

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00067/16

Claire Protheroe
Direct Services Manager (Wales)
PACEY Cymru

Claire.Protheroe@pacey.org.uk

10

February 2016

Dear Ms Protheroe

Thank you for your email of 14 January, on behalf of registered childminders in Wales, regarding planning issues they are facing following the recently announced key changes to childcare regulation and registration.

I am aware of the concerns and issues between childminders and Local Authority planning departments which may have arisen as a result of the extension of childcare regulation. To help address these, Welsh Government officials and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) are providing clear guidance and advice to the childcare sector and Local Authority planning departments to help clarify the position.

Compliance with childcare standards is different from compliance with planning legislation and CSSIW has issued a letter to providers setting out the relationship between the different regulatory requirements for childcare and planning. I can confirm CSSIW no longer requires evidence as to the planning status of childminders' premises, as part of the childcare registration process. However, providers are still responsible for ensuring their premises comply with planning and building control, environmental health and fire safety regulations. CSSIW has also updated its website and supporting information for childcare providers to reflect the revised position.

I understand approximately 70% of registered childminders are already caring for older children, so the extension of the upper limit for the regulation of childcare from April 2016 should have no bearing on planning requirements for these providers, unless they are seeking to introduce changes to comply with regulation standards or are seeking to increase the number of children cared for.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Revised guidance on Planning and Childcare in Wales will issue shortly to Local Authorities. This will update earlier guidance to childminders and planning authorities on the use of residential dwellings for childminding and reflect the changes in childcare regulation. The FAQs on the Welsh Government planning section of the intranet will also contain updated advice.

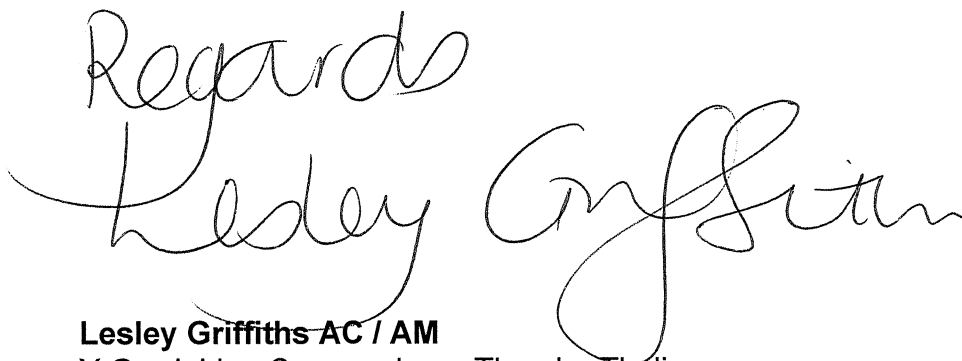
Childcare is a key priority for the Welsh Government. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the needs of parents/carers in their area. We will be encouraging local planning authorities to work with the childcare sector to fulfil this duty.

The Plenary debate you referred to was to discuss planning issues around the introduction of secondary legislation to implement part of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015. It was not about charges for a 'Certificate of Lawfulness' but about the introduction of a standard set of fees for a mandatory pre-application advice service which local planning authorities will provide. This will introduce consistency across Wales in terms of the fees charged. I understand they are no different to those for other small businesses wishing to operate from their homes, although I appreciate your concerns about these issues.

My officials are keeping me fully informed about the arrangements for implementation of the extension of childcare regulation and the steps needed to ensure any potential disruption or burdens to providers' businesses are minimised.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank PACEY Cymru for the work you are doing, in collaboration with the Welsh Government as part of the CWLWM consortium, to support the childcare sector in the introduction of the new arrangements.

As you have copied the Minister for Natural Resources who is responsible for planning policy into your email, I am copying him into this response.

Regards


Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Ffodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

cc Minister for Natural Resources