

Ka Lai Brightley Hodges
Head of Coram PACEY
41 Brunswick Square
London
WC1N 1AZ

Lucy Powell MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

22 July 2026

Dear Lucy Powell MP,

I am writing on behalf of our more than 12,000 members to congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State for Education. Coram PACEY represents around half of the registered childminders in England and Wales, as well as other early years professionals including nannies, who are a significant yet often overlooked part of the childcare and early education workforce.

Coram PACEY has been active in supporting your team to deliver on the ambitions set out in the *Best Start in Life* strategy. Our members are passionate and dedicated professionals, committed to ensuring that every child has the strongest possible start. We would be delighted to arrange visits to childminding settings so you can see first-hand the impact of their work.

Given your experience in education and early years throughout your parliamentary career, you will understand your appointment comes at a pivotal moment. Home-based childcare providers in England are facing unprecedented challenges, driving the continued decline of the childminding workforce. Ofsted statistics continue to show a decrease in the number of Ofsted-registered childminders – a 47% decline in the last decade. If this trend continues, we estimate that there could only be a handful of childminders remaining in ten years¹.

When you consider the vital role of childminders in supporting children and families, this loss is devastating. Your Government has committed to giving every child the opportunity to thrive in their early childhood and beyond. Childminders make a valuable contribution to:

¹ Ofsted. Main findings: childcare providers and inspections as at 31 March 2026 (9 July 2026)

- **Education and care:** Providing calm, home-from-home environments, adapting to the needs of the individual child and often becoming trusted extensions of the family. They often look after children from infancy right through to school-age.
- **Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):** Offering highly personalised support for children with SEND. Smaller group sizes allow childminders to provide highly flexible and adaptable care that meets individual needs.
- **Babies and young toddlers:** The familiar and intimate home environment supports early child development through warm, responsive interactions, helping babies feel safe and build secure attachments.
- **Supporting families' needs:** Providing affordable, flexible and adaptable childcare to support families to access work, connecting them to local services and their community. They have a particular value for families working outside traditional hours, including shift workers, single parent households and disadvantaged families.
- **Skills and employment:** A career in childminding can offer parents a flexible route into employment while caring for their own children, with opportunities to build a sustainable business, create jobs and support others into the profession.

We are concerned that recent policy changes in the early years sector are not designed with home-based settings in mind. Without significant and immediate Government intervention in the following areas, we will continue to see highly skilled and dedicated early years professionals being driven out of the profession, reducing families' access to flexible, local and unique childcare options:

- **Removing the unfair rule that prevents childminders from claiming funded hours for related children:** The same rule does not apply to group settings or for childminders in Wales and is forcing many families to move their child to new settings to take up their entitlement, disrupting continuity of care or childminders providing childcare free of charge at a detriment to their business. This disregards the family's personal preferences, the best interests of the child, and the needs of the wider family.
- **A childminder-specific early years funding model:** Early years funding rates are set based on nursery ratios and are not fit for purpose for childminders who operate at much smaller ratios. The three- and four-year-old rate in particular fails to cover delivery costs, with just 4% of our childminder survey respondents reporting that the rate is adequate to run their business sustainably². This is forcing childminders to make difficult business decisions, such as not caring for 3- and 4-year-olds, breaking continuity of care with children they have built strong bonds with.

² Coram PACEY survey of childminders (November 2025) 2,944 respondents

- **Reinstating the blanket 10% wear and tear allowance for childminders within Making Tax Digital (MTD):** HMRC must reverse its recent decision that childminders within MTD can only claim tax relief on actual purchases, repairs and replacement of items. In a UK-wide survey, only 4% of respondents state that they have sufficient cash flow upfront to repair or replace items damaged through wear and tear, and 1 in 2 childminders said this change will drive them out of the profession entirely³.
- **Improving the recruitment and retention of the home-based childcare workforce:** We are calling on the Government to fund universal, national programmes to support prospective childminders through the pre-registration process, ensuring accessibility and consistency. This should be accompanied by funded, accessible post-registration support to enable the professional growth of childminders with mechanisms to reduce isolation and provide emotional support.
- **Reinstate mandatory early years training:** We are calling for the reinstatement of the requirement for childminders to carry out formal EYFS training to join the Early Years Register, which was removed in 2024. This will raise perceptions of quality and professionalism and bring childminder requirements back in line with the rest of the sector.
- **Recognise childminders as a key part of the national SEND system:** The Government must improve access to SEND-specific funding, training opportunities that recognise childminders' context and working hours and allow them to upskill and develop their knowledge.
- **Tighter regulation of nannies:** Often overlooked in the sector, nannies play an important role in provision for families requiring one-to-one support, for children with SEND, or for parents working irregular or ad-hoc hours that do not align with traditional childcare settings. Stricter, consistent regulation would improve professionalism, raise standards and quality and bring nannies more closely aligned with the wider education sector.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss the issues affecting home-based childcare professionals. I look forward to working together to ensure that every family in England has access to affordable, local and flexible childcare that meets their needs and supports every child to thrive.

Yours sincerely,



Ka Lai Brightley-Hodges, Head of Coram PACEY

³ Coram PACEY survey (21 January – 5 February 2026) 4853 respondents