

# Above and Beyond

Annual Report 2020-2021

**scma**<sup>®</sup>

Scottish  
Childminding  
Association

*committed to quality childcare*



# Going above and beyond...

A message from Graeme McAlister, Chief Executive of SCMA

**This last year has been like no other. SCMA had just agreed a new, three-year strategy aimed at addressing a number of the challenges being faced by childminding, when COVID-19 struck.**

Recognising the national emergency in which we all found ourselves, we put our new strategy on hold to prioritise supporting members at this time. To do this we quickly enabled remote working for all staff, who have continued to work on full hours around the country throughout the pandemic.

We put significant energy into keeping childminding open as long it was safe to do so. Due to the lower risk of infection associated with our small setting size, childminding has been able to stay open more than any other form of childcare during COVID-19 (including to provide vital childcare for key workers and vulnerable children). So many of our members across the country stepped up to do this during very difficult and challenging circumstances and we remain very proud of how childminders have, and continue, to go above and beyond to support their families and communities.

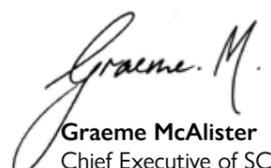
The ever-evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated frequent changes to Childminder Services Guidance and SCMA maintained regular communications with members to ensure they were always up to date with the guidance requirements and operated safely for the families they cared for, in addition to contributing to national recovery planning. Where policy measures or restrictions proved harmful to childminding, we used evidence to influence change.

In parallel, we influenced a range of financial support for childminders whose businesses had been affected by the significant decrease in demand

for childcare due to parents being required to work from home or being on furlough. This included investing our own funds to act as a stimulus for securing financial support from the Scottish Government for childminders experiencing financial hardship, as well as building a successful case for larger-scale financial support for business sustainability.

While COVID-19 has undoubtedly worsened a number of the challenges already being faced by childminding pre-pandemic, we will continue to play a vital role in supporting national and local economic recovery. This is why we believed it was necessary for a positive leadership approach and our new strategy was launched in May 2021. In simple terms, we believe it is time to Change the Narrative by Strengthening Childminding, Supporting Families and Increasing Choice.

I feel that that what #TeamSCMA has achieved in such challenging times has been phenomenal and would like to personally thank our staff, Leadership Team and the Scottish Executive Board for their support and dedication. I would also like to sincerely thank our members for their commitment to families and without whose continued support it would not be possible for SCMA to do as much as we do to support childminding.

  
**Graeme McAlister**  
 Chief Executive of SCMA

“Childminding will continue to play a vital role in supporting national and local economic recovery”.



Liz Stewart, SCMA Convener

**Well, what can I say? Childminders across Scotland have gone above and beyond whilst facing so many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Despite this, there have been moments of joy, success and triumph, as we take a look back and marvel at the hard work, resilience and dedication, that we childminders have for our children and families.

Facing a public health crisis, lots of uncertainty and business concerns - and whilst adopting additional operating procedures and following enhanced safety guidance - childminders have continued to welcome children into their homes with a big warm smile.

Like so many other organisations, #TeamSCMA had to quickly adapt to working from home to ensure there was no disruption to core service delivery and SCMA has undoubtedly been a guiding light for us all during the pandemic, providing reliable guidance, tailored support and devoting and securing financial support for childminders.

In addition, SCMA has provided an invaluable voice for childminding, both at local and national levels, where together we work to ensure that childminders' voices are heard, considered and have the recognition they deserve. We remain confident and proud of #TeamSCMA, which includes the Scottish Executive Board, who use their grassroots knowledge and experience to benefit the Association.

Despite the challenges, SCMA continues to be a forward-thinking organisation; always looking for opportunities to

support members, and our families and communities. And this is reflected in the 'looking to the future' section of this Annual Report where we introduce our new three-year strategy.

Whether we are serving on the SCMA Board or within our own individual childminding settings, we are all passionate about one thing – benefiting the lives and wellbeing of the children.

SCMA's Vision remains unchanged and very much at the heart of what we do, providing “quality childminding - building confident children within a family childcare experience”.

I'm overwhelmed with pride for the childminding workforce and look forward to a better year ahead and a positive future for childminding in Scotland.

  
**Liz Stewart**  
 Convener, SCMA



## Annual Finance Report 2020-2021

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

	2020	2021	2020	2021
<b>Incoming Resources</b>				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
<b>Voluntary Income</b>				
Memberships and Subscriptions and Gift Aid	182,353	179,514		
Other Grants	89,912	449,536		
CYPFEIF Core Funding	285,000	285,000		
<b>Activities for Generating Funds</b>				
Project and Service Agreement and Administration	171,795	254,383		
Income from Insurance Sales	142,811	130,170		
Sales of Publications	43,619	35,171		
Conference Receipts	13,685	20		
Advertising	750	0		
Delivering Training to SCMA Members	74,213	63,342		
<b>Investment Income</b>				
Deposit Account Interest	7,251	8,422		
<b>Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities</b>				
Project and Service Agreement Funding (excluding fees)	796,261	1,398,653		
Total Incoming Resources	1,807,650	2,804,211		
<b>Resources Expended</b>				
Charitable Activities	797,251	1,827,524		
Generating Funds	738,159	724,008		
Support Costs	117,118	137,842		
Governance	103,413	113,919		
Total Resources Expended	1,755,941	2,803,293		
<b>Net Incoming / (outgoing) resources</b>			<b>51,709</b>	<b>918</b>
*Total Funds (brought forward)			1,053,055	

\* Reserves carried forward are necessary to help safeguard an organisation in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

# A year in focus 2020-2021

## Supporting Our Members | National Response During COVID-19

We recognised early on in the pandemic that the national position and operating guidance for childminders was changing frequently, with little warning. Information vacuums were arising – childminders needed a reliable source to interpret what this meant for their practice and for the families they supported; parents too were uncertain.

We quickly established SCMA as a trusted source of information and took urgent action to represent childminding at the very highest level with Scottish Government, Care Inspectorate and other stakeholders.



### What did we do?

March 2020

We developed a dedicated COVID-19 webpage featuring Frequently Asked Questions, and this page alone received **35,000 hits** in the first six months.

Recorded and uploaded **28 video updates** on the changing operating guidance and other developments, and our YouTube channel received more than **40,000 views** across the year.



“Having just watched Graeme’s latest video – he has always been honest, clear and concise: summarising it better than anyone else has been able to. When I see a video posted, I know it will be understandable and informative, and worth finding the time to watch.”

“We know SCMA is fighting for us, and you are there for support during this challenging time it means a lot.”

SCMA MEMBER



#TeamSCMA answered more than **10,000 calls** to our Helpline

Local #TeamSCMA staff supported the **delivery of critical childcare** for key workers and vulnerable children across Scotland.

### Influencing Policy & Practice

SCMA contributed extensively to national recovery discussions with Scottish Government

and Care Inspectorate to ensure that the frequently changing Childminding Services Guidance for COVID-19 reflected the needs and experience of childminders.

SCMA successfully advocated for the need to ease restrictions on blended placements in the summer of 2020. Our survey found only 19% of members believed their business would be viable in 12 months’ time if restrictions remained in place when the schools returned after the holidays.

“I just wanted to thank you all [at SCMA] for all your hard work helping childminders through this unprecedented pandemic.”

“I have been closed, opened, working reduced days and hours - especially with school closures where my parents are teachers and don’t require my service – it has been very challenging to stay afloat and keep going, not to mention staying positive.”

“However, thanks to you and all your perseverance on our behalf with the Scottish Government. I just wanted to let you know how much I have appreciated all the help and info you have sent out to us regularly.”

SCMA MEMBER



SCMA secured a commitment from Scottish Government to develop a new **Action Plan for Childminding** and contributed heavily to its development.

### Financial Support

SCMA worked tirelessly to influence and provide financial support for childminding settings affected by COVID-19:

July 2020



SCMA invested **£30,000** from its own funds to initiate and establish the Childminding Workforce Support Fund and to provide a stimulus for further funding. Initially this was match funded by the Scottish Government, providing **£60,000 in small grant funds** of up to £350 each for childminders experiencing financial difficulty.

Oct 2020

SCMA’s work to secure further funding resulted in Scottish Government allocating an **additional £390,000** towards the Childminding Workforce Support Fund, enabling a total of **1,200 childminders** to receive much needed support.

We undertook surveys on financial viability to capture evidence on behalf of childminders, built the case for and played a key role in influencing the **£3.2m Childminding Business Sustainability Fund**, which enabled all childminding settings to apply for a **£750 one-off grant**.



- We secured the **continuation of college payments** to childminders.
- We lobbied Scottish Government to influence the **Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund**.

“I want to thank SCMA yet again for their support and help. I overlooked the Business Sustainability Grant application sent by the Care Inspectorate and would have missed out if it were it not for SCMA signposting it to childminders.”

SCMA MEMBER

### Media & Political Interest



SCMA significantly **raised the profile of childminding**, securing a wide range of media coverage. Chief Executive Graeme McAlister was a regular contributor to TV interviews and took part in national discussions to help raise awareness and inform debate.

We set up regular interviews with childminders to provide a real-life perspective on how guidance was affecting settings – and our concerns were also raised by MSPs in the Scottish Parliament at the highest level including featuring in First Minister’s Questions.

### SCMA Wellbeing Service

After securing **£70,000** from the Scottish Government’s Wellbeing Fund, our Wellbeing Service was launched, taking

direct referrals from organisations such as Women’s Aid who were temporarily unable to provide physical support for vulnerable families. The innovative service matched children with local childminders who could provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment.

The Wellbeing Service helped over **100 children and parents** and provided respite for many.

“The service has been fantastic support. My wee one loves going to the childminder, who has been an amazing support. There’s been a huge change in my daughter.”

PARENT



### Membership Engagement

Almost **1,500 responses** to our **#TellSCMA: Childminding and You Survey**

providing valuable information to inform development of our new strategy.

A new membership benefit and support service introduced, offering SCMA members **free access to Health Assured counselling support package**, which aims to benefit, protect and enhance members’ emotional health and wellbeing

Experienced a significantly increased level of **membership engagement** through our communications channels (Facebook, website, e-mail and Helpline contact).



Co-ordinated a video call with SCMA members and Maree Todd, Minister for Children and Young People, which enabled childminders to discuss their experiences of operating during COVID-19 and provide feedback.

Oct 2020

### We Moved Office!

In addition to the unprecedented level of activity to support our members - SCMA moved office locations during the pandemic, as our lease was due to expire on our Stirling Head Office premises. While home working has increased, SCMA still requires an office base, and a new lease, providing financial savings and more flexible office-space, was secured on premises at Castle Business Park in Stirling.

# Looking to the future...

Over the last decade childminding in Scotland has undergone much change through the professionalisation of childminding practice and the development of early years policy.

As the professional voice of childminding, SCMA has gained the respect and support of a wide range of stakeholders with whom we work closely to influence policy and standards as they impact on childminding. We need to maintain and build on this position for the benefit of childminders and the families and children we support.

Prior to COVID-19 the shape of the childminding workforce had changed with both an increase in those leaving the profession and a decrease in those coming into it. We recognised that leadership and action were required to redress these worsening trends, to deliver growth in the childminding workforce and to ensure that childminders are supported in their ongoing learning and quality practice delivery.

In parallel, membership is at the heart of what we do, and we recognised that members' needs, and expectations change and that the services and support which we provide must evolve and be responsive to their needs.

