

coram pacey cymru

Growing the Magic

A National Strategy for Childminding in Wales

2026-2035

Centre of Excellence for Childminder Training and Research

Introduction

Across Wales, childminders are delivering something magical for families, opening their homes to create familiar and welcoming environments for children to thrive and grow, building trusting relationships and support networks.

Children benefit from a unique childcare experience that is tailored and personal. In small, mixed-age groups they are supported to develop socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively in a nurturing home-like environment.

1,060

active, registered childminders in Wales

(Care Inspectorate Wales, September 2026)

Childminders in Wales make an extraordinary contribution to children, families and communities every day. Through their warmth, skill and commitment, they provide nurturing, flexible and high-quality care that supports children's learning, development and wellbeing, while offering families trusted childcare rooted in their own local communities.

At the time of creating this strategy, however, it is clear that the very essence of childminding — the flexibility, creativity and personalised care that the workforce brings to children, families and communities across Wales — has too often been lost. 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 opportunities 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, contributing to the low number of new childminder registrations recorded.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) figures show that registered childminder numbers have fallen every year since 2018, with now only 1,377 in Wales and only 1,060 of these active. Childminders currently provide over 11,000 childcare places which equates to around 12% of the registered childcare places in Wales. This comes at a time when plans for funded childcare expansion, through Plaid Cymru commitments to develop a more generous, universal childcare offer for younger children, have been published. Without urgent action to stabilise and grow the childminding workforce, there is a risk that childminders will be unable to play their full part in delivering this expansion, particularly for families who need flexible, local and personalised provision. 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.



Introduction (continued)

Progress has been slow on the areas crucial to positive change recommended by The Independent Review of Childminding, 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. In the two years since the publication of the review, 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.

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. Greater support is needed for childminders, recognising their vital role and ensuring their contribution is valued, respected and visible across the wider childcare and early years sector.

This strategy builds on Coram PACEY's The Magic of Childminding report, launched during Childminding Week 2026. The largest report of its kind, it brings together the real-life experiences, impact and voices of childminders, parents, children and sector experts, demonstrating the 'Magic of Childminding' in action across England and Wales. The report highlights the transformational impact of childminding on children, families and communities, and the urgent need for the Governments in England and Wales to support and grow the childminding workforce.

I am proud to present our National Strategy for Childminding in Wales, setting out how Coram PACEY Cymru can continue growing the 'Magic of Childminding' over the next 10 years. Developed by the Coram PACEY Cymru team in consultation with childminders, this strategy keeps children, families, childminders and communities at the heart of our work. Taking a strengths-based approach that is child centred, system aware, evidence informed and practical, it marks an intentional shift towards recognising the very best that childminders offer their communities, rather than viewing childminding only through the lens of challenge or decline.

The magic of childminding is already happening across Wales. We must now recognise it, value it, and invest in it so that the benefits of childminding can grow for generations to come.



Claire Protheroe

Coram PACEY Cymru

Our development principles

Coram PACEY Cymru are unwavering in our ambition to champion, support and grow a thriving childminding workforce in Wales, ensuring childminders are recognised as central to high-quality childcare and early education.

Building on the strengths, expertise and unique contribution of childminders in Wales, this strategy sets out a positive cultural shift for the next 10 years, one that enables all our work to be:

1 Child Centred

Keeping children at the heart of our work by focusing on the difference we make for children and families.

We do this by putting children first, understanding their needs and championing the environments that help them thrive.

2 System Aware

Recognising how policy, workforce, funding and culture shape outcomes for children, families and childminders.

We do this by working with others to create the conditions childminding businesses need to succeed.

3 Evidence Informed

Grounded in what we know works for childminders and families in Wales

We do this by using our experience, research evidence and real-life stories to influence policy and inspire change.

4 Practical

Turning ambition into action through planning, influencing and decision-making.

We do this by working with others to improve processes, strengthen practice and turn innovative ideas into action that makes a real difference for our communities.

Our 10-year goals for children, families, childminders and communities

Coram PACEY Cymru believes that, to bring about the change we want to see for childminders in Wales, we must also focus on the difference we want to bring about for children, families and communities.

Our 10-year goals describe the long-term difference we want this strategy to make for children, families, childminders and communities across Wales.

Together, they set out a shared vision for a stronger childminding sector that improves outcomes, widens choice and helps local communities thrive. These goals will guide our priorities, partnerships and actions, keeping the needs and experiences of children, families and childminders at the centre of change.



