



A manifesto for childminders:

Senedd Elections 2026



Introduction

The childminding sector in Wales is in a precarious state of fragility. Many childminders, including those in disadvantaged areas, are facing closure due to rising operational costs, increased demands around regulatory requirements and inconsistent access to deliver funded provision. In addition, barriers to becoming a childminder, including costs associated with training and registration have prevented or deterred some individuals from becoming a childminder and therefore contributed to the low number of new childminder registrations recorded[1].

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) figures show that between March 2018 and September 2025 the number of registered childminders in Wales decreased year on year, with around 807 fewer settings in March 2018 compared to September 2025 (a 37% decrease)[2]. The loss of childminders and the childcare places that they offer is in stark contrast to some other parts of the sector and the expansion of funded childcare and other early years policy initiatives. The decline in the number of registered childminders is likely to have a significant impact on childcare availability and accessibility, and threatens the statutory responsibility placed on Local Authorities to secure provision of childcare for children and families.

The Independent Review of Childminding was published in June 2023. A Childminding Review Recommendations Group Overview Panel and Working Groups were established by Welsh Government bringing together key partners and stakeholders, to consider the findings from the review and explore potential actions and timescales for each of the recommendations. Work is ongoing, but is slow on the areas crucial to positive change. In the two years since the publication of the report the number of childminders in Wales has continued to decline at a significant rate. The number of childminders is impacted both by the number of registrations of new childminders and the cancellations of skilled and experienced childminders leaving the sector.

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Coram PACEY Cymru remain concerned about three key areas that form the focus of our manifesto- start up support for those looking to become a childminder, opportunities for childminders to deliver funded Flying Start and nursery education provision and changes to ratios for childminders. We believe without further action in these areas, the number of childminders will continue to decrease.

The findings of the Independent Review indicate that a passion for looking after children, alongside the opportunity to manage their own business are key factors that have encouraged many individuals in Wales to choose childminding as their long-term career option and we need to do more to support childminders given the key role they have to play and demonstrate how valued and respected they are.

This Manifesto outlines a series of policy recommendations to support the childminding sector in Wales.

Claire Protheroe



[1] Independent Review of Childminding

[2] Microsoft Power BI

Recommendations at a glance

- 1 Urgent action to fund a universal, national programme to support prospective childminders through the pre-registration process, ensuring accessibility and consistency.
- 2 Enable childminder delivery of all childcare and early education funded programmes including Flying Start and Nursery Education.
- 3 Take forward proposals for changes to ratios for childminders to support continuity of care for children, parental choice of provision and sustainability of services.
- 4 Review and implement funding systems that are fair, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of all children, families, and childcare providers.
- 5 Establish a coordinated, national framework to streamline and clarify local planning, commercial waste, and environmental health requirements for childminders—removing inconsistencies and reducing regulatory barriers.



1

Fund a universal, national programme to support prospective childminders through the pre-registration process, ensuring accessibility and consistency.



Background: Coram PACEY Cymru are continuing to call on Welsh Government for urgent action to fund a universal, national, comprehensive childminder pre-registration programme to take the prospective childminder from the first enquiry point through to registration ensuring accessibility and consistency. Commitment and investment is needed here to ensure significant impact.



2

Enable childminder delivery of all childcare and early education funded programmes including Flying Start and Nursery Education.



Background: Coram PACEY Cymru are aware of the significant impact that the delivery and expansion of Flying Start is having on childminders. There are barriers in place for childminders to be able to deliver Flying Start and Early Years education provision that need to be broken down or remove. This will also ensure parents/carers have accessibility and choice in relation to quality childcare across Wales.

We strongly believe that the approach within the Childcare Offer for Wales should be used and that any CIW registered settings should have the opportunity to be funded for Flying Start or Early Years Education without additional barriers around training, qualifications and procurement being put in place.





3 Implement changes to ratios for childminders

Background: The current consultation on the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (NMS) in Wales proposes changes in this area that Coram PACEY Cymru support. We need to implement any changes agreed as swiftly as possible to support continuity of care for children, keep sibling groups together, ensure parental choice of provision and support sustainability of services.

Review and implement funding systems that are fair, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of all children, families, and childcare providers.



Background: Childminders are predominantly sole traders, with very small margins for turnover, and so are particularly vulnerable to inadequate funding rates and the impact of poor payments practice. This situation has been exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis; rising inflation, energy costs and the costs of essential like food and travel.

The April 2025 uplift in the rate paid for delivery of the Childcare Offer for Wales was welcomed by Coram PACEY Cymru and members. There is a need for an annual review of all rates across all funded programmes and closer alignment between these.

If all funded payments (Childcare Offer, Flying Start and Nursery Education) were paid monthly in advance, using the national digital service for the Childcare Offer as a mechanism, this would allow childminders to manage their cash flow and protect them against changing circumstances for children in their care that impact financially on their service.

5

Establish a coordinated, national framework to streamline and clarify local planning, commercial waste, and environmental health requirements for childminders

Background: From childminder feedback, and engagement with wider stakeholders, we know that local planning, commercial waste and environmental health requirements can impact negatively on childminders and influence decisions around registering, remaining registered or making decisions around expansion.

The variations in current approaches locally are confusing and inconsistent. There have been some steps made to address issues but further action is needed to have the required impact. We call for a coordinated national framework of guidance across all these cross-cutting areas to provide a clear and consistent approach for childminders in Wales in one resource.



About Coram PACEY

Formed in 1977, we are a professional association dedicated to supporting home-based childcare professionals including childminders and nannies to provide high quality services, information and advice to children, their families and carers. We want all children to experience high quality childcare and early education, helping them to have a bright future.

Across England and Wales we provide training, expert advice, help and peer support to practitioners and practical and impartial support and information for families and carers and those advising them.

 02920 351 207

 cymru@corampacey.org.uk

 www.corampacey.org.uk

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