

# Childminding Quality Improvement Networks - Draft Guidance.

## Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is:  
24 June 2010

Your comments must reach us by that date.



**THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).**

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

**Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.**

Name Sue Coates  
Organisation (if applicable) National Childminding Association  
Address: NCMA, Royal Court, 81 Tweedy Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 1TG

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact Rahella Khatun-Uddin on:

Telephone: 0207 7838566 or

by e-mail: [Childminding.QIN@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Childminding.QIN@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 311

e-mail: [consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

Please mark an X in the box below that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Childminder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Body
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Group Provider	<input type="checkbox"/> Government Office
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		

Please Specify:

The National Childminding Association (NCMA) is the only national charity and membership organisation that represents home-based childcare in England and Wales, delivered by registered childminders and nannies, with approximately 43,000 members.

We promote quality home-based childcare so that children, families and communities can benefit from the best in childcare and education. Working in partnership with Government, Ofsted, local authorities, children's centres, extended schools and other childcare organisations, we aim to ensure that every registered childminder has access to services, training, information and support to enable them to provide a professional service. NCMA offers to work with all local authorities across England (and Wales).

We also aim to ensure that everyone who supports registered childminding has access to the information, training and support they need.

1 Do you think it is a good thing that all childminders should be able to access a network?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

NCMA believes that all registered childminders should be able to access a Childminding Quality Improvement Network.

Quality Improvement Childminding Networks raise quality, give parents more choice, strengthen links and supports home-based childcare.

A Quality Improvement Childminding Network Model in every local authority would support and develop registered childminders and childminding in the areas and give parents choice and access to quality home-based childcare.

Recent NCMA research has shown registered childminders value networks because of the additional training available, extra support and meetings (information sharing and networking) and their help in attracting new parents to their settings through referrals and the reputation of the network.

2 Do you think that this tiered model is the right approach, and would be accessible to all childminders whatever their levels of qualification and experience?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

NCMA supports the tiered model approach outlined in the consultation document. This is a step towards a model which would be inclusive and accessible for all registered childminders.

Recent research undertaken by GfK NOP for NCMA and DfE has shown that some registered childminders, mostly Level 2, felt that network membership was not available to them due to 'exclusivity'. The proposed model would remove that barrier as a tiered model allows for registered childminders whatever their levels of qualification and experience to engage with the network. It also creates a recognisable pathway for registered childminder professional development.

The research has shown that joining a childminding network was dependent on the membership criteria and many registered childminders were unsure of what this was. It is important that the publication of the new model is supported by awareness raising activity. While general awareness of childminding networks is high across all regions, level 2 registered childminders were less aware.

It is important that the level of support is clearly identified and be at an appropriate for each registered childminder. There should be dedicated hours for the coordinator to meet with registered childminders and a set number of registered childminders who they work with. The level of support for each tier level should be clearly defined to ensure the registered childminders understand how much engagement they would have with the network coordinator.

NCMA believes there is scope for the network coordinator to be creative about how they engage with registered childminders. For example, if it is suitable some engagement could be conducted remotely.

**Comment on point 3.4** - Where the guidance addresses registered childminders progressing to a level 3 qualification.

NCMA believe the line "Those who do not/are unable to do this will not be taken into account for the purposes of the EYFS ratio requirements." could be misunderstood by local authorities.

The new Quality Improvement Network consultation document is suggesting that only registered childminders, who are part of a network, with a level 3, or working towards a level 3, can draw down the funding.

The wording needs to be clearer that registered childminders on a network can care for 2, 3, and 4 year olds but won't get the funding if they don't have, or are not working towards a level 3.

The following statement would be clearer “Those who do not/are unable to do this will not be able to draw down the flexible funding for 2, 3 and 4 year olds”.

To ensure that all families have the opportunity to choose registered childminders it is vital that the right level of funding is invested in the childcare workforce so all practitioners are able to progress to a level 3 qualification and that there is a network in every local authority.

3 Should the model say more on the recommended external assessment and verification arrangements? If so, what would that be?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

NCMA supports external assessment and verification assessment. NCMA believes this is crucial to ensure good quality and best practice.

NCMA would welcome the inclusion of a statement that the assessor should be independent and have experience and strong expertise in the field.

Furthermore, if local authorities can initially use their current assessment and verification arrangements then NCMA believes there needs to be clear guidance about what approach is acceptable.

NCMA looks forward to supporting the development of the national standards over the coming 12 months and supports the principle that Government should also look to promote best practice for what assessment and verification should entail.

4 Are there any other features that a childminder network should have?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

NCMA support Childminding Quality Improvement Networks as the primary driver for quality improvement. The impression given in the guidance is that the Quality Improvement Childminding Network is primarily seen as a mechanism for enabling registered childminders to draw down EYFS. NCMA would support a shift in focus towards quality improvement.

The Childminding Quality Improvement Network should have due regard to the special educational needs code of practice ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/sencodeintro](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/sencodeintro) )

NCMA would also support the network establishing an expert link on safeguarding issues.

The Childminding Quality Improvement Network should be accessible to registered childminders and nannies on the voluntary register.

Ensuring that every member of the home-based childcare workforce can join a network as long as they are registered with Ofsted will mean all children can receive a good quality experience.

NCMA is mindful that reference should be made to the change in legislation which

now means that childcare arrangements between friends that are not for monetary payment are exempt from registration under the Childcare Act 2006. The Childminding Quality Improvement Network is focused on registered and inspected providers and therefore a note should be included to say if this is not the case you will not be able to access the network.

The details in the network should reflect other government guidance. For example the guidance for children's centres which states that good links should be established between children's centres and childminding networks.

Terms should be used consistently. NCMA has noticed inconsistencies in the name for the network and the national standards, scheme or model throughout the guidance. Childminding Quality Improvement Network (s) should be the term used to define a network as quality improvement is the key driver for establishing networks.

### EYQISP

EYQISP may not provide the most consistent assessment model for categorising providers who wish to deliver the free entitlement. This is because EYQISP is not designed to assess registered childminders in the same way as networks such as NCMA Children Come First. Further clarification of whether EYQISP would apply to registered childminders, in addition to their being required to be part of a quality assured childminding network, would be welcome.

NCMA understand a number of local authorities are adapting EYQISP to their local needs demonstrating that current models are not suited to the home based setting.

5 Are there other arrangements that might meet the same objectives as a childminder network, but in a different way? Please state what those arrangements would be?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Currently around 70% of local authorities have a form of childminding network. Recent research with local authorities found that most authorities had networks of some description, and where they had set up their own networks they continued to see NCMA's model as the 'gold standard' and sought to recreate some of these in their models, e.g. having meetings for network members, regular training opportunities, buddy systems for members and non-members.

NCMA supports the approach outlined in the consultation. It is an effective way to ensure universal accessibility for registered childminders to a Childminding Quality Improvement Network.

Where they are well established and investment is made a network can provide a high quality service to local parents and families. For example, the Buckinghamshire Community Childminding Network (BCCN,) an award winning

model, supports quality assured care to children and young people aged from 0-19 years through a network of registered childminders who are carefully recruited and given support and additional training in order to meet a diversity of needs. This helps to provide a seamless service for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and families and could be replicated in other areas.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

**Please acknowledge this reply X**

Here at the Department for Children, Schools and Families we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes  No

All DCSF public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DCSF consultations are conducted, please contact Donna Harrison, DCSF Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 794304 / email: [donna.harrison@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:donna.harrison@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 24 June 2010

Send by post to:

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Childcare Sufficiency Team  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: [Childminding.QIN@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Childminding.QIN@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)