Children

Children are safe, heard, included and thriving, with the care, relationships and opportunities they need to play, learn, belong and reach their full potential.



Families

Families can access trusted, flexible and inclusive childminding that meets their needs, supports wellbeing, offers genuine choice, and helps them feel confident, informed and connected.



Childminders

Childminders are valued, recognised and supported as skilled professionals, with the confidence, opportunities and resources to grow, innovate and build sustainable, thriving businesses.



Communities

Communities value childminders and are responsive to local needs. They work together, through strong partnerships, so children and families benefit from connected, inclusive local support.

CHILDREN



GOAL:

Children are safe and healthy, feel heard and included, with the care, relationships and opportunities they need to play, learn, belong and reach their full potential.

We want children in childminding settings to:



Be safe and healthy

Children are safe, secure and healthy, supported by nurturing relationships, positive environments and opportunities to play, learn and grow.



Be heard and included

Children develop a strong sense of identity, belonging and confidence, with their rights upheld and their well-being prioritised.



Have the right support at the right time

Children receive personalised, timely support that recognises their individual circumstances, strengths and needs.



Have equal opportunities wherever they live

Children across Wales have fair access to quality childcare, education, funding and support, regardless of their location or circumstances.



Experience positive transitions

Children are supported to move confidently between home, childcare, education and other services, with their needs understood.

"Childminders have a fundamental role to play in ensuring many children are able to access their rights in the early years of their lives. By providing play-focussed learning in inclusive, safe and nurturing environments, childminders promote children's rights and help them to grow and develop during their critical first years."

Hugh Russell, Chief Executive of Children in Wales

How we make this happen:

1 Strengthening childminding provision

Supporting childminders with the knowledge, skills, confidence and resources they need to provide nurturing, inclusive, high-quality experiences for children.

2 Championing children's voices and rights

Ensuring children's experiences, voices and rights inform practice, policy and decision making.

3 Influencing policy and funding

Using the voice and experiences of childminders and families to influence policies, funding and services so they better reflect children's individual needs and the vital role of childminders.

4 Improving access and inclusion

Working with partners to remove barriers so all children and families can access inclusive, high-quality childminding that meets their needs, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances.

5 Connecting communities

Support childminders to connect, share learning, collaborate and strengthen local networks so children benefit from more joined-up, responsive and inclusive support across their community.

6 Championing the value and impact of childminding on children

Raise awareness of childminders' unique role in supporting children's learning, wellbeing and development, while strengthening recognition of their contribution to families, communities and the wider childcare system.



FAMILIES



GOAL:

Families can access trusted, flexible and inclusive childminding that meets their needs, supports wellbeing, offers genuine choice, and helps them feel confident, informed and connected.

We want families to:



Feel supported and confident

Families can access trusted, local and flexible childminding that fits around their lives, supports family wellbeing, and meets the needs of all their children.



Recognise the value of childminding

Families understand what makes childminding unique and feel confident choosing it as a trusted, high-quality childcare option.



Have choices that work for them

Families can choose from high-quality childcare that meets their individual needs, including their children's ages, circumstances, language, culture and community.



Access funding and support with confidence

Families can understand available financial help and wider support, navigate it easily, and get what they need without unnecessary complexity.

"The magic of childminding is, quite simply, love in action. It is the fact that our children have gone each morning to a real home, not an institution, where they are held, known, and cherished as an individual. It is the seamless, unhurried transition from our home to another home, where they never had to feel the shock of a world too big or too noisy or too impersonal."

Parent of three

How we make this happen:

1 Make childminding visible and understood

Communicate clearly with families about what childminders offer, promoting the benefits of childminding, challenging misconceptions and raising the profile of childminders as a high-quality choice.

2 Strengthen choice and availability

Support the development and sustainability of a diverse childminding workforce so families have genuine local choices that reflect their needs.

3 Include the voices of families in our work

Listen to families and use their experiences to shape our services, campaigns, partnerships and policy influence.

4 Make funding and support easier for families to navigate

Work with Welsh Government and partners to simplify information, remove barriers and help families understand, access and benefit from the funding and support available to them.

5 Promote inclusive, culturally responsive childcare

Work with partners to ensure families can access childminding that reflects their language, culture, identity, needs and circumstances.



CHILDMINDERS



GOAL:

Childminders are valued, recognised and supported as skilled professionals, with the confidence, opportunities and resources to grow, innovate and build sustainable, thriving businesses.

