



3 February 2023

**Update for childminders on the
National Action Plan for Childminding 2021-2028**

Dear childminder,

May I start by emphasising how much I value the importance of the work you do as a childminder. You, and other childminders like you, make a large and positive difference to the lives of thousands of children and families in Ireland every day.

The National Action Plan for Childminding 2021-2028 sets out a phased approach to bringing childminders into the scope of regulation, subsidies and supports over the coming years. You may have heard the news that I received Government approval very recently for the next step in that phased approach – agreement to seek to amend legislation to allow for new regulations for childminding. A change in the legislation in turn will make it possible for a much wider cohort of childminders in future to take part in the National Childcare Scheme and benefit from other State supports.

While I firmly believe the National Action Plan will be very beneficial to childminders across the country, I very much understand the concerns and anxiety you may have. I would like to reassure you that the new regulations, when they are written, will be proportionate and will be respectful of the home and family setting that is so essential and unique to childminding. The new regulations will also provide assurance to parents of the quality of care you provide in the best interest of children. To make sure this is the case, I am committed to ensuring that childminders are actively involved in the development of the new regulations.

We have already established an expert Advisory Group on the Regulation and Inspection of Childminders, and I very much welcome the fact that there are a number of childminders on this Group. I am reassured to hear that childminders have already been active participants both on the Steering Group for the National Action Plan and on all four Advisory Groups we established to support the work of the Steering Group.

In addition, my Department will be leading further consultation with childminders on the new regulations over the coming months, through focus groups and through public consultation. The focus groups will begin very shortly. We will provide more information on these consultation processes in the near future. I encourage you to make good use of these opportunities to ensure your voice is heard.

I can also assure you that the process of change will be gradual. While I am keen to allow childminders to register with Tusla and take part in the National Childcare Scheme at



the earliest opportunity, the National Action Plan for Childminding rightly commits to a phased approach. That means that childminders will be given time to register, and that there will be a transition period (Phase 2 of the National Action Plan) during which childminders will be given supports to help them progressively meet regulatory requirements over a number of years.

Officials in my Department will be working on the legislation and drafting the new regulations over the coming months, informed by the childminding Advisory Groups and the consultation with childminders that we will be undertaking. Later this year and through into 2024, we will then be putting in place the supports childminders need to help them meet registration requirements. At this stage we do not have a definite date for when the new regulations would first come into effect or when childminders would be able to take part in the National Childcare Scheme, but we remain committed to the National Action Plan, which set out the ambition of achieving those goals by 2024.

For more information on the National Action Plan for Childminding 2021-2028 please see www.gov.ie/childminding, and contact your local City / County Childcare Committee or Childminding Ireland or other representative organisation.

May I thank you once again for your support for this important process, which I firmly believe is in the interests of childminders, families and children.

Yours sincerely,

Roderic O’Gorman T.D.
Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth