

# Deregulation of Childcare

Survey Report 2022



## Introduction

# About Childminding UK

Childminding UK has been supporting childminders for over 30 years. Formed in 1991 by and for local working childminders in Northamptonshire, we now support childminders across the country. A registered charity, we are the only national organisation that solely supports childminders and we have recently achieved the Princess Royal Training Award for ‘Ensuring high quality childcare through training and support’.

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## Part one

# Background

It is widely recognised that the first 5 years of a child's life are fundamental to their future chances, both in education, their opportunities for employment and building and maintaining effective relationships.

At a time when children's development is of concern following the pandemic, it is vital that good early years education focusses on the needs of the children at all times.

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## Ratios

There is no evidence that relaxing ratios will result in cheaper childcare fees for parents. The 2013 study commissioned by the Government concluded that if staff care for more children there would be a reduction in quality.

Childminding is a unique sector of early years by the nature of the role. They care for children from birth to secondary school age. It is much more difficult to fully manage the needs of children of multiple ages than to care for e.g. four children aged three.

Childminders do not stay at home all day - rather they give the children a wide variety of experiences in the local community, as well as carrying out routines such as school runs. The practicalities of being able to go out and about and maximise children's opportunities for learning and building their cultural capital is much more difficult with larger numbers of children.

Childminding can be an isolating career as most childminders work alone. This isolation can be reduced when childminders regularly meet up with their minded children. This interaction can also help childminders organise emergency cover, which lessens the impact of minded children having to attend another setting.

## Part one

# Background continued...

## Agencies

Out of almost 34,000 childminders, nearly 33,000 have chosen to either register with Ofsted rather than an Agency or to remain Ofsted registered, even though Agencies have been around for 8 years.

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## Registering from non-domestic premises

The biggest benefit of registered childminding is that it is home from home childcare. A home is familiar and there are places to play, rest, snuggle and sleep. Many children who don't settle well in larger non-domestic premises can flourish in a caring and nurturing home environment.

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## Changing the way early years is funded

The suggestion that parents could be paid directly rather than paying early years settings so that they have more choice over where their childcare entitlement is spent needs very careful thought to prevent public funds being misspent or used to obtain childcare that cannot be assessed as suitable for children's needs and to keep children safe.

This report aims to provide childminding views about the areas being mooted around deregulating the childminding profession.

## Part two

# Methodology

Childminding UK currently has just over 1,000 members. We invited 937 members to complete a survey from 19th October to 4th November 2022. We received 158 (over 16%) responses, with some members in the registration process and others being registered for over 10 years and over 53.8% being registered for over 5 years.

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### **The focus of the survey was on:**

- The reduction or removal of ratios and any resulting impact on quality or parents fees
- The requirement to register with a Childminding Agency
- Permitting childminders to register from non domestic premises
- Changing the way early years is funded
- Allowing parents to use Government funding to pay grandparents or friends
- A slimmed down Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) specifically for childminders.



## Part three

# Key findings

## Childminding Agencies

**78.5%** of respondents agreed they should have the choice of registering with Ofsted or a Childminding Agency, with **53.1%** stating they would stop childminding if it became compulsory to register with an agency. Of these, **43%** said they would leave early years altogether.

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## Ratios

**88.6%** of respondents would not regularly care for additional children if ratios were relaxed or removed.

**69.6%** of respondents would not reduce parents' fees if they cared for extra children with another **22.2%** saying this wasn't applicable to them as they would not care for additional children.

**60.1%** of respondents stated they believe the quality of care and education they could deliver would be reduced if they were caring for additional children.

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## Registering on Non-domestic premises

**89.3%** of respondents suggested that they wouldn't operate their business from non-domestic premises, with reasons cited as 'it would increase my running costs' (**17.7%**), 'I wouldn't do this as childminding is home from home childcare' (**58.9%**) or 'I want to be at home for my own family' (**12.7%**).

## Part three

# Key findings continued...

### Changes to Government funding for childcare

**75.9%** of respondents stated they wouldn't support the Governments suggestion to pay funding for childcare directly to parents, with **78.5%** suggesting that parents shouldn't be permitted to use funding to pay grandparents or friends.

**85.4%** of respondents agreed that childminders should be able to claim funding for their own or other related children.

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### Childminder specific EYFS

**72.8%** of respondents agreed with a suggested EYFS document specifically for childminders.

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### Families Information Service

**83.5%** of respondents stated that their details were on their Families Information website.



## Part four

# Survey results

### Ratios

In October 2021, there were reports that the Government were planning to reduce staff ratios, an idea that was first mooted in 2013, under the then early years minister Liz Truss. As then, there has been strong opposition from the early years sector and the results of the public consultation yet to be revealed but debated in Parliament on November 14th. In 2013, the plans were blocked by Nick Clegg, the then deputy Prime Minister of the coalition government, after a cross sector campaign - Rewind on Ratios - run by the Early Years Alliance.

Childminders can already vary the usual ratios if there is a reason to do so and they can show that they can fully meet all the children's needs. Of those who do, they only cater for exceptional circumstances such as caring for siblings or parents changing working hours.

Given the cost-of-living crisis affecting childminders who work from home and have additional costs involved in running their setting, it may be expected that many would be in favour of increasing the number of children they can care for to increase income. However **88.6%** of respondents state they will not change their current practice if ratios are relaxed.

Only **11.4%** of respondents supported a relaxation of ratios. One said 'If childminders were allowed a ratio of 1:4 without question it would help to reduce costs'. Another said 'I would care for more than 3 four year old's, but would not want to care for more than 2 one year old's because I could not provide for them properly or keep them safe'. Another stated 'I do believe that experienced and highly qualified practitioners (YET/QTS) should be able to adjust ratios and potentially care for up to 5 children under 5. However, the caveat to that is that nobody experienced and highly qualified and in their right mind would ever choose to do so if for example those children were 1, 1, 2x2's, and just 3. Were they just to be 3x3 year old's and 2x4 year old's I consider it perfectly feasible. However to do so would be very hard work and not something I would reduce my fees to enjoy!'



## Part four

# Survey results continued...

One respondent said 'Why would anybody work harder for less money? NOBODY is going to care for extra children but do so at a lesser cost to parents, why should we as professional educators be responsible for the shortfall in government funding?' Another said 'Despite what the Government do, I will not be increasing ratio numbers or decreasing my hourly rate to parents as I am not prepared to offer watered down care or education.'

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'I'm not in agreement with a stack them high and sell them low agenda, children will become a number rather than a child in need of the very best educational fun start in life'

Many respondents voiced concerns that they are charging parents excessive amounts and should take on more children to help reduce parents' fees. One said 'If I looked after more children, I would not be reducing my costs – the work would increase and the salary would affect the increased work load.' Another said 'Increasing ratios for childcare providers in the hope they will take on more children and charge families less during the current cost of living crisis is insulting. It will not result in us earning any more as our costs have increased, taking on more children compromises quality of care and the whole suggestion does not show any recognition for the work we do.'

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'Nobody else in any other sector would willingly do more work for less pay!'

## Part four

# Survey results continued...

### **The Requirement to register with a Childminding Agency**

Ofsted began registering and inspecting childminders because the Government thought that it was preferable to separate support and regulation, thus ensuring regulation is totally impartial. Making all childminders register with Agencies takes away this impartiality. Agencies are not the only providers of childminding support. Ofsted registered childminders can and do access support from other places, including from membership organisations like ourselves. Registering with Ofsted is more cost effective than registering with a Childminding Agency, thus keeping parents' fees more affordable.

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In 2013, a survey of over 1,000 childminders by IPPR revealed that more than eight out of ten (86 per cent) thought that the introduction of agencies could lead to higher business costs, which could be passed on to parents.

Overwhelmingly, **78.2%** of respondents said they should have the choice of whether to register with Ofsted or an Agency. They said they valued the independence and Ofsted grading. One simply stated 'Childminders have rights too, we should have the right to choose if we want to register with Ofsted or an Agency'. Another said, 'I think you should have a choice of if you'd like to join Ofsted or an Agency...having looked into the initial setting up costs and monthly payments puts me off. It was financially off-putting'.

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'Very few experienced and qualified professionals wish to join an agency. We are self-employed and choose to be. I don't see agencies offering to pay our pension, holiday and sick pay!!! Where is the advantage to us?'

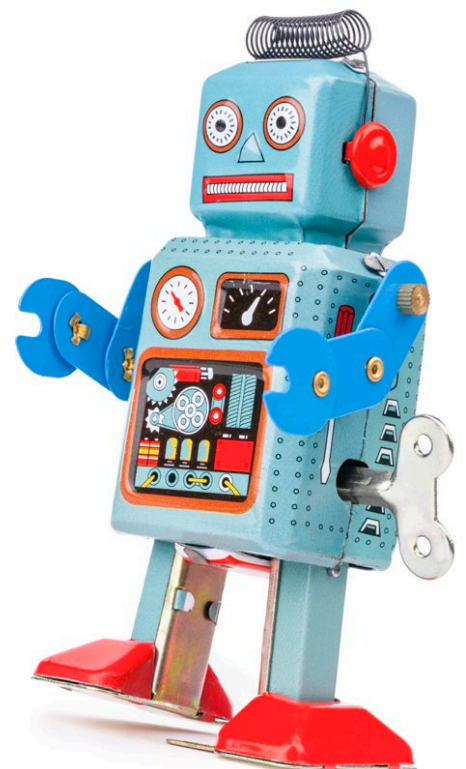
## Part four

# Survey results continued...

Over **53%** of respondents suggest they would not continue childminding if they were made to join an Agency. One simply said ‘Why change something that isn’t broken?’ and another ‘I would definitely consider my options should we be made to work for an agency.’

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‘I don’t see how this can possibly benefit either children or childminders. It will increase parents’ costs, not reduce them. In the case of Tiney, I also object to lining the pockets of a MALE entrepreneur who has never done our job and has disparaged us during interviews. They are already trying to buy out the opposition and I certainly don’t want to end up with them by default because there is no other option available. Why should I lose the excellent grades I have built up over the years for no reason other than someone wants to make money out of us?’



## Part four

# Survey results continued...

### **Permitting childminders to register from non domestic premises**

The majority of respondents stated that they would not run their childminding business from non-domestic premises, with only **5.1%** saying they would do so.

Childminding offers parents with childcare responsibilities the opportunity to care for their own children at home alongside minded children.

Many childminders use their gardens as extended areas for gardening, bug hunting, digging, paddling pools, outdoor equipment such as trampolines etc. This would be more difficult to provide in a community building due to other users having access and the risk of damage. Taking these experiences out of a regular childminding day would reduce the opportunities for extending learning.

The costs of renting premises would be likely to increase costs for childminders and then they may struggle to get enough work to be financially viable if they then have to set their fees higher than local childminders working from home.

The largest agreed response was that childminding is home from home childcare (58.9%). Working from non-domestic premises removes completely the uniqueness that home from home childcare brings to children and their families.

‘Paying the funding directly to parents will not necessarily reduce their costs. Most nurseries and childminders rates are higher than the funding rate so parents who still rely on these services would end up paying more’

## Part four

# Survey results continued...

### Changing the way early years is funded

Respondents suggest that Government funding is not sufficient to cover normal costs and that many childminders will not provide funded places because of this.

One respondent said ‘I would like to see the local authority cut from the funding process and the money paid to parents’ Childcare Choices account and paid to us directly at our rate. Parents should be allowed to top up to the pay difference. It would save the sector and enable more providers to offer funded places. Many childminders simply don’t claim the funding meaning parents miss out or Universal Credit pays it through that system.’

Another said ‘Current funding does not even cover my normal costs. If I care for three children using funding I don’t even get minimum wage after expenses. Funding levels need to go up and I am looking at increasing my charges to cover additional costs I am incurring e.g. heating, light, food and other ancillaries as well as the external activities we attend which have increased costs.’

One respondent explained fears about parents passing on early years funding to the childminders. ‘The only aspect of my job that’s hard is being paid on time and regularly. Paying the family direct wouldn’t help, they’d use the money towards other bills first or see it as their money sadly. I see this a lot with tax credits.’



## Part four

# Survey results continued...

Many respondents suggested that childminder fees are not expensive. One said 'I have been childminding for 24 years. When I started my hourly rate was £2.50. I now charge £4.00 per hour and am not prepared to work for less'. Another stated 'I don't charge a large amount for childcare at all and I do enjoy what I do. I like to keep everything as it is'.

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'Many of us in reality are working for less than the minimum wage yet have a degree. The press and media make it sound like childcare providers are money-grabbing individuals, little more than babysitters. Let's turn the conversation to the reality of it.'

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'Personally I don't think childcare is expensive. You are looking after, nurturing, enhancing and improving a child's development in a safe, inspiring home setting. I don't think Childminders are paid enough with regards to the government funding.'

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'I am sick of hearing in the media about the extortionate cost of childcare. High-quality care and education and experiences in the first 5 years of a child's life are absolutely crucial to their onward success. These children are the future. The responsibility we shoulder is massive yet many of us, in reality, are working for less than the minimum wage yet have a degree.'

## Part four

# Survey results continued...

### **Changes to Government funding for childcare**

Respondents voiced concerns about paying funding directly to parents and allowing them to pay unregistered family and friends to care for their children. They feel it will completely devalue the work commitment and dedication they give daily for children and parents.

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‘Most of the time we are seen as glorified babysitters... to be able to pay family and friends to look after children I think belittles everything we do. We might as well give up the title of childminder, become friends with those who need us, then they can pay us directly (with Govt funding). We wouldn't have to worry about Ofsted inspections or complying to any legal requirements or standards of curriculum. I am a childminder and a receptionist in a law firm. I have to work three times the amount of hours childminding to equal the pay of one hour at my other job’

For many years there has been much done to raise the profile of registered childminding and bring it in line with other early years practitioners. Many respondents feel that suggestions of government funding being paid to unregistered family and friends will undermine and undo much of this progress.

## Part four

# Survey results continued...

One respondent said ‘There are reasons why ratio and inspections are important. Standards will slip if parents can pay whoever they want. A childminder is a qualified professional, not just anyone. There needs to be more recognition and support for childminders.’

Respondents also raised safeguarding concerns for children if unregistered people were able to use Government funding to pay for childcare. One said ‘Grandparents and relatives receiving the funding should have to have a DBS check, paediatric first aid and safeguarding training, as Childminders do.’ Another said ‘Despite what the Government will do I will not be increasing ratio numbers or decreasing my hourly rate to parents as I am not prepared to provide watered down care and or education plus it’s a safeguarding issue - if they were to do away with Ofsted who will be regulating Grandparents or friends to take care of children? This proposal will stretch Childminding services to the limits and I fear that if this happens most are likely to close their doors permanently and that will leave parents with even less choice of a professional childcare service and it will only add to the pressures on this industry.’

Respondents suggested that grandparents should be registered in order to obtain funding for their grandchildren. One said ‘I feel grandparents should not get paid to look after children because they are not qualified, gone through Ofsted requirements, have no DBS checks or first aid training and insurance. How will they deliver Early Years Foundation Stage if they have no training in it? They would have to register to Ofsted. Another says ‘Registration should stay for all childminders. Unregistered care enables some to earn money for inadequate childcare. Taking in extra children is no easy thing - especially if you are not an experienced childminder.



## Part four

# Survey results continued...

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We are already not valued enough with what we do being seen as nothing more than babysitters and this will only make it worse. We are professional governed Early Years Educators and we offer safe, loving nurturing home from home care. Good childminders will leave and where does this leave our children being in the care of people who have no training, no licenses, no DBS checks, no insurance, no safeguarding measures in place and no idea of what they are doing. It's a mess and who will pick up the mess? Social Services because there will be a greater risk of abuse to children by unauthorised care.'

There is however support for registered childminders being able to claim Government funding for their own related children as they do in Wales. One stated 'Where childminders have their own children within that ratio it would also benefit to allow parents/relatives to claim the funded hours for their own children.' Another suggested 'There should be NO discrimination in a childminder drawing down funding for their own child or a grandchild for example. The fact we can't mean everybody loses out and infers the care and education we provide would differ for a blood relative calling into question our integrity which I actually find insulting.'

A grandparent respondent stated 'As a grandparent myself it would be great to earn money for the space taken up by family. Family members would gladly pay for my service but can't and are sad they have to leave their child with strangers.' With another respondent stating 'should be able to access funding for any family children e.g. grandchildren nieces/nephews etc.'

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Childminders should be able to look after family and receive funding for this care. We are professional bodies, we are registered, insured and trained to work to the same framework as all EYFS Childcare providers.

## Part four

# Survey results continued...

### Childminder specific EYFS

While over **72%** of respondents said they would welcome a Childminder version of the EYFS, there were concerns of what this will do to the profile of childminding in relation to that of other early years practitioners. One stated 'In relation to the question of the 'Slimmed down' EYFS I have answered no because we do not know what would be in the slimmed down version and my concerns around this involve the fact that, once again, it is under-mining our position, as childminders, in the Early Years Sector. Parents will look at it and say 'Oh, they don't have to meet the same standards as a nursery' and, when we are all looking to get the same recognition across the board, this kind of thinking would have a very negative impact on our profession.'

Another suggested 'People already look at us as babysitters do any less of an EYFS just for childminders makes us feel like we can't do the job we train hard for, the EYFS has already been made more simple, this makes sure children are developing well and track them every childcare provider should do this or they should just be a babysitter'

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### Families Information Service

A high **83.5%** of respondents claim that their details are listed on their local Families Information Service website. This survey didn't ask for what details are listed, so can't comment on if the full statutory details were included. One respondent knew that 'My details will be put on the local families website as soon as I'm registered', but another stated 'I wouldn't know as never been informed'.

One respondent explained how Stevenage Council are being proactive in relation to this. 'I have been to Stevenage council offices recently as they were interested on how all childcare settings are coping with cost of living etc. and they are changing their family ISW and so it's going to make it easier for parents to access so I will be going back on and updating my details'.

## Part five

# Summary

A higher than usual response rate to this survey shows the depth of unease and worry among our members about potential increases to the costs of running a childminding business as well as impact on wider childminder workforce if mooted deregulation measures are brought into place. Responses range from those who are pre-registration childminders to those who have been minding for over 10 years.

Childminding numbers have reduced significantly over recent years according to Ofsted figures with a fall of 7% between August 2021 and March 2022. Historically, childminding is a transient profession but with numbers remaining reasonably static. Sensible measures to reverse this trend should be investigated to enable parents to have the option of good quality regulated home from home childcare that is the uniqueness of childminding.

