

DIRECTOR OF QUALITY, PRACTICE & LEARNING

(Part-time, up to 22hrs per week¹)

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Who are we?

SCMA is the only national organisation in Scotland specialising in supporting all aspects of childminding practice. We are a membership organisation with circa 2,500 members (approximately 85% of the childminding workforce); we are a national Third Sector advocacy body (through which we provide a professional voice for childminding and work to ensure that national policy and standards as they impact upon childminding are influenced by evidence and the experiences of childminders); we are a service provider delivering local services, contracted by local authorities, for childminders and vulnerable families; and we have also become a national delivery partner delivering a number of projects for the Scottish Government.

Organisational Development and Strategy

As background, childminding had experienced a number of significant challenges over the years and in response SCMA developed and launched a new three-year strategy in May 2021 (mid-pandemic and at a time when few were looking forward) to promote recovery, strengthen childminding, support families and increase parental choice as part of a longer ten year journey. This provided a catalyst for change and we are incredibly proud of all that we have achieved so far, including:

- ✓ significantly increasing the profile, value and importance of childminding
- ✓ making childminding more relevant to different policy agendas (ELC, school-age childcare, Additional Support Needs, remote and islands, community and economic development, parental employment, child poverty and others)
- ✓ strengthening the evidence, creating partnerships and piloting solutions
- ✓ securing vital Scottish Government funding commitments including a new national programme on childminder recruitment and retention
- ✓ strengthening SCMA's voice, membership benefits, engagement and impact

We are currently in the second (and delivery) stage of our strategy which is strongly focused on solutions, recognising that:

- **childminders** provide flexible, high-quality childcare solutions for families
- **childminding** provides solutions for a range of policy agendas
- **SCMA** provides solutions to inform development and implementation of policy and practice

Our strategy continues to span the five work areas of 'Representation, Policy & Influencing', 'Workforce, Learning & Quality', 'Membership', 'Families & Communities' and the 'Value of Childminding' and contains 15 commitments and objectives including:

- continuing to represent and provide a voice for childminders
- strengthening membership support at all career stages
 - further developing our childminding-specific CPL programme, documentation and policies
 - supporting members to diversify their business models to support sustainability
- continuing to address the issues which have been causing childminders to leave the workforce
- delivering a new three-year national programme on childminder retention and recruitment
- strengthening our family support and contributing to the further development of all-age childcare
- continuing to increase the profile and value of childminding.

¹ Negotiable. SCMA may be willing to accept a reduction in hours (e.g. to 17 or 18 hrs per week) to enable the candidate to undertake two part-time roles

[This accompanying animation](#) provides a short and easy means of accessing our strategy.

Our Services

We also deliver a range of services across Scotland, ensuring that childminders are able to improve the quality of their delivery through professional learning, providing high-quality, nurturing childcare and family support. At this time this includes the following:

- **Professional Learning**

Our Learn with SCMA function offers a range of Continuing Professional Learning (CPL) opportunities to support childminders with ongoing quality improvement. Over 90% of childminders consistently score 'Good' or Above across all quality criteria, through independent inspection by the Care Inspectorate, which is the highest rating of any childcare provider. In recent years we have invested in our CPL Strategy, brought production of our courses in-house and now provide an expanded range of new and updated interactive/virtual learning courses and events as well as our e-learning courses delivered on our own SCMA online platform.

- **Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)**

Working in partnership with 7 local authorities, we have locality-based field staff who support the involvement of childminders in the delivery of funded Early Learning and Childcare hours for 2,3 and 4-year-olds. Service delivery includes recruitment, training, quality assurance, ELC referrals, payments, and overall support.

- **Community Childminding**

Community Childminding is an early intervention for families who may be one step away from crisis, where whatever is going on at a parental level (addiction, bereavement, mental health, terminal illness etc) has been impacting on young children's behaviour (such as through the development of attachment disorders), this has been picked up by health visitors or social workers and the families referred to our services for support. We are currently commissioned to provide Community Childminding services in 4 local authority areas (Aberdeen, Fife, Glasgow and Scottish Borders). Community Childminders receive enhanced training to provide short-term childminding placements for children and families who would benefit from early intervention support. These vital services have helped over 900 families in need in the last 3 years, demand exceeds our capacity to supply, and we believe this has the potential to be developed in other local authority areas and indeed nationally. Click on the link to see more information, including our Community Childminding Briefing Sheet: childminding.org/enhanced-family-support

- **School-Aged Childcare**

We are currently working across 6 Early Adopter Communities (EACs) / local authorities to deliver a School-Aged Childcare service (SACC), raising awareness of childminders as providers of SACC, providing funded access to SACC in childminding settings as well as recruiting new childminders into the workforce. It will support low-income families and those where children have additional support needs, seeking to reduce the impact of child poverty and it will also provide key learning and modelling to inform future expansion and sustainability of school-aged childcare with childminders. As the policy landscape has evolved, the emphasis of the project has widened from its original focus on SACC to all-age childcare.

- **Workforce Retention and Recruitment**

Within our strategy SCMA committed to leading nationally on the development of a sustainable childminding workforce. Since then we have advocated for change, built the evidence, created partnerships (first in rural then urban areas) and secured funding to pilot a new method of recruiting childminders and also measures aimed at supporting the existing workforce. This work was recognised in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government for the role childminders could play in contributing to the reduction of child poverty. This led to the launch of the Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future (PSCF) in June 2024 – a three year national programme on childminder recruitment and retention predominantly funded by the Scottish Government and

delivered by SCMA. Currently just entering Year 3, the PSCF has seen 31 out of 32 local authorities in Scotland partnering with SCMA for us to deliver our demographically-targeted recruitment campaign and supported model of childminder recruitment in their areas. To date 587 candidates have commenced Induction, 157 new childminders have completed registration with the Care Inspectorate and established their businesses, a further 138 candidates have submitted their applications to become childminders to the Care Inspectorate and more are continuing to come through behind – creating a potential 2000+ much-needed new childminding spaces for families around Scotland. In parallel, childminders in 17 local authority areas have been participating in retention pilots including mentoring, different models of Funded Time Off the Floor and a range of new Quality supports and materials have been developed for the whole childminding workforce.

Visit our website to learn more about SCMA, our wide range of activities and increasing influence on behalf of childminders and families: childminding.org

About the role of Director of Quality, Practice & Learning

We are delighted to be recruiting for the role of Director of Quality, Practice & Learning.

We are looking for an experienced, innovative, collaborative and solutions-focused Director of Quality, Practice & Learning. This is a new re-focused role within our Leadership Team which has arisen following the early retirement of a previous member of staff. The new role recognises that the previous role had evolved, as have our current and future needs linked to our strategy and the changing political landscape.

The successful postholder will work as part of our Leadership Team contributing to SCMA's overall policy development, strategic planning, budget preparation and control, and lead on quality, learning and practice development. This new re-focused position presents an exciting opportunity to play a key role in delivering our strategy, future ambitions and in shaping and influencing the development and delivery of childminding practice in Scotland

The successful applicant will consolidate, oversee and develop our quality function and activities (provided to our membership through our services and to the wider childminding workforce through the Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future) and contribute to the development and implementation of our CPL strategy, linked to the delivery of our wider organisational strategy.

We are looking for someone who has significant experience and understanding of quality improvement, practice development and professional learning within an early learning/childcare environment; a demonstrable track record in innovation and establishing partnerships (including securing funding); experience of working in partnership with local authorities; and has the drive and enthusiasm to work with us on the next stage of our strategic journey.

This is a permanent position. However, as a significant level of our current funding is only confirmed to 31 March 2027 due to the Scottish Parliamentary elections in May 2026, this role could also present a possible interim / secondment / acting-up opportunity. It is also possible that increased hours for this post could be offered in future.

The post is home/head office based, days to be agreed, with regular attendance at our Head Office in Stirling. Equipment will be provided. Some travel may be required.

Working with Us: Benefits

Our staff matter to us. Previously achieving a silver award in Investors in People, we subsequently developed our own internal approach to ensuring the success of our organisation through our people – aptly named 'Engaging With Our People' and continue to work with an external organisational development consultancy to support this.

- **Salary: £58,117 – 62,252 pro rata**, with potential progression on to £63,728 – 68,394 pro rata
- **Hours: up to 22 hours per week** (although SCMA may be willing to accept a reduction in hours (e.g. to 17 or 18 hrs per week) to enable the candidate to undertake two part-time roles

- Generous Annual Leave entitlement: **27 days annual leave plus 10 days public holidays** (with long term service increase after five years) (pro rata for part-time staff)
- **Home/Office based**
- **Flexible working**
- **Contributory Pension Scheme** (employer contribution of 7.5%)
- **Life Cover:** 3 x gross annual salary
- **Health Assured - Employee Assistance Programme**
- **Annual Volunteering Day**

Application Process

If you believe you have the skills and experience and could make a difference in this role, we would love to hear from you.

All applicants must complete an application form including providing a competency-based statement demonstrating their possession of the experience, skills and knowledge required to fulfil this role.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the role informally or in more detail, please contact Graeme McAlister, Chief Executive at graeme.mcalister@childminding.org

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