Demand from vulnerable families to access our vital Community Childminding services has exceeded our capacity to support more referrals and there is a pressing need to develop this service further to support families.

While those who use, know about and understand childminding value it greatly, too many do not and are not aware of the potential which it could offer their families. There is a need to raise wider awareness about the benefits of childminding, to change outdated perceptions, to increase the value attached to childminding and to increase parental demand for childminding services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only intensified these issues and heightened our need for a new strategy.

“Membership is at the heart of what we do, and we recognised that members’ needs, and expectations change and that the services and support which we provide must evolve and be responsive to their needs.”



# Changing the Narrative: New SCMA Strategy 2021-2024

Our new, three-year strategy was launched in May 2021, with the aim of strengthening childminding, supporting families and increasing choice.

Our focus will be on the following five key areas:

- **Membership:** helping members to recover and sustain their businesses and ensuring our membership support adapts to changing needs; providing them with what they need, when they need it and in the most appropriate form.
- **Policy, Representation and Influencing:** continuing to provide a strong professional voice and using evidence and childminders' experiences to influence and support national and local policy.
- **Workforce, Learning and Quality:** reversing the declining trends within our workforce, and supporting on-going skills development and learning at all career stages.
- **Children and Families:** further development of Community Childminding and our other services to meet the increasing demand from families in need, increasing support for school-age childcare and developing childminding in areas where provision is low.
- **Value of Childminding:** changing outdated perceptions of childminding, increasing the value attached to it by parents, policymakers, other providers and the wider public to create more demand for childminding.

While we are not out of COVID yet, and we may need to adjust our plans as we go, we hope that by sharing our priorities and the strategic framework in which we will be operating over the next three years that this may create more opportunities for joint working with a range of stakeholders where our interests are shared.



Strengthening Childminding, Supporting Families and Increasing Choice



# Key Stats and Figures 2020-2021

## SCMA MEMBERS



84% OF  
CHILD MindERS ARE  
**scma**  
MEMBERS

## BECOMING A CHILDMINDER



1,835 downloads  
Guide to Becoming a Childminder



337 PEOPLE (69% completed our Childminding Induction Support Programme (69% completed online, via e-Learning with SCMA))

## childminding.org

82,821 visits  
to childminding.org



### CHILDMINDER SEARCH SERVICE

54,541 PARENTS  
searched using

2,186 childminders  
ACTIVE ON  
our Childminder Search Service

34,436 logged onto the  
MEMBERSHIP DASHBOARD

## LEARN WITH SCMA

1,462 childminders  
completed a  
CPL course



500+ scma  
members accessed  
our FREE CPL offer

### COURSES COMPLETED

539  
Interactive/virtual

923  
e-Learning courses

### REALISING THE AMBITION

2,197 VIEWS  
of our 'Introduction to Realising the Ambition' video discount for our new Realising the Ambition CPL course

50% OFF  
DISCOUNT

for our new Realising  
the Ambition CPL course

1,300+ HELPLINE calls received by #TeamSCMA

## FACEBOOK



6,894 LIKES | 7,502 FOLLOWERS

TOP POST REACH:  
34,345 PEOPLE | 4,789 ENGAGED

643,364  
AVERAGE REACH  
OF TOTAL POSTS



## TWITTER



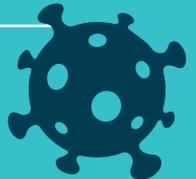
@ScotChildmind | 3,125 FOLLOWERS

284,194 REACH OF IMPRESSIONS

TOP TWEET EARNED  
11,351 IMPRESSIONS

TOP POST RECEIVED  
151 ENGAGEMENTS

## COVID-19



40,261 hits to our dedicated  
COVID-19 webpage

132 TOTAL FAQs  
published during COVID-19

40,000 YouTube  
views of our YouTube videos

All figures taken from April 2020 – March 2021

**scma** Scottish  
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committed to quality childcare

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Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
[gov.scot](http://gov.scot)

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