Childminding UK believes that childminding is an attractive option for parents and children but also as a viable career option.

A simple relaxing of ratios for all early years does not consider the uniqueness of childminding provision, the wider age range of children cared for and the nature of their role in giving children experiences in the community as well as providing essential school picks ups for older children. Childminders already have flexibility in their ratio restrictions and the majority of respondents will not relax ratios further as they say to do so would impact on the quality of provision.

According to our survey results, insisting that all childminders register with a Childminding Agency, will result in over half of respondents giving up childminding. Most of these will not seek early years roles in group settings. If this is reflective of national childminding workforce, it is going to vastly reduce childminder numbers rather than increasing them.

## Part five

# Summary continued...

The costs of registering with a Childminding Agency is significantly more expensive than registering with Ofsted plus buying support and training as needed. Members stated they couldn't pay this increase without passing costs onto parents. They also value their Ofsted registered status and grading as well as the independence they have in running their business as they choose.

If parents are given Government funding to pay whoever they choose to care for their children instead of having to choose registered care, there are major concerns about how the government will ensure children are safeguarded. How do we ensure that children are protected from those who would not pass a registration process? This would also reduce the profile of registered childminding that it has taken many years to raise to the level of other early years practitioners.

Over three quarters of respondents said that they should be able to provide funded places for related children. Currently, related children must use their entitlement in other settings, which isn't parents first choice for their children. This is not the case for group settings where staff's children/relatives are funded.

Many childminders celebrate that their provision is home from home childcare. For others it suits their family situation to work from home. To be able to register from venues such as village halls was only attractive to a 5% of respondents because of the costs involved and the change to the home from home childcare status.

While many said they would welcome a childminder specific EYFS, there are concerns about reversing the work that has been done to raise the profile of childminding in line with other early years settings.

## Part six

# Recommendations

## Ratios

As childminders already benefit from being able to vary usual ratios, we recommend that this remains the same.

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## Childminder Agencies

Childminder agencies have failed to convince childminders that they are a better option than registering with Ofsted. Their business model means agencies must be self-supporting and the subsequent costs involved just do not make them an attractive option for most, along with the loss of independence many value.

### We recommend:

- Allow full choice to childminders over whether they choose the agency of Ofsted model
- Provide clearer information regarding the differences between registering with an Agency and registering with Ofsted, so that childminders fully understand Ofsted's role is registration and inspection only - and that childminders can access support and training of their choosing. Registering with Ofsted does not mean there is no support available and this isn't always clear
- Do not aim to encourage more childminders to join Agencies, or make it compulsory as to do so threatens to reduce the childminding workforce by half.

## Part six

# Recommendations continued...

### Early years funding

Childminding is a much needed part of the childcare workforce and needs protecting. Current funding levels do not meet the usual hourly rate for many childminding settings, resulting in many childminders not offering funded places. Relatives of registered childminders are forced take up spaces in group settings because they can't draw on this funding.

#### **We recommend:**

- Increase funding levels to cover the true cost of providing a childcare place, but if this isn't possible, Government to make changes to the narrative around early years funding to enable parents to recognise this is a contribution towards early years education and care. Allowing settings to charge a top up fee bringing income in line with usual hourly rates will result in more spaces available for parents, while vastly subsidising the place.
- Registered childminders should be allowed to claim funded places for related children as they do in Wales and in group settings in England. This will help childminders fill their places, but also release places in early years settings for others who need them. It also gives parents full choice of where their children receive their care and education.
- Enable grandparents and other relatives to register with Ofsted so that government funded places are regulated and safe.

## Part six

# Recommendations continued...

## Registering from alternative premises

The glory of childminding is that it offers something unique; it is the closest provision to what the child receives at home and can help settle children who will not flourish in a bigger group environment. There is no appetite for childminders to work from venues such as village halls, so this would not increase the numbers of childminders, but the associated costs may make them unviable or more expensive to parents.

### We recommend:

- Keep childminding as home from home childcare
  - Continue with the option for 50/50 registrations as it is now.
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## Simplified EYFS

Many childminders enter childminding with previous early years' experience and do not need a simplified version of the EYFS. For others, the areas such as ratios that are childminder specific are clearly marked. Having a childminder version may undo the valuable work to raise the profile of childminding. We recommend that if a childminder version is produced, then versions for other forms of early years are produced too so that childminding does not look isolated from the profession and therefore less valid.

## Part six

# Recommendations continued...

### General recruitment

In our work with childminders, many told us that the pandemic situation forced them to leave a profession they love. They cited lack of financial support, with the support that was then offered arriving too late and not applying to all childminders. This with the costs of running a covid safe environment with no help towards PPE costs (as provided for nurseries) was a deciding factor in them having to seek work elsewhere and leaving the childminding workforce so depleted. We know that for many the costs of registering are prohibitive, for others, the length of time it takes to register is a factor. The inspection process is a rigorous one and needs to remain so to fully prepare prospective childminders for their role and to safeguard the children they care for while providing high quality care and education for children and peace of mind for parents.

Many people wish to become childminders in their own homes but live in rented accommodation that won't permit it.

#### **We recommend:**

- Aiming to shorten the registration process while allowing time for the necessary safety checks
- Consider accepting enhanced DBS disclosures with Update service from other early years roles
- Inform childminder candidates how the registration process is moving at every step of the way
- Create timescales for Local Authorities to return Social Services checks by (often this can delay registration)
- Reintroduce the childminder Start Up Grants that helped so many childminders into the childminding profession previously
- Provide information or routes for landlords to allow childminding from their premises explaining that childminding does not 'fit' usual 'running a business' rules
- In any future emergency situations, include childminders for funding support alongside group settings from the beginning.



## Part seven

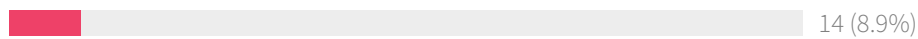
# Full survey

Question 1

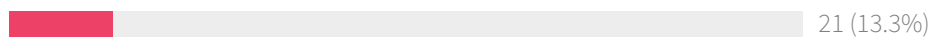
### How long have you been a registered Childminder?

