

Childminder de-registrations in Wales

Update May 2018

Section 1: Introduction and Methodology

1a: Introduction

PACEY Cymru previously carried out a piece of research looking at reasons for childminder de-registrations in Wales. This followed concerns raised in the sector due to the increase in numbers of those leaving childminding and a report was published in February 2017.

Sustainability of existing, quality childcare is of importance to support the needs of children and their families and has also come to the forefront as the implementation of the childcare offer in Wales has moved forward. This offer has increased the need for quality, registered childcare to meet demand and so the sustainability of existing childminders is of key importance.

The 2017 Report showed the decline in the number of registered childminders in Wales since 2015. The statistics in the table A, below, show this in more detail and also the more recent statistics up to March 2018.

Table A. Number of Registered Childminders in Wales Sep. 2015-March 2018

Date	Number of registered childminders	Difference
30 Sep. 2015	2216	n/a
31 March 2016	2171	45
30 Sep. 2016	2071	100
31 March 2017	1954 ¹	117
30 Sep. 2017	1951 ²	3
31 March 2018	1911	40
Total difference		305 (13.8% decrease since Sep. 2015)

(Data provided by CIW, 2015-18)

This decline in registered childminder numbers is a cause for concern and has continued since the publication of the previous report in February 2017. This is likely to have a significant impact on childcare availability and accessibility.

¹ Please note that due to issues with CIW website the figures used for this period for the Vale of Glamorgan and Rhondda Cynon Taff are approximations based on the 2018 figure.

² