# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **National Childminding Week: Supporting childminders** |
| **DATE**  | **13 May 2024** |
| **BY** | **Jayne Bryant MS, Minister for Mental Health and Early Years** |

The Welsh Government’s ambition to develop and support a skilled childcare and play workforce that is regarded as a career of choice, is set out in our 10-year Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan. The plan also recognises that the childcare sector in Wales is crucial in enabling parents to work and train and is key to the social and economic development of Wales. We are committed to ensuring a range of high-quality childcare options are available to families and children.

Childminders play an important part in supporting this commitment offering professional, high-quality, home-from-home childcare and learning and development support for a range of ages working closely with parents to respond to different needs.

In recent years, the number of registered childminders has declined sharply. In response to this, we commissioned an [Independent Review](https://www.gov.wales/independent-review-childminding) to understand the reasons for this and what might be done to support retention and growth in the number of childminders in Wales. The review made a number of recommendations aimed at addressing the challenges that push some childminders out of the sector and deter others from entering it.

National Childminding Week provides us with an opportunity to celebrate and showcase childminding and its importance within the childcare sector in Wales. It also provides us with an opportunity to update Members about the work we are undertaking, with partners, to respond to the independent review’s recommendations.

A review of the childminding online application process for new applicants will be undertaken to ensure a smooth process. To support new childminders to access a wealth of key information, a one stop resource will be developed to act as a central point for childminders to access information about what advice, support and funding is available to support entry into childminding.

To support childminders run their settings, guidance will be developed to help childminders understand and draft the policies they need to minimise administrative burden. Guidance is also to be developed outlining what to expect from inspections to allay childminder concerns in this area.

The *Planning and Childcare in Wales Policy Clarification Letter* will be updated and re-issued to assist with planning applications which could enable childminders to expand the capacity of their provision. Work to raise awareness of business support available to support childminders will also take place.

Local authorities (working with PACEY Cymru) will be encouraged to facilitate cluster or network meetings for new and established childminders. Engagement will also take place with childminders to ensure the delivery of training is best suited to their needs.

Alongside this, we will continue to collect data relating to childminder registrations and cancellations of registrations annually so that we may see if our actions are making a difference.

Work is already underway on a number of actions. I will be monitoring this work closely and will keep Members informed about progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all partners working with us to deliver these actions to support retention and growth in the number of childminders in Wales.