



Scottish Childminding Association

Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future

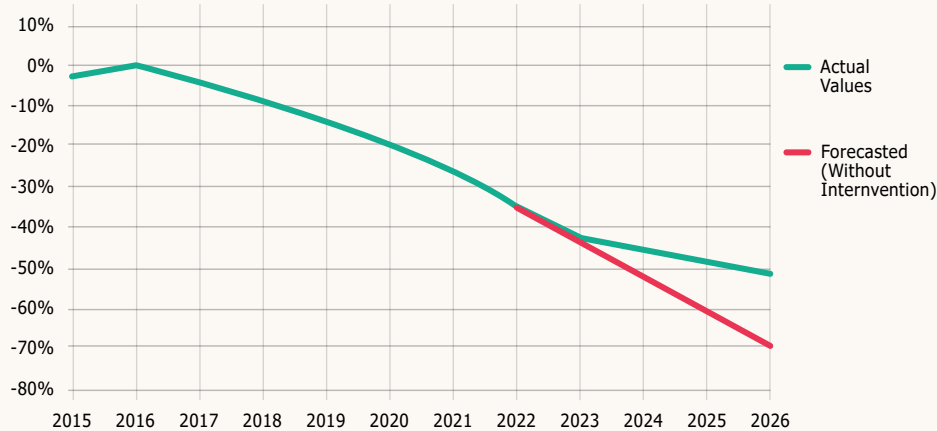
Year 2 Impact Report

1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026



Background

The Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future (PSCF) is a national, recruitment and retention Scottish Government funded initiative, delivered by the Scottish Childminding Association, (SCMA), to address the long-term decline in the childminding workforce.



[SCMA projections based on Childcare Statistics, Care Inspectorate]

In Year Two of PSCF, (April 1st, 2025 – 31st March, 2026), SCMA focused on scaling up recruitment activity and embedding targeted retention measures to support a sustainable, high-quality workforce across Scotland. The programme expanded to include 30 local authorities working in partnership with SCMA to recruit childminders in their areas, with 17 participating in retention measures.

As well as targeted recruitment, pilots of different models of Funded Time Off the Floor, Mentoring and Peer to Peer Support took place, with additional quality materials to support childminders' practice made available to the entire childminding workforce through the PSCF's Quality & Learning strand of work.



Candidate Demographics

Recruitment



The demographic profile of Year Two candidates reflects both its expanding reach and the growing diversity of individuals exploring a career in childminding.

Age & Gender

97% Of candidates identified as female

3% Identified as male, indicating a modest but encouraging increase

Prior Experience in Education

33% of candidates came from a teaching/childcare background

85% of those candidates held a relevant childcare qualification

English as a Second Language

A significant demographic trend was the increase in candidates for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). This was particularly pronounced in local authority areas with established migrant communities and was further influenced by partnership efforts with English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) providers and community groups.

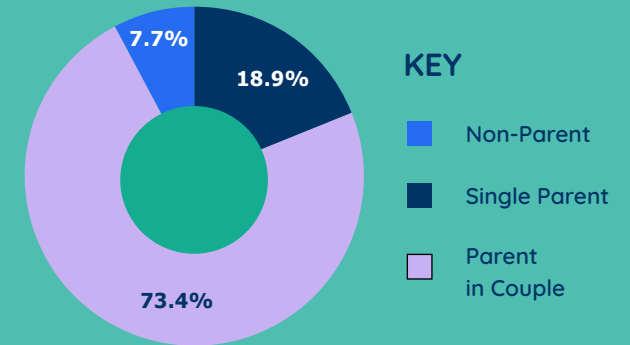
Year 2 Local Authorities

Aberdeenshire	Edinburgh	North Lanarkshire
Aberdeen City	Western Isles (Eilean Siar)	Orkney Islands
Argyll & Bute	Falkirk	Renfrewshire
Clackmannanshire	Fife	Scottish Border
Dumfries & Galloway	Perth & Kinross	Shetland Islands
Dundee	Glasgow	S. Ayrshire
E. Ayrshire	Highland	S. Lanarkshire
E. Dunbartonshire	Inverclyde	Stirling
E. Lothian	Midlothian	W. Dunbartonshire
E. Renfrewshire	North Ayrshire	W. Lothian

	Year 2	Year 1&2
Childcare Spaces	2463	3634
On Programme (people supported)	369	586
Registered	115	157

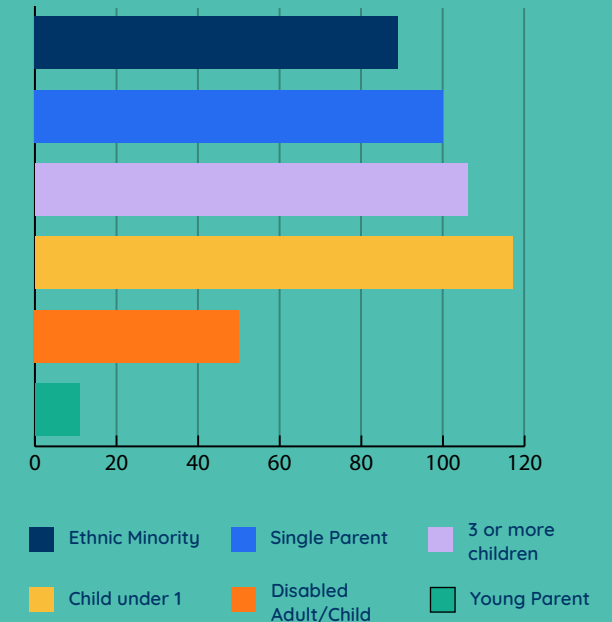
	Year 2
Candidates actively being supported towards Care Inspectorate registration by SCMA	112
Candidates submitted & awaiting Care Inspectorate registration	82
Candidates currently being 'on-boarded' /supported to join	48

Parental Status



Poverty Indicators

Notably, 72% of candidates meet one or more poverty indicators, showing that the programme has a critical role in supporting individuals who may face significant socio-economic barriers to entering or sustaining employment.



SCMA Expertise & Tailored Support

Dedicated SCMA Workforce Officers

SCMA's Workforce Officers are dedicated to providing tailored, childminding-specific practical support for new candidates, from their first enquiry through to registration. Each is assigned to a group of participating local authorities and has specific and tailored knowledge regarding the candidate's area and can tailor local support accordingly. Candidates have a dedicated Workforce Officer throughout their journey who they can contact with any questions - big or small.

Workforce Officers guide candidates every step of the way, providing clear information, one-to-one advice and support, including in the practicalities of registration with the Care Inspectorate. They add a unique value to the process - building candidates' confidence, helping to remove barriers, and ensuring individuals are well-prepared for a sustainable career—ultimately making the whole process smoother, more informed, and more achievable.

“ My Workforce Officer was always on hand to answer any questions I had, she was so reassuring. She supported me in writing my policies for the Care Inspectorate registration process, and provided me with practical hints and tips and, importantly, the confidence to complete this stage. ”

-Year Two candidate



“ I found it all so straight forward. It was great how timelines are set out at the beginning and the Workforce Officer was clear and honest about expectations from the start. I love having a dedicated person at the end of the line to call for advice, she has been great. ”

Package of Support

All PSCF Candidates receive:



One-to-one support from a dedicated SCMA Workforce Officer



Funded SCMA Childminder Induction Support & Continuous Professional Learning Package



Minimum £750 business start-up grant

Candidate Facebook group



Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future (PSCF) Candidates

A candidate Facebook Group was established in June 2025 to create a supportive and welcoming network for individuals who had completed Induction Training and were beginning their Care Inspectorate application. Currently 71% of active candidates at this stage have joined the group.

95% of members actively viewing, posting, commenting, or reacting to shared content.

Rural & Island Communities

Geographical representation shifted as PSCF expanded into additional local authorities. This has resulted in increased participation from rural and island communities, where access to training and support can be more challenging. These areas often face unique contextual barriers, including fluctuating population levels that can directly affect the viability and long-term sustainability of childminding businesses.

“ I’m so glad I continued down this new career path, to see my setting come to fruition, providing vital childcare locally, makes me really proud. ”

Island Life, New Career: How One New Childminder Is Supporting Working Families on Arran

A new childminder on the Isle of Arran is making a real difference to local families while reshaping her own working life and long-term career.

Read More



A New Chapter In Childminding for Arisaig, Highland

New childminder, Heather Cameron, wants to create a flexible and welcoming setting that meets the needs of families, including providing weekend childcare.

Read More



Discover a career in childminding!

