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Graeme McAlister
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By email: graeme.mcalister@childminding.org

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Dear Graeme,

Many thanks for joining us for the roundtable meeting in response to the comprehensive and helpful submission the SCMA provided to the consultation on inspection of early learning and childcare and school age childcare services in Scotland last year.

We held the roundtable in order to discuss what current initiatives were being taken forward to support childminders specifically with the administrative burdens they experience. I recognise that there is a significant amount of work taking place to explore how childminders can be best supported.

We agreed that the Scottish Government would clarify the position in terms of the expectations of childminders when subject to the assurance and monitoring processes put in place by local authorities in their role as guarantors of quality under the National Standard. We have heard that some childminders understand that their local authority requires them to report against Education Scotland's How Good Is Our ELC (HGIOELC) as part of their self-evaluation in advance of the local authority monitoring and assurance process.

We also recognise that HGIOELC is used voluntarily by some childminders to support them to carry out self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is a core part of the inspection process and we recognise that HGIOELC can be a useful tool for helping childminders with this. It can also be helpful for practitioners to identify strengths in the ways they are currently working, and to identify areas where more could be done to improve outcomes for children and their families.

We have discussed the position in relation to the use of HGIOELC with both COSLA and ADES, who have confirmed that while each local authority has autonomy to determine the way in which they conduct their assurance and monitoring activity, in line with the Care Inspectorate requirements, **local authorities do not expect childminders to use HGIOELC as part of their self-evaluation process.**

If a childminder has been instructed to use HGIOELC, they should contact their local authority to seek clarification. It is also worth pointing out that while Ministers have the

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legislative powers available to ask HM Inspectors to carry out inspection of childminders who provide funded ELC, Education Scotland do not currently inspect this form of provision.

In terms of ongoing inspections by the Care Inspectorate, we would expect childminders to continue to use the Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework. This is until the implementation of the [shared inspection framework](#), which is currently being developed in partnership by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland and will provide additional support for self-evaluation. Following its full implementation in September 2024 the shared framework will apply to all early learning and childcare settings, including childminding settings, as well as to school age childcare services.

One of the aims of the development of the shared framework is to take account of feedback from stakeholders and to minimise any burden of external scrutiny in the early learning and childcare sector, including in childminding settings. It should help to strengthen partnership working between the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland, particularly for those services that are inspected by both organisations. Both the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland are continuing to work to ensure that the specific interests of childminders are reflected in the new shared framework and will engage further with practitioners as the framework is tested and implemented. We would encourage your members to respond to the [survey](#) launched alongside the draft framework on 23 November, which closes on Friday 19th January 2024.

Kind regards,



Eleanor Passmore
Deputy Director for Early Learning and Childcare

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