



SCMA STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 - 11

Our Vision and Key Priorities

Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) promotes childminding as a quality childcare service, through its Vision and Key Priorities for childminding. These were developed by the Association's Elected Members. The Association's Vision Statement is:

"Quality Childminding ... building confident children within a family childcare experience"

In order to achieve the Vision, there are three key priorities:

1. Raising the profile of childminding and the work of the Association
2. Improving the quality of childminding
3. Recruiting and retaining professional, quality childminders

Our Background and Structure

SCMA is a national charity and membership organisation founded in 1985. It has over 4,500 members representing around 85% of Scotland's childminders and others with an interest in quality childminding.

The structure of the Scottish Childminding Association is based upon a network of volunteer members from the 32 local authority areas and around 46 staff who work to promote the organisation. The strength of the Association lies in its belief that every member has the right to contribute and play an active part in the future of the Association through its many networks.

SCMA maintains its commitment to its volunteers and staff through its Investors in People status. The Association seeks to promote childminding as a quality childcare service. Through its members, elected members, volunteers and staff, the Association strives to influence policy and provide information and training as to how the highest standards of childminding can be achieved.

How we set our Priorities and Goals

The Association has a team of volunteers most of whom are childminders. They represent the various local authority areas in Scotland and have been voted on by the members in their areas. These volunteers form our Board and our Childminding Development Team.

Once a year they meet to review our strategic plan and to set goals against our three key priorities for the forthcoming year.

SCMA's Strategic Plan demonstrates that we support the Scottish Governments' Strategic Objectives - a Scotland that is Wealthier and Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger and Greener. In order to achieve these high level objectives fifteen National Outcomes were produced. Each of our goals are aligned to these national outcomes.

Our Goals



Key Priority One: To raise the profile of childminding and the work of the Association

Improve our services to members and increase membership of SCMA

Our members are our most important asset and we know that we need to look after them. Members are very satisfied with the quality of service they receive from us but we are not complacent. In the future we know we need to listen more to their needs to ensure we are getting things right. We need to make sure we let them know what we have been doing to represent their interests and ensure we continue to provide much valued services such as access to public liability insurance or to our member's forum. We aim to increase communications with our childminding support groups and use our staff and volunteers to raise awareness of our services.

To provide and improve our information services about childminding and the work of the Association

It is reassuring for our members and anyone looking for information about childminding that they have one organisation that has it all. We will continue to be the experts in childminding and develop these services. This includes 'Childminding' our members' magazine, our website and various publications. Our Helpline is also a key service both for our members and for members of the public and will continue to be easily accessible. SCMA will also strive to provide local authorities and other relevant organisations with information on the work of SCMA and the childcare sector.

To ensure the viability of the Association and secure ways of diversifying our funding base

We are committed to using our funds in the most efficient and effective ways possible. We know that our member's funds are precious and that we have a responsibility to use public money wisely. Over the forthcoming years it will be increasingly important to minimise risks and be prudent in the way we use our existing funds and look for ways of diversifying our funding base.

To ensure that SCMA assists with and influences policy in relation to early years and childcare services

With our comprehensive knowledge about childminding we know we are well placed to assist and influence government and other stakeholders in the formulation of policy about early years and childcare. This will be particularly important as a new scrutiny and improvement body comes into force in 2011 and government moves forward on achieving the outcomes in its national performance framework and its early years framework. We will continue to consult our members over policy issues to ensure that our information is up to date.

Volunteering with SCMA

The support received from our members is extremely valuable to the Association. Elected members represent each local authority area in Scotland and come together nationally to serve on either the Board or the Childminding Development Team. We are aware that there are many more members who would be willing to fly the flag for SCMA by promoting our services and membership more locally. To this end we will expand the current use of Volunteers. A separate "Volunteering with SCMA" strategy will be implemented. This will allow those time-served elected members who may wish to continue to support SCMA and other members who are keen to contribute opportunities to promote childminding and the work of the Association at local level.

Key Priority Two: To improve the quality of childminding

Continue to promote learning with SCMA

We have a straight forward programme of learning in the SCMA training framework for those either intending or those already providing a childminding service. This starts with our Induction programme and goes on to outline a range of continuing professional development workshops that we deliver. Where appropriate we would encourage learners to take up our Scheme of Excellence award which is entered on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Our intention is to raise awareness of the learning opportunities with SCMA and increase the number of childminders taking part.

Launch the newly accredited Scheme of Excellence

Our Scheme of Excellence award is due for reaccreditation in 2010. We are aiming to increase the level it appears on the SCQF to level 7. This will bring it in line with other awards and ensure it is appropriate to the level that childminders operate at. We aim to launch the newly accredited award in October 2010.

Maintain our quality assurance systems

We have developed a comprehensive quality assurance system to ensure that our trainers are maintaining a good standard of delivery and that their training needs are identified and met. We intend to continue with this to ensure our training meets the highest standards.

Key Priority Three: To recruit and retain professional quality childminders

Attract high-quality individuals to childminding

In the past it was sometimes thought that childminding was either unimportant or an easy option. These days it is recognised that this is a demanding and vital service that needs only those with a real aptitude and dedication to the care of children. Our Induction programme is designed to assist the right applicants to go ahead with their registration and we aim to make this available throughout Scotland.

Raise awareness of childminders as being at the heart of an early intervention strategy

Providing a local family-based service allows childminders to be uniquely placed to really understand what is happening in the lives of the families they work with. Childminders build up a very close relationship with their families and can spot potential problems before they build up into something worse. With their small ratios childminders can identify where a child is not developing as expected or where family problems are causing stresses that need help. In consultation with the family, these early referrals make a real difference. We aim to ensure that local authorities and health professionals understand the role of childminders in identifying families in need of early intervention services. We also aim to ensure that childminders have the information and training they need to detect these early warning signs.

There are times though in every family when additional help is required and community childminders provide the perfect choice to provide local non stigmatised childcare places to help in those times. We aim to increase the number of community childminding services in Scotland.

All this is in line with the aims of 'getting it right for every child', to give all children and young people the best start in life.

Increase access to the SCMA training framework

We are aware that there is currently limited access to our training in some local authority areas so our plan is to broaden that access. We now have in place a national training plan that centralises the booking of training and will in the future centralise where training is delivered. This will break down the current funding barriers to training and allow members to access the training which is best suited to them. We aim to ensure that all childminders have access to SCMA training.

Achieve branded learning centre status

We have completed the process of becoming a branded learning centre. This will allow us to give improved guidance to members about available training with a variety of providers including on-line learning. It will also allow members to use their ILAs to fund training.