We want childminders to:



Feel valued and recognised as professionals

Childminders are respected as skilled professionals and recognised for the difference they make to children, families and communities.



Develop and grow with confidence

Childminders can access opportunities to develop their practice, strengthen their businesses, innovate and share their expertise with others.



Provide inclusive, responsive care with confidence

Childminders have the knowledge, skills, resources and support to meet each child's needs, reflecting their language, culture, identity and circumstances.



Build sustainable and thriving businesses

Childminders can access fair funding, business support and opportunities that enable them to build stable incomes and sustain high-quality childminding provision.

"I love having agency over my day and the autonomy childminding provides. We literally can change our plans at the drop of a hat depending on the weather or how the children are feeling that day. I love being able to implement change for the benefit of the children without having a chain of command that has to agree to it first. If I read something or learn something from trusted peers or a training event I can try it out immediately. This role, especially in the rural area in which I live, can be isolating and lonely. I know at the drop of a hat I can get help and advice or just a listening ear whenever I need to."

Childminder in Flintshire

How we make this happen:

1 Champion childminders as professionals

Raise the profile of childminders as trusted early years and childcare professionals, ensuring their voice, expertise and impact are recognised in policy, practice and local systems.

2 Create pathways for growth and progression

Provide and influence opportunities for professional learning, leadership, business development and progression, enabling childminders to grow their confidence, aspirations and expertise.

3 Build confidence and capability

Equip childminders with the knowledge, skills, resources and networks they need to provide high-quality, inclusive and responsive childminding.

4 Influence fair funding and opportunity

Work with government and partners to remove barriers and ensure childminders have fair access to funded programmes and opportunities that support sustainable businesses.

5 Connect and share expertise

Create opportunities for childminders to connect, collaborate, innovate and share their knowledge across local networks and the wider early years and childcare sector.



COMMUNITIES



GOAL:

Communities value childminders, are responsive to local needs and work together, through strong partnerships, so children and families benefit from connected, inclusive local support.

We want communities to:



Value and recognise childminders as professionals

Childminders are valued as trusted childcare and early years professionals, making an important contribution to children, families and community life.



Listen to and involve childminders

Local authorities, partners and services understand childminding businesses and involve childminders in local planning, decision-making and service development.



Reflect local identity, language and diversity

Childcare and early years provision reflects the language, culture, identity and diversity of local communities, including the Welsh language.



Be connected and collaborative

Childminders are part of strong local networks across family support, childcare, education and community services, creating more joined-up support for children and families.

"Through inspection and ongoing engagement with the sector, CIW sees how childminders use the home-based environment to build secure relationships, respond to individual needs and support children's wellbeing, play, learning, development and communication. This personalised approach, combined with strong professional practice, enables children to feel settled, confident and engaged in their play and learning, while offering families trusted, community-based childcare."

Ceri Herbert, Head of Inspection, Childcare and Play Inspection,
Care Inspectorate Wales

How we make this happen:

1 Raise the profile of childminders locally

Champion childminders as a vital part of local childcare and early years provision, highlighting their contribution to children, families and community life.

2 Build stronger local partnerships

Support the connection of childminders with local authorities, schools, health and family support services and community organisations to create more joined-up support for children and families.

3 Include childminders in local decision-making

Create opportunities for childminders to influence planning, commissioning, funding and service development, so decisions reflect the realities of childminding businesses.

4 Reflect local identity, language and diversity

Support childminders to provide inclusive, culturally responsive childcare that reflects the communities they serve, including the Welsh language.

5 Build connected communities of practice

Enable childminders to share knowledge, collaborate and strengthen local networks, so children and families benefit from more responsive community support.



Help grow the Magic of Childminding in Wales

Everyone has a part to play in creating a thriving future for childminding in Wales.

Sign Coram PACEY Cymru's Childminding Charter for Wales to show your commitment to valuing, championing and supporting childminders and to helping more children, families and communities experience the Magic of Childminding.

Coram PACEY Cymru will publish an action plan setting out the practical steps we will take with childminders, families and partners to deliver this strategy, monitor progress and turn our shared ambitions into lasting change.



About Coram PACEY

Coram PACEY wants all children to experience high quality childcare and early education, helping them to have a bright future.

We support everyone involved in childcare and early education to provide high quality services, information and advice for children, their families and carers.

About Coram PACEY Cymru

Coram PACEY Cymru works closely with the Welsh Government and others to influence children's futures and represent childminders. Our dedicated service in Wales shapes national, regional and local childcare and early years policy.

corampacey.org.uk

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