

PLANET Childrens Policy Group

Work undertaken to date
re: The Community Childcare
Subvention Scheme (CCSS)



Presentation to Network Meeting
6th December 2007

1. Meeting with Ms. Sylda Langford, OMC
Wednesday, 14th November
2. Attendance at Dail Private Members Motion
Wednesday, 14th November
3. Irish Childcare Policy Network (ICPN)
meetings - ongoing
4. Meeting with SIPTU re: childcare sector
Thursday, 29th November

5. Surveys / Case studies / Information Exchange

1. Meeting with Ms. Sylda Langford, OMC Wednesday, 14th November

- The meeting lasted 2.5 hours, and the delegation felt it had been extremely positive and beneficial.
- The OMC outlined the background to the CCSS.
- Were particularly attentive to the case studies.
- Offered to share audit findings with PLANET.
- Were confident that the CCSS would be rolled-out on schedule with all concerns resolved.
- We highlighted the support of childcare co-ordinators, creche managers, etc. in returning parent forms

The PLANET position was that we:

- Seek an agreed solution that is beneficial to all.
- Wish to build on the advances made under EOCP.
- Are looking to discuss how funding is allocated, not seeking additional funding.
- Have consulted widely with our members and have research into the effects of CCSS countrywide.
- Are concerned of the impact on families in disadvantaged / DEIS areas.

Acknowledging Achievements of The Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme

'The Quantitative findings generally confirm the fact that an effective Programme has been delivered over the EOCP period. This commenced from a 'standing start' and has well exceeded original objectives.

In terms of increasing the number of childcare places in Ireland, EOCP has had a significant impact.'

- VFM Audit, p. xii

EOCP – Other outcomes

- Childcare provision where none existed.
- Childcare provision in disadvantaged / DEIS areas.
- Enabled disadvantaged parents to withdraw from welfare dependency.
- Advanced the “all children are equal” theory and practice.
- Established a foundation for early learning.

EOCP- Who gained

- Children & parents from categories below:
 - Single parents in disadvantaged – DEIS areas.
 - Unemployed parents returning to training and education.
 - Unemployed parents taking up low paid employment.
 - Low income families.

EOCP recognised as major advance



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THE PARTNERSHIPS
NETWORK

CCSS - Impacts

- Low income families who are not in receipt of any welfare payments are not included in this scheme. (Contrary to original remit of EOCP)
- From our research, a large majority of community childcare facilities predict a substantial loss in guaranteed 'income' and will have to either close or have a major cutback in services.
- Remaining projects will need to raise fees dramatically to cover these shortfalls.



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THE PARTNERSHIPS
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PLANET Proposal- Conclusions

- PLANET are seeking to devise a solution in partnership with OMC.
- PLANET members will facilitate OMC in research and consultation.
- PLANET seeking to discuss how the scheme is implemented, and not seeking any additional funding over the proposed 2008 budget.

Where we go from here....

- We will request a further meeting with the OMC for late January / early February to discuss the findings of their audit and subsequently what format the CCSS will take.

2. Attendance at Dail Private Members Motion Wednesday, 15th November

- PLANET attended at the invitation of Deputy Alan Shatter (FG, who laid down the motion).
- Other Partnership staff were also in attendance.
- All opposition members were calling for the extension of the transition period, and many gave examples of the impact from their constituencies.
- PLANET office provided two Senators, and a number of TD's with information in advance of the Dail & Seanad debates.
- Forwarded copies of the Dail, Seanad, and Parliamentary questions to Partnership staff on a regular basis.

3. Irish Childcare Policy Network (ICPN)

PLANET are members of the ICPN, along with other national agencies such as:

- Barnardos
- Childrens Rights Alliance
- National Childrens Nurseries Association
- Childminding Ireland
- Family Resource Centres
- Border Counties Childcare Network
- City and County Childcare Committees
- OPEN
- Irish Rural Link

The ICPN are preparing a policy document on the CCSS, and with the support of DHR Communications (PR company to FRC's) will be

- Presenting this paper to Sylda Langford on Tuesday, 11th December (at which PLANET will have representation).
- Launching this to TD's, Senators and the media (both national and regional) on Wednesday, 12th December.

4. Meeting with SIPTU re: childcare sector Thursday, 29th November

Attended by: Patricia King, Gerry Flanagan, Stephen Hughes, SIPTU; Jacqui Sidney, PLANET; Carol Ingoldsby, Dublin City Childcare Committee; Monica Cassidy and Maria Tyrrell, Larkin Centre for Unemployed; Noirin Byrne

- Looking at Government work in the area of childcare.
- Will be promoting the clear, advisable, realistic goals of quality services in childcare, training for staff, mechanisms of funding.
- A value in building a density of union membership (Dublin sufficient at present) so that they can lobby on behalf of the community childcare sector in the next round of National Agreement discussions.
- Will be commencing work on this area immediately

5. Surveys / Case studies / Information Exchange

- The PLANET office have had contact with Fine Gael, Labour, and Sinn Fein Political Parties, SIPTU, Irish Rural Link, Childrens Rights Alliance, Irish Vocational Education Association, St. Vincent de Paul, and ONE Family in relation to the CCSS.

- We informed both Senators and TD's prior to the recent Dail and Seanad Debates.

- We undertook a survey (through Childcare Co-ordinators) of childcare facilities and received 64 responses outlining the impact to them.

- We collated and presented 20 case studies to relevant parties.

- We maintained regular information exchange to childcare co-ordinators, managers, and chairpersons, at times on a daily basis.

Again we would like to thank all those who supported us to date – the policy group, childcare co-ordinators, managers, chairpersons, and community childcare facilities.

And look forward to your continued collaborative work in 2008.