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

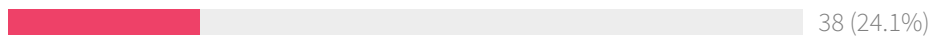
Not registered yet



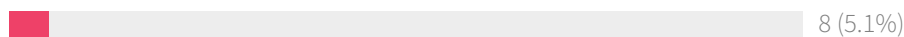
Less than a year



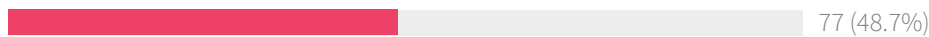
1 - 5 years



5 - 10 years



More than 10 years

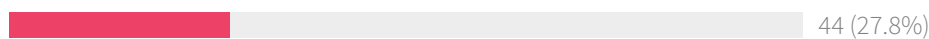


Question 2

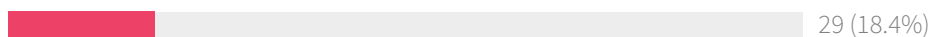
### How long have you been a Childminding UK Member?

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

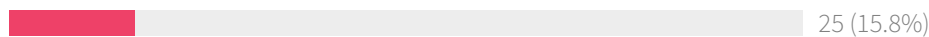
Less than a year



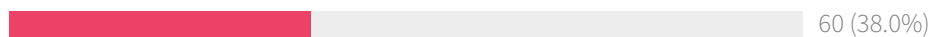
1 - 2 years



2 - 3 years



4 or more years



## Part seven

# Full survey continued...

Question 3

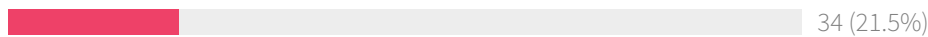
**Do you think you should have the choice of registering with Ofsted or a Childminding Agency?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

Yes



No

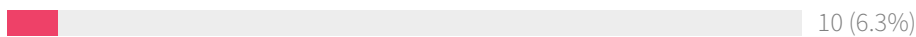


Question 4

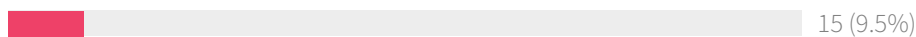
**If you said no, was it because?  
(Please tick all that apply)**

59 answers (Checkboxes)

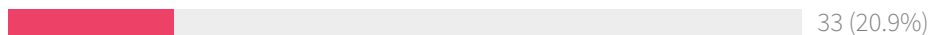
More expensive



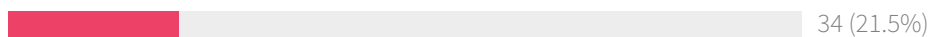
I don't agree with agencies



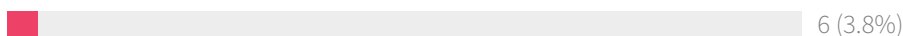
I value Ofsted grading



I want to be totally independent



Other - please state



**Open text responses to 'other':**

Unknown contact said:

"Agencies also take a cut from fees."

## Part seven

# Full survey continued...

**Unknown contact said:**

“Keeps it professional”

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**Unknown contact said:**

“I don’t see how this can possibly benefit either children or childminders. It will increase parents’ costs, not reduce them.

In the case of Tiney, I also object to lining the pockets of a MALE entrepreneur who has never done our job and has disparaged us during interviews. They are already trying to buy out the opposition and I certainly don’t want to end up with them by default because there is no other option available.

Why should I lose the excellent grades I have built up over the years for no other reason than someone wants to make money out of us?”

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**Unknown contact said:**

“Why change something that isn’t broken?”

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## Part seven

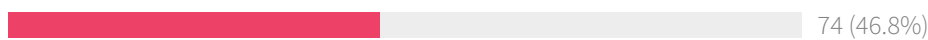
# Full survey continued...

Question 5

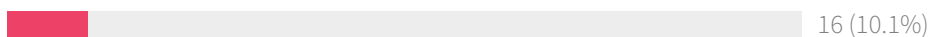
**If the Government were to make it compulsory for Childminders to register with an agency instead of Ofsted, what would you do?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

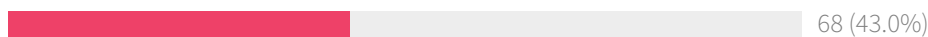
Register with an agency



Stop childminding but work in Early Years in another sector (e.g. nursery/pre-school)



Stop childminding and leave the Early Years sector

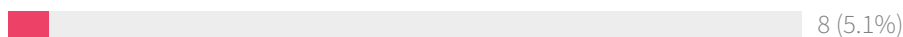


Question 6

**With the current ratio variations, you are permitted to care for additional children if you can cater for all their needs. If you already care for additional children, have you reduced the cost of your fees for all parents?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

Yes



No



## Part seven

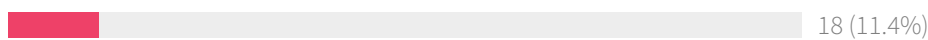
# Full survey continued...

Question 7

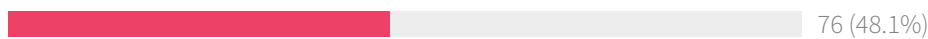
**If the Government relaxes ratios further or removes ratios altogether, would you regularly care for extra children?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

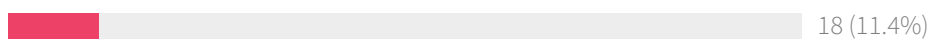
Yes



Yes, but only for exceptional circumstances such as continuity of care or siblings



Yes, but if I only care for children of very similar ages (e.g. all 3 year olds)



No

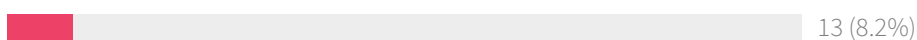


Question 8

**If you were to regularly care for additional children in the future, would you reduce the cost of your fees for all parents?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

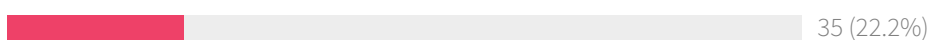
Yes



No



Not applicable as I wouldn't care for additional children



## Part seven

# Full survey continued...

Question 9

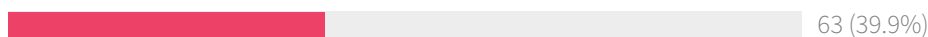
**Do you believe that to regularly care for extra children would reduce the quality of care and education you could provide?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

