relevant media and press highlights.

**Stakeholder Consultation**

Nick Fitzpatrick from Frontier Economics presented the results of the final sessions of Phase 2 of the stakeholder consultation, which covered affordability and partnership with the State. The Expert Group then discussed the stakeholder responses on issues raised during the sessions. The discussion focused on the interpretation of the findings, their implications and the potential impact that these findings may have on informing the development of the funding model, particularly in the areas of affordability, accessibility, quality, and the composition of the sector.

There was a presentation on and discussion of Phase 3, and the Expert Group agreed that the proposed approach should proceed.

**Affordability**

Gillian Martin presented papers on options to improve affordability and costings for NCS reforms. The main issues covered in the discussion included: identifying those most in need of assistance regarding affordability; the NCS;

market composition; methods of increasing affordability; the trade-offs associated with certain measures; labour market participation; optimal levels of provision; and stakeholder feedback.

### **Inclusion**

Hazel O'Byrne presented a secretariat discussion paper on the identification and allocation of resources for settings to address disadvantage. Hazel outlined the rationale and contents of the paper and provided updates on the development of the identification model before inviting discussion. The Expert Group discussed issues associated with the allocation of supports including: issues of scale; differences between ELC and SAC provision; the cost of supports; governance and administration; and the shape of the sector.

### **Drafting of the Report**

Gillian Martin presented a draft outline and timeline for the Report. The Expert Group members expressed their opinions regarding the progress, content and structure of the report and agreed on how best to proceed with the drafting process.

### **AOB**

The meeting of the Expert Group concluded.