

**New Funding Model for ELC and SAC  
Expert Group Meeting  
Wednesday 28 July 2021  
Webex  
Minutes**

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**Participants:**

Michael Scanlan (Chair)  
Edward Melhuish  
Eva Lloyd  
Tove Mogstad Slinde  
Tim Callan  
Rory O'Donnell  
Niamh Callaghan (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)  
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):**

Nick Fitzpatrick, Frontier Economics

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**Welcome**

The Chair welcomed the Expert Group to the meeting. Minutes from the last meeting will be recirculated for review.

**Topical issues**

Gillian Martin updated the Expert Group on issues including the ongoing major reviews in the sector: Review of Systems and Structures, Workforce Development Plan, NCS, and AIM. Gillian also provided updates on: the Joint Labour Committee for Early Years Services; pre-budget submissions and relevant issues.

**Stakeholder Consultation**

Nick Fitzpatrick from Frontier Economics presented an update on Phase 3 of the stakeholder consultation. The Expert Group then discussed the outcomes of consultations thus far through Phases 1, 2, and 3. The discussion covered the key points and themes which arose throughout the stakeholder engagement processes and how best to incorporate the views of the stakeholders into the Group's conclusions and report.

**Implementation Work Strand**

Hazel O'Byrne then presented a secretariat information paper on the implementation work strand and led a discussion on Budget 2022 and its potential impact on the Expert Group's work. The emerging draft recommendations were also discussed in terms of sequencing, costs and timelines, in addition

to the potential impacts of external factors such as the other ongoing sectoral reviews and the phased transition of existing Covid-19 supports.

The Chair gave a presentation on a first draft of proposed recommendations of the Expert Group. The subsequent discussion covered issues such as: rationale; prioritisation; feasibility; timelines; potential benefits for children and other stakeholders; additional impacts for the sector; stakeholder views; administration; compliance; and international best practice.

The Chair then led a more general discussion on an initial first draft of the Expert Group's report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The main issues covered included: quality; affordability; fee controls; sustainability; addressing disadvantage; the journey and shape of the sector; structure; tone; scope; consistency with the terms of reference and guiding principles; and suggested improvements to the draft. It was agreed that individual Members would provide written feedback and comments to the secretariat by 18 August and that a second draft would be circulated by 15 September.

**AOB / Close**

The Chair advised the Group that Philip Crosby was retiring from the civil service shortly. He thanked Philip, on behalf of the Group, for his important contribution to the work of the Group and wished him well in his retirement.

The meeting of the Expert Group concluded.