Yes



No

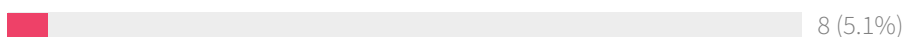


Question 10

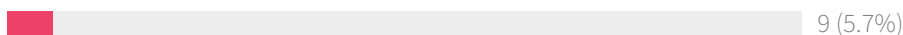
**How would you feel about operating your business from outside of your home, such as from a village hall?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

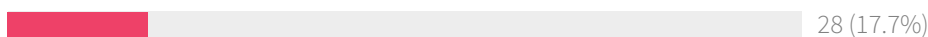
I would do this if I was allowed



I would do this for part of the day/ week



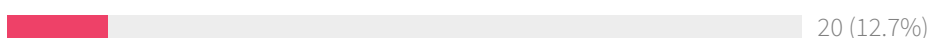
I wouldn't do this as it would increase my running costs



I wouldn't do this because childminding is home from home childcare



I wouldn't do this because I want to be at home for my own children/family



## Part seven

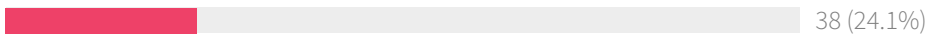
# Full survey continued...

Question 11

**Would you support the Government suggestion that funding for 3 and 4 year old's is paid directly to parents?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

Yes



No

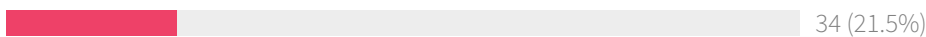


Question 12

**If money does go directly to parents, should parents be able to pay grandparents or friends to look after their children?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

Yes



No



## Part seven

# Full survey continued...

Question 13

**Should Childminders be able to access 3 and 4 year old funding for their own children?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

Yes



No



Question 14

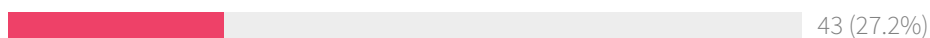
**It is suggested that Childminders should have a slimmed down version of the EYFS that only applies to them. Would you support this suggestion?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

Yes



No





## Part seven

# Full survey continued...

Question 15

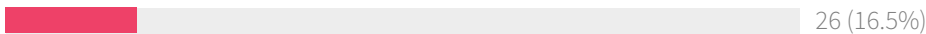
**All Local Authorities have a statutory duty to publish details of childcare providers in their area. Are the details of your childminding setting listed on your local Families Information Service website?**

158 answers (Radio Buttons)

Yes



No



Question 16

**Anything else you wish to say?**

52 answers (Open text)

**Unknown contact said:**

'More needs to be done to support childcare providers as the more restriction posed upon us will only result in even more people leaving the profession. The funding system is a joke making it very difficult to manage when each LA manages it completely different. More needs to be done to streamline the process, make the rates more fair and to support the amazing people in this sector.'

**Unknown contact said:**

'I am not yet registered. I will be registered in 4 weeks.'

**Unknown contact said:**

'Nurseries / pre-schools are also expensive, and Childminder's are also professionals caring for children in their own homes. The training is extensive to their own time and implements additional costs. Now putting costs to one side for a moment, there is also a greater concern to the quality of care for children. I fear that if these measures of ratios are lax the quality of care won't be the same and could potentially result in neglect or other abuses.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'government do not pay high enough rates for funding, if unqualified people car for children , where does the first aid, public liability and education training come from ? possible would not benefit the children t all, but put them at risk of harm'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'I feel the the government do not understand or value us as childminders and our professional qualifications. If these changes are brought in, we will be expected to do more work and pay more in costs, whilst also be expected to charge less, which is insulting. I will leave the sector if this comes to fruition, as I suspect many will, meaning that childcare will become even harder to find rather than cheaper. In my opinion, the government have got this completely wrong and are speeding up the collapse of the Early Years childcare sector'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'If Ofsted would stop micromanaging, it would save their costs and make our lives easier. Some of their behaviour, particularly during inspections, is ridiculous. And WHY are they drilling us during already stressful inspections? If we've attended the safeguarding training, that should be sufficient. Why not let the training include tests, as it does for first aid courses?'

**Unknown contact said:**

‘This brings around so many safeguarding issues - using unregistered care/uninspected premises will increase accidents/abuse like we have never seen before. Many of us work extremely hard to be professional in the standards we provide these proposals are quite frankly insulting. Increasing numbers of children in a time when we are supposed to be closing covid gaps in education means more children will fall through the gaps and not be achieving their best by the time they go to school. If paying family members becomes a thing, we will see fewer children taking up places in registered settings like minders or nurseries. And these family members will not follow the EYFS as they won’t have to, thereby increasing already wide learning gaps for our children.’

---

**Unknown contact said:**

‘Out of everything said or being discussed it is ridiculous to even consider trying to force childminders to join an agency! childminding is self employment and from the home not from village halls working under agencies! How dare they discuss reducing payments and increasing ratios its ridiculous’

---

**Unknown contact said:**

‘If you want more childminders, pay for the upfront cost of training, as it prevents people from entering the profession. Do not reduce the requirements on childminders (re the EYFS) - including training requirements. You will reduce the standard of care/ quality of provision. We don’t want to aim to reduce quality of care. We want to increase it. It is currently set at the right standard. You can already pay for an unqualified babysitter. Childminding is different. Also don’t reduce Ofsted inspections, this will have the same effect. Our children are important. I want them to be safe and well looked after. They are precious. They are not a financial commodity. The whole point of a childminder as opposed to a nursery is it offers people the extra option of fewer children in a group and in a home setting. Why try and turn them into nurseries?!.. i.e. have them operating out of a village hall with lots of children. It doesn’t make any sense lol. The two are separate things. If you want to see lots of groups of children in a village hall, increase the number of nurseries. You can reduce the cost to parents of childcare by subsidising it. Not by reducing the hourly amount they are expected to pay a carer. I am going in the opposite direction. I will take on just two children (this is a popular choice for childminders and allows them to give each child the necessary attention) and charge more per child per hour.’