Find out how becoming a childminder through the Programme for Scotland's Childminding Future could work for you

Online Discovery Sessions

- 220 attendees
- 6 Registered
- 22 On Programme

In year two we hosted 10 on-line ‘Discover Childminding’ information sessions. These are supported by targeted digital ‘PPC’ campaigns with specific messaging regarding the events, as well as posting organic content in community groups in key target areas. The sessions are hosted by SCMA Workforce Officers and provide an opportunity for candidates to ask any questions and find out more about a career in childminding, helping to remove any potential barriers to applying. Stakeholders are provided with social media content supplied by SCMA, which can be used to promote the events on socials. SCMA developed an events page, which hosts information about regular Discover Childminding Events.

<https://getstarted.childminding.org/events/>



Digital Marketing

Recruitment of new childminders is underpinned by a digitally led, demographically targeted marketing campaign designed to reach potential new childminders in Scotland. It's a national campaign across Meta (Facebook and Instagram) and incorporating 'Pay Per Click' (PPC), supported by targeted, organic activity which reaffirms local relevance for potential childminders.

The Year 2 campaign results have reinforced SCMA's move toward a broader multi-channel recruitment strategy. This has been key to effectively reaching and engaging the core demographic of women aged 25-45 likely to have children. Enquiry data strongly reflects this strategy, with 45% of all enquiries coming from 30-39-year-olds, alongside high-performing search terms demonstrating the value of demographic targeting and intent-led messaging in driving informed, high-quality engagement.

Meta Ads continued to deliver strong scale and efficient traffic generation, while PPC played an important lower-funnel role in capturing intent and converting high-interest users. The campaign also reinforced the strategic importance of SEO, website experience and channel integration.

Specific messaging helped make stronger and clearer links to childminding being a natural career opportunity for a parent audience as well as highlighting the flexibility and work/life balance achievable through a childminding career.



Marketing Collateral

Following testing, the meta campaign assets were separated into two audiences 'parent' and 'broad'. For the first time, specific messaging and campaign directly targeted parents, making stronger and clearer links to childminding being a natural career opportunity for this specific audience, while the 'broad' ad set reinforced messaging around the flexibility and work/life balance achievable through a childminding career.

Fresh marketing collateral, filmed with existing childminders in their settings (large and small) showcases different business models. We amplified the voice of the child, with children conducting short 'tours' of the setting and speaking to camera to show what they do and how much they enjoy being with their childminder. Social-first videos utilise the style and approach of Instagram Reels and TikTok videos to capture authentic, uplifting, real-life moments.

Campaign Highlights

Top performing creative campaign assets are videos, especially those showing the life of childminders.



29K Views



8.2K Views

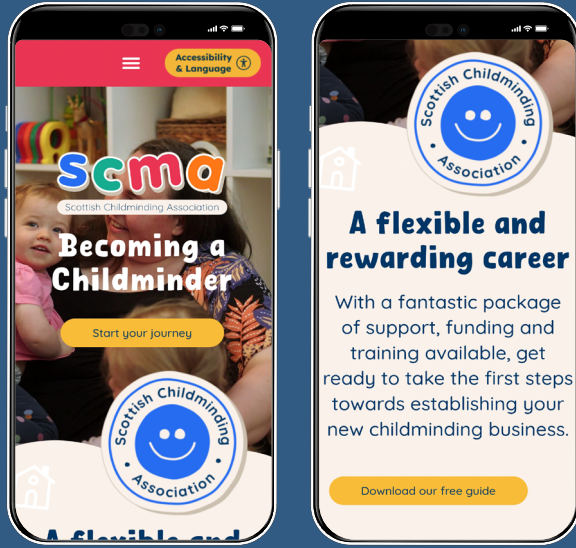
Engaging our audience with a tour of a childminder's house was particularly successful. The childminder and children showed the viewer around the childminding setting, helping to speak to the viewer.

These were part of the meta campaign across Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok, generating 2.64m impressions from April 2025 - February 2026.

Recruitment Landing Page

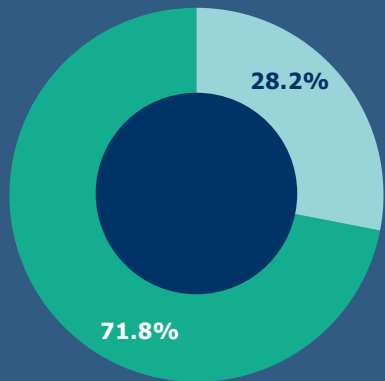
The PSCF landing page outlines the package of support, funding and training available, informing new candidates about taking the first steps towards establishing a new childminding business.

The page hosts important FAQ information, answering questions at a key point of interest and helping to reduce barriers.



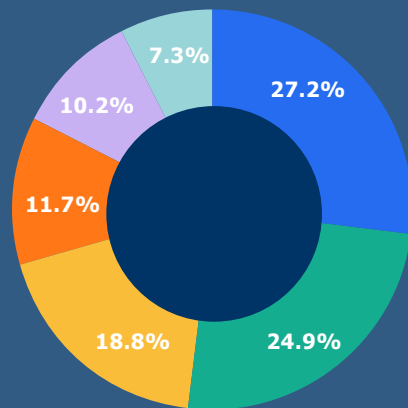
69k users during the reporting period

99k sessions on the site



User Gender

Male Female



User Age

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

RECRUITMENT

Stakeholder Engagement

In year two, various media toolkits were shared with participating local authorities to provide easily accessible materials that could be shared on social media during key campaign milestones. These included:

- April 2025, Year 2 Launch Marketing Campaign Collateral
- May 2025, Childminding Week,
- June 2025 'Discover Childminding On-line Events'
- Jan 2026, 'New Year, New Career
- 'Discover Childminding On-line Events' February 2026

“ We are thrilled to be working alongside SCMA ”

- Laura Hutchison, Aberdeenshire City Council

These case studies illustrate key themes within the childminding workforce, and examples of the impact this form of childcare provides for children and families. They focus on a newly qualified childminder who has entered the profession following a career change, offering insight into her motivation and the support she has received through PSCF to get started. The second is an example of how childminding provided an attractive career change opportunity; the third is an example of the impact of retention - where a new childminder and established childminder were paired together through the Mentoring pilot, demonstrating full circle, career support.



New Childminder PSCF Year 2

Stacey Gardner
South Ayrshire



PSCF Support Instrumental:
“Had it not been for SCMA and the PSCF, I don’t think I would have made the career change when I did and as quickly.”

[Read More](#)

Career Change

Amy Watt
West Calder



With her children growing up quickly, Amy began exploring how to become a childminder. She wanted a role that would allow her to work from home.

[Read More](#)

Recruitment & Retention

Liz Creelie &
Leigh-Anne Anderson,
Falkirk



Two childminders who met through participating in retention measures to support the workforce, have been reflecting on their journey as part of this innovative work.

[Read More](#)



Workforce Retention

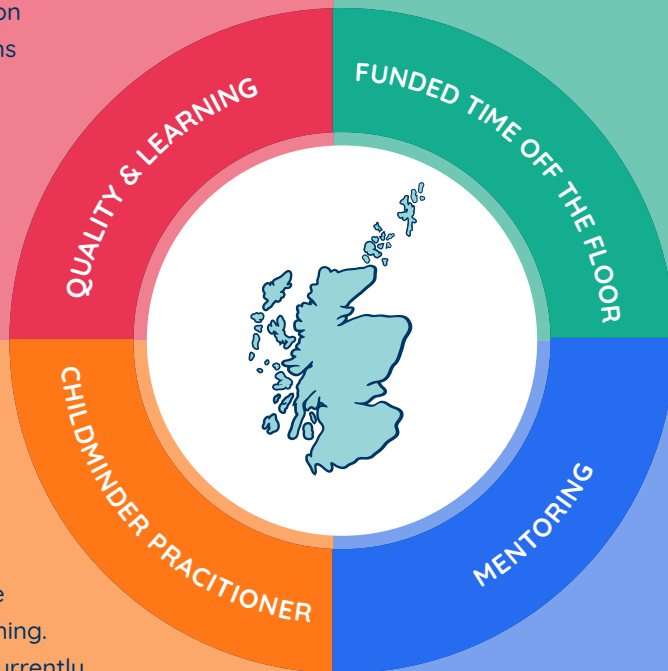


All childminders were provided with free access to SCMA's three Quality in Practice E-Learning courses, a revised Self-Evaluation Toolkit and SVQ support sessions to support on-going practice and professional development. A new podcast series was developed to trial a new support format for childminders.

Funded Time Back and Reduced Practice Time piloted supporting childminders with "funded time off the floor" for continuous professional development, self-evaluation and to complete paperwork.

Linked to the 'Time Off the Floor' model - one registered childminder (Childminder Practitioner) provides cover for a Childminder Host, to complete paperwork or professional learning. Available in 3 local authorities currently.

Mentoring and Peer to Peer Support allows the childminding workforce to come together, share experiences, knowledge & support, build confidence and develop a network of people to talk to.



Retention Impact on Quality - Grades

On Pilot Program(s)		Not on Pilots	
35%	Grades Improved	33%	Improved grades
35%	Grades Declined	41%	Declined grades
6%	Mixed Direction	7%	Mixed Direction
24%	No Change	17%	No Change

Analysis of inspection reports up to October 2025 shows early positive indications for childminders participating in the PSCF Pilots compared to the control group. While many participants were inspected early in their pilot journey, findings suggest stronger inspection outcomes overall, alongside improvements in areas such as self-evaluation, planning, professional learning engagement and use of SCMA support resources.



Before taking part in the Funded Time Off the Floor pilot, **80% of participants were considering leaving childminding.**

This has reduced significantly - **of that 80%, 72% are now no longer considering leaving.**

“It’s kept me as a childminder, I was ready to look for another job. Paperwork has become more manageable to stay on top off. Really feel more valued as a professional.”
(TOTF Participant)



Funded Time Off The Floor

149 Participants took part in the pilot.

100% of participants returned for a second year to participate, providing a strong indicator of relevance, participant satisfaction, and high levels of trust in the Time Off the Floor model.

Work/Life Balance

Findings below show that TOTF is helping childminders manage administrative tasks more effectively, reducing paperwork spilling into family time and supporting clearer boundaries between work and home.

The majority of childminders reported that funded TOTF hours have positively improved their work/life balance.

84% Experiencing either some or significant improvement

34% Reported a significant positive impact

13% Reported no change

2.5% Felt that their work life balance had worsened (due to a increase in enhanced development undertaken)

“ I’m less stressed because I’m more organised and generally know exactly what I should be doing and when, without having to do extensive reading or research to find out. ”

Confidence Levels

Confidence in completing paperwork and administrative tasks improved significantly during the pilot, with 68% initially reporting neutral or low confidence, compared to 93% feeling confident after 48 weeks. Many also said the pilot helped them feel more valued, professional and committed in their role.

Mentoring

SCMA ran Mentoring Pilots in 18 Local Authorities;

Aberdeenshire	Edinburgh	Renfrewshire
Argyll & Bute	Falkirk	Scottish Borders
Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Stirling
East Dunbartonshire	Glasgow	South Lanarkshire
East Renfrewshire	Highland	West Dunbartonshire
Eilean Siar	North Lanarkshire	West Lothian

“ I leaned how many different funding types were available in my local authority and which funding I could participate in. ”
-Mentee

Quality of Support Provided

Mentors across all phases have helped new childminders build confidence and strengthen practice through practical support and guidance. This highlights the value of mentoring in providing both reassurance and quality improvement support.

Results strongly suggest that structured mentoring and peer support positively influence retention, reducing early drop out by providing reassurance, reducing isolation, and increasing confidence—key factors repeatedly highlighted by mentees.

Onboarding Lessons

Phase 2 established a stronger link between recruitment and retention, ensuring new childminders received continuity of support after registration.

Overall Value & Future Potential

100% of mentors would recommend mentoring

97% of mentees would recommend it

New and experienced childminders valued the reassurance, guidance, and connection it offered.

Mentoring also shows potential as a bridge into funded ELC delivery, helping childminders navigate complex onboarding processes and build confidence.

Summary:

The mentoring pilot has improved confidence, wellbeing, quality and professional connection, with Peer Partnerships offering flexible support for experienced childminders. Findings highlight mentoring as a valuable tool for reducing isolation and supporting early professional development, though wider systemic change is still needed to improve long-term workforce retention.

Quality and Learning

As part of the Quality and Learning strand, all registered childminders in Scotland have been provided with free access to SCMA's Quality in Practice E-Learning courses, Self-Evaluation Toolkit, Annual Planner and access to SVQ support sessions. These sessions are important in engaging childminders to have the confidence and willingness to undertake this qualification.

Recent inspection reports under the new Quality Improvement Framework continue to emphasise the importance of high-quality self-evaluation, confident reflective practice and robust evidence of improvement planning, areas that strongly align with SCMA's Quality strand and the learning and support developed over the past year.

As the sector continues to navigate new expectations under the revised Quality Improvement Framework, SCMA's combined offer remains vital for supporting childminders to build confidence, meet regulatory requirements and demonstrate high-quality practice across Scotland.

SVQ Support

Between April 2025 and February 2026, SCMA delivered a programme of structured support to childminders considering or undertaking their SVQ qualification. SCMA worked in partnership primarily with West Lothian College, while also engaging with other providers, to ensure the support aligned with providers' expectations and the realities of childminding practice.

Information Sessions

(for those considering an SVQ):

100% of respondents reported these were beneficial.

Participants highlighted:

- Increased clarity about what the SVQ involves
- Confidence to approach providers and enrol
- Reassurance about workload and flexibility
- Clear explanations from assessors

SCMA delivered 31 Quality in Practice (QiP) Self-Evaluation Toolkit workshops across Scotland, supporting over 400 childminders with self-evaluation.

Self-Evaluation Toolkit (SET)

SCMA's refreshed Self Evaluation Toolkit was updated to align with the new Quality Improvement Framework, (Sept 2025), and provides a clear, practical structure for self-evaluation, ensuring it reflects current legislation, guidance and best practice and follows the Care Inspectorate's three self-evaluation questions in an organised streamlined three-step process.



SET Case Study

SCMA's Self-Evaluation Toolkit is a practical resource designed to help childminders reflect on their practice, identify strengths and support continuous improvement with confidence. Read about childminder Gillian Ford's experience of using the tool in practice.

[Read More](#)

Childminder Practitioner - Materials



Strong engagement was supported by the careful design and use of clear, confidence building resources including welcome videos and meet and greets, play videos & children's story book, family welcome packs and session journals.

Retention - Landing Page



Hosts PSCF retention information regarding pilot activity and signposts childminders to Quality & Learning resources, including SVQ support.

1500 Sessions
769 New Users
50% Engagement Rate

Quality and Learning - Podcast

In January 2026, SCMA released the first episode of a new podcast series, developed in direct response to childminder feedback calling for more accessible, informal, and supportive professional dialogue. At just over 20 minutes long, it provides a 'bite-size', relaxed, "staff room style" space where childminders can listen in on practical discussion on the topics they say matter most to their daily work, wellbeing, and confidence.

SCMA will release a follow up series in Year Three, focusing on topics informed directly by the feedback gathered from childminders. The podcast will continue to act as a supportive tool for professional learning, connection and confidence building, helping keep childminders engaged, informed, and supported in an accessible and flexible format.

“ It covered Annual Planner, Self Evaluation, Personal Plans, e-learning and organisation of our time and paperwork... It will help me tackle these tasks with more confidence. ”

“ Really useful for childminders to feel like they have a bit of a staff room dialogue. ”

Childminders said...



“ I have been impressed and thankful for all the support I have received in the process of becoming a childminder. I hope that my new childminding setting will help parents in my area who have very little childcare options and no other childminders. ”

“ SCMA’s Q&A sessions and chats with my Workforce Officer helped prepare me for my home visit from the Care Inspectorate. There is a shortage of childminders in my area and I hope that my new setting can make a difference for children and their families. ”

“ Before the mentoring programme, I often felt I was working in isolation, but this has shown me how powerful it is to have the right professional network around you. ”

“ Having paid protected time has reinforced my identity as a skilled professional. ”

“ I would recommend TOTF to other childminders in Scotland as it builds confidence, strengthens peer support, and helps practitioners manage their time more effectively through shared ideas and collaborative working. While it may not reduce workload directly, it makes the role feel more supported and sustainable. ”



Stakeholder Feedback



“ I’m delighted South Ayrshire Council has been able to support the Programme for Scotland’s Childminding Future. It’s fantastic to hear success stories emerging within South Ayrshire.

Childminding is a vital service for many members of our community, so I’m pleased we’ve been able to participate in this scheme that not only helps to upskill aspiring business owners, but will expand options for affordable childcare. ”

- Councillor Chris Cullen, South Ayrshire Council’s Policy Lead for Leisure and Community Services:



“ What’s particularly encouraging is the wider impact beyond the training. This partnership is supporting unemployed or underemployed individuals to move into sustainable self-employment, giving them greater financial independence, flexibility for their own families and the confidence that comes with building their own business. At the same time, communities benefit from increased access to high-quality, home based childcare, helping more parents to return to work, training or education. It’s a ripple effect, supporting families, strengthening the workforce and creating stronger local economies. ”

-Tracy Connerton, Client Services Officer, Highland Council

