

Changing the Narrative

Strengthening Childminding,
Supporting Families and Increasing Choice

SCMA Strategy 2021-2024



SCMA is the only national organisation in Scotland dedicated to supporting all aspects of childminding.

83% of Scotland's childminders are members. In recent years, childminding has experienced a number of challenges which have only been intensified by COVID-19, so the need for our new strategy is greater than ever.

Over the next three years we will be strengthening childminding, supporting families and increasing parental choice by focusing on five key areas.

Membership

During the next three years, we will:

Provide a professional voice for members, ensure that what we do is responsive to and informed by the needs and experiences of our membership, and continue to strengthen membership engagement, participation and involvement.



Support members with recovering and growing their businesses and develop and implement a refreshed membership package to ensure that it is competitive, offers strong value at all stages of career within childminding, supports different business models (0-12/16 years), and that this provides members with what they need, when they need it and in the most appropriate format.

Increase membership recruitment and retention, grow our membership, and consolidate our national position and representative base by working towards our goal that 90% of childminders in Scotland will be members of SCMA by 2030.

Representation, Policy and Influencing

During the next three years, we will:

Influence, inform and support the development and implementation of national and local policy (Early Years and other areas*) to ensure this is appropriate, proportionate and reflects the needs and experiences of childminding.

Provide particular support in the implementation of Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) policy, nationally and locally (including contracting a range of services with Local Authorities), to increase the number of childminders involved in delivering funded hours through both individual and blended care and to support parental choice.

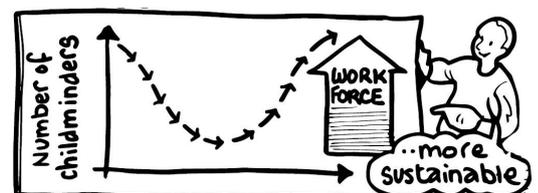
Undertake, contribute to and promote the need for research to strengthen the evidence base in relation to childminding to support the development of evidence-based national and local policy.



Workforce, Learning and Quality

During the next three years, we will:

Support the childminding workforce in responding to changing demand for childcare post-COVID-19, work with others to provide stability, increase retention and develop a more sustainable childminding workforce with the aim of bringing the workforce back into growth.



Support skills development and learning at all career stages and maintain and improve quality standards, by further developing our childminding-specific Continuing Professional Learning programme for childminders in support of developments in childminding practice, national policy, and the changing requirements of inspection and quality improvement.

Promote the quality which exists within the childminding workforce, share best practice to encourage and support quality improvement and promote and consolidate the role and value of play in learning.

*To influence the best outcomes for the children and families that our members support, we are regularly invited to contribute to a wide range of policy areas including early years, school-age childcare, children and young people, education, inequalities, poverty, social inclusion, mental health and wellbeing.

Families and Communities

During the next three years, we will:

Work to extend and develop nationally our support for vulnerable children and families (through our Community Childminding and Wellbeing services), developing services in new local authority areas.



Work to develop childminding services in areas where childminding provision is low, and in which social, economic or geographic inequalities are pronounced, to increase access to childminding, to support local community development, employment and increase parental choice.

Consolidate the position and place of childminding within the community, as a community asset, in supporting children and families from birth to high school (0-12/16 years), through transitions within, and increasing our support for school-age children.

Value of Childminding

During the next three years, we will:

Lead and undertake work to change perceptions of childminding and to increase wider understanding about the value of childminding (including its equal standing to other providers and additional benefits).

Undertake targeted work to increase the value attached to childminding by: parents (to increase demand for childminding services); policymakers (to increase support for and contracting with childminding); other professionals (to increase referral or signposting to childminding) and for children with additional support needs.



As we move through recovery, undertake targeted recruitment activity to increase the value of childminding as a potential career, positively presenting childminding as an informed career option to those seeking a more rewarding career and to bring new entrants into the profession.

Our five key strands of activity will be underpinned by the following principles:

- Our values-based approach in which **children and families** are at the heart of all that we do
- Supporting **parental choice** and working together with parents
- Using **evidence** to inform our, and others', activities
- Working in **partnership** with a range of stakeholders to maximise benefit and impact
- Monitoring and **evaluating** our impact, progress against objectives and adapting our approach as required
- Securing **sustainable and diverse** funding
- Optimising our use of **technology** to support the delivery of our activities
- Recognising that our **members** are our greatest resource
- Valuing, engaging, supporting, investing in and developing **our staff**

The need for a new strategy

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, we have gained the respect and support of a wide range of stakeholders with whom we work closely to influence policy and standards that 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 already changed, with both an increase in those leaving the profession and a decrease in those coming into it. We recognised leadership and action were required to redress these worsening trends, to deliver growth in the childminding workforce and ensure childminders are supported in their on-going learning and the delivery of their quality practice.

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 had 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 pandemic has only intensified these issues and heightened the need for our new strategy. We are passionate about and believe firmly in the future of childminding. Join us on the next stage of our journey.

Graeme

Graeme McAlister
Chief Executive

Liz

Liz Stewart
SCMA Convener



Scottish Childminding Association
Argyll Court, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4TY
Tel: 01786 445377 Email: information@childminding.org

childminding.org

© Scottish Childminding Association 2021
Illustrations created and supplied by Graham Ogilvie Designs

The Scottish Childminding Association is a Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in Scotland.
Registered Charity No SC010489. Limited Company No 144696



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government through a CYPFEIF and ALEC Fund Grant.