**Unknown contact said:**

'I believe increasing ratios will not only reduce the quality of the care i provide but also be a safety issue.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'I think a bit of flexibility in ratios is a good thing to allow for family changes etc but I wouldn't reduce fees as I would need to increase my assistants hours to cover the extra'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'We are trying to help children as well as earn a living. We should be able to receive funding for our own children too. Also using alternate premises would be a huge help. I love childminding which is why I've done it for years but all the restrictions alongside increase in costs, we are finding it really tough'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Safety of children is paramount and always will be. We have rules and regulations for a reason. To give a free for all in numbers is just an accident waiting to happen.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'In relation to the question of the 'Slimmed down' EYFS I have answered no because we do not know what would be in the slimmed down version and my concerns around this involve the fact that, once again, it is under-mining our position, as childminders, in the Early Years Sector. Parents will look at it and say 'Oh, they don't have to meet the same standards as a nursery' and, when we are all looking to get the same recognition across the board, this kind of thinking would have a very negative impact on our profession.'

**Unknown contact said:**

'Increasing ratios for childcare providers in the hope that they will take on more children and charge families less during the current cost of living crisis when all of our expenses have increased including food, energy and fuel is insulting. It will not result in us earning any more money as our costs have increased, taking on more children compromises quality of care and the whole suggestion does not show any recognition for the work we do.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'I work to deliver good childcare, I don't charge a large amount for childcare at all and I do enjoy what I do I like to keep everything as it is.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Why would anybody work harder for less money? NOBODY is going to care for extra children but do so at a lesser cost to parents, why should we as professional educators be responsible for the shortfall in government funding? I do however believe that experienced and highly qualified practitioners / routinely outstanding [e.g EYTs / QTS] should be able to adjust ratios and potentially care for up to 5 children under 5. However, the caveat to that is nobody experienced and highly qualified and in their right mind would ever choose to do so if [for example] those children were under 1, 1, 2x 2's and just 3. Were they to be 3 x 3-year-olds and 2 x 4-year-olds [not at nursery] I consider it perfectly feasible - we are professionals who make professional judgements every day. However, to do so would be very hard work and not something I would reduce my fees to enjoy!!!! Very few experienced and qualified professionals wish to join an agency. We are self-employed and choose to be. I don't see agencies offering to pay our pension, holiday and sick pay!!! Where is the advantage to us? There should be NO discrimination in a childminder drawing down funding for their own child or a grandchild for example. The fact we can't mean everybody loses out and infers the care and education we provide would differ for a blood relative calling into question our integrity which I actually find insulting. Furthermore, I am sick of hearing in the media about the extortionate cost of childcare. High-quality care and education and experiences in the first 5 years of a child's life are absolutely crucial to their onward success. These children are the future. The responsibility we shoulder is massive yet many of us, in reality, are working for less than the minimum wage yet have a degree. The press and media make it sound like childcare providers are money-grabbing individuals, little more than babysitters. Let's turn the conversation to the reality of it!'

**Unknown contact said:**

'I would like to see the local authority cut from the funding process and the money paid to parents to their childcare choices account and paid to us directly at our rate. Parents should be allowed to top up the pay the difference. It would save the sector and enable more providers to offer funded places. Many childminders simply don't claim the funding meaning parents miss out or Universal credit pays it through that system'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Childminders have rights too, we should have the right to choose if we want to register with ofsted or an agency.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'I wish you would also raise a survey to get our % allowances of household bills increased, every single cost is rising yet they remain static , including the 45p mileage allowance that hasn't changed in years despite fuel cost doubled .. 10% wear and tear is way too low , utility costs are astronomical and we have to heat our homes for the children etc . It's crazy now . Please unite with Pacey , and every LA in the country and let's get our voice heard in Government!!'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Personally I don't think childcare is expensive. You are looking after, nurturing, enhancing and improving a child's development in a safe, inspiring home setting. I don't think Childminders are paid enough with regards to the government funding. The pressures put upon us as Childminders, I feel, are huge. Most of the time we are seen as glorified babysitters. I may have the wrong end of the stick, but to be able to pay family and friends to look after children I think belittles everything we do. We might as well give up the title of Childminder, become friends with those who need us, they can then pay us directly. We wouldn't have to worry about Ofsted inspections or complying to any legal requirements or standards of curriculum. I am a Childminder and a Receptionist for a law firm (both two days a week) and I have to work three times the amount of hours at childminding to equal the pay of one hour at my other job.'

**Unknown contact said:**

'i live in a deprived area anyway and the cost of childcare is cheap considering in other areas it is really dear. I set an amount for parents to pay which is good value for money. I have an assistant and she needs to be paid for too so any extra children helps with the costs and children play better in groups and they still get daily a 1-1 time with the manager (myself) and that helps with bonding and education at the same time'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Grandparents and relatives receiving the funding should have to have a DBS check, paediatric first aid and safeguarding training, as CMs do. And I do not reduce my fees regardless of number of mindees as it is extremely hard work and I provide good value for money and only take additional children if I feel I can care for them to an acceptable level. The govt should not use CMs as a piggy bank - we have our own mortgages and bills to pay and spend a considerable amount of money on resources. We are NOT babysitters.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Despite what the Government will do I will not be increasing ratio numbers or decreasing my hourly rate to parents as I am not prepared to provide watered down care and or education plus it's a safeguarding issue if they were to do away with Ofsted who will be regulating Grandparents or friends to take care of children? This proposal will stretch Childminding services to the limits and I fear that if this happens most are likely to close their doors permanently and that will leave parents with even less choice of a professional childcare service and it will only add to the pressures on this industry. We are already not valued enough with what we do being seen as nothing more than babysitters and this will only make it worse. We are professional governed Early Years Educators and we offer safe loving nurturing home from home care. We are just as important to that child as their own family. Good childminders will leave and where does this leave our children being in the care of people who have no training no licenses no DBS checks no insurance no safeguarding measures in place??and no idea what they are doing. It's a mess and who will pick up the mess created by this? Social Services Children's Services because there will be a greater risk of abuse to children by unauthorised care. The Government need to wake up and stop loosing childminders!'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'I'm not published on the council website as I'm not registered'

**Unknown contact said:**

'The government needs to listen to us childminders. Although we follow the eyfs we are unique by having 6 children on a daily basis. We ar cheaper than nurseries.Making childcare cheaper would make it totally unviable for us to carry on with childminding. I have worked hard to build my business and get my outstanding grade from Ofsted and I'm not going to let small minded government officials who think they know what we as childminders should be doing to ruin and close my business.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Childminders need more respect from other professionals especially nurseries and schools. And definitely from parents. Government needs to educate them in this direction as we are educating ourselves learning and developing regarding Eyfs and all the laws which applies to us. We are not babysitters!!!! When Ofsted is coming to check us they are behaving like we are a proper nursery, so we have to have the same rights as they are! We are constantly updating ourselves and spending more money in resources as many nurseries I know and worked for them.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Current funding does not even cover my normal costs. If I care for three children using funding I don't even get minimum wage after expenses. Funding levels need to go up and I am looking at increasing my charges to cover additional costs I am incurring eg heating, light, food and other ancillaries as well as the external activities we attend which have increased their costs.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'I feel parents or grandparents should not get payed to look after the children. Because they are not qualified, gone through Ofsted requirements, got no DBS checks or first aid training. No insurance, will there house be checked for safety. How will the early years foundation stage if got no training in it. Will have to register to ofsted and pay the ofsted fee every year'



**Unknown contact said:**

'I do think you should have a choice if you'd like to join Ofsted or Agency so ticked yes but having looked into the initial setting up costs and monthly payments put me off. Much as I dread Ofsted inspections, it was financially off putting. However, if I didn't have a choice, then I would take the hit to continue in the job I enjoy.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'My details will be put on the local families website as soon as I'm registered'

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**Unknown contact said:**

'Govt funding is too low and I won't be accepting it.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Registration should stay for all childminders unregistered enables some to earn money for inadequate childcare. As a grandparent myself it would be great to earn money for the space taken up by family. Family members would gladly pay for my service but can't and are sad they have to leave their child with strangers. Taking in extra children is no easy thing, especially if you are not an experienced childminder. Even when you are experienced it can be challenging to cover all areas for every child. It's not impossible but can be hard. If the government decides to cap charges I would definitely leave the job, like everything else prices are rising including groups and outings so I would end up worse off.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'People already look at us as babysitters do any less of an eyfs just for childminders makes us feel like we can't do the job we train hard for, the eyfs us already made more simple as it's now birth to three, this makes sure children are developing well and track them every childcare provider should do this or they should just be a babysitter'

**Unknown contact said:**

'Increasing the funding rate and offering 15 hours to ALL 2 year olds would significantly reduce the cost to parents. I personally try to keep my fees low but with rising costs it is difficult to do so. If childminders were allowed a ratio of 1:4 without question this would also help to reduce costs. Where childminders have their own children within that ratio it would also benefit to allow parents/relatives to claim the funded hours for their own children. I also believe that the majority of childminders do have lower costs and once again the bad rep of nurseries bring the sector down. The issue is primarily with nurseries and the low staff wage and high parent cost. Positive media coverage of childminders would also benefit.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Re the last question , I have been to Stevenage council offices recently as they were interested on how all childcare settings are coping with cost of living etc and they are changing their family ISW and so it's going to make it easier for parents to access so I will be going back on and updating my details'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Regarding the final question. I wouldn't know as never been informed.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'There are reasons no why ratio and inspections are important. Standards will slip if parents can pay whoever they want. A childminder is a qualified professional, not just anyone. There needs to be more recognition and support for childminders.'

**Unknown contact said:**

'I am a mother to 2 teenage daughters who attended a childminding setting when they were younger. She did not have to follow the EYFS as it is now as it was a home from home environment and not an educational nursery. I think this should still be the case. There should be other relaxed guidelines in place for childminders to follow as this adds lots of extra pressure when working on your own. I have spoken to a few people and the EYFS side puts a lot of people off wanting to do it. I have worked in private day nurseries for over 10 years so I know a lot of people who would love to become their own boss but wont as the EYFS is harder to keep up with when working on your own and is a lot harder to find and create activities when you do not have lots of storage like in nurseries. When working in nurseries you get given 'time out' to plan and create activities and update learning journeys. Childminders do this in their own time so a lot of hours go unpaid. I think parents would be happy knowing that their child happy in a safe and loving environment and when the child reaches pre-school age they attend pre-school to help get more school ready.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'Paying the funding directly to parents will not necessarily reduce their costs. Most nurseries and childminders rates are higher than the funding rate so parents who still rely on these services would end up paying more.'

---

**Unknown contact said:**

'I feel childminders receive negative press from councils, and health professionals, it's always 'why isn't your child in nursery' I take my job role extremely professionally and like to think I give my whole to each child on an individual care basis. I don't charge crazy prices like nursery's around me and I take the whole family on not just the child. Whoever the only aspect of my job that's hard is being paid on time and regularly. Paying the family direct wouldn't help, they'd use the money towards other bills first or see it as their money sadly. I see this a lot with tax credits. Also if we had to register with an agency would that interfere with the 30 hrs gov help? That doesn't help anyone. I'm also not in agreement with a stack them high sell them low agenda, children will become a number rather than a child in need of the very best educational fun and start

on life.’

**Unknown contact said:**

‘Should be able to access funding for any family children e.g grandchildren nieces/nephews etc’

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**Unknown contact said:**

‘I have been childminding for £24 years. When I started my hourly rate was £2.50. I now charge £4.00 per hour and am not prepared to work for less’

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**Unknown contact said:**

‘We as childminders are struggling financially, but I love the job and want to continue. Ratios play a massive part of restricting us.’

---

**Unknown contact said:**

‘I feel I have not been a childminder for long enough to truly have a say in this and a lot of the questions are not really as straight forward as ‘yes’ or ‘no’. I would care for more than 3 three or four-year-olds, but I would not want to care for more than 2 one-year-olds because I could not provide for them properly or keep them safe. I guess it would be good to have a choice so you can consider the specific circumstances.’

---

**Unknown contact said:**

‘If I looked after more children, I would not be reducing my costs - the work would increase & the salary would reflect the increased work load. I do not think funding should be paid to parents. Childminders should be able to look after family and receive funding for this care. We are professional bodies, we are registered, insured and trained to work to the same framework as all EYFS Childcare providers. I would definitely consider my options should we be made to work for an agency.’

---

**Unknown contact said:**

‘I don’t suppose this proposal at all. Providers are already struggling to make a decent wage and provide resources for children. Nobody else in any other sector would willingly do more work for less pay! We are already undervalued and overworked, I often think of leaving childcare altogether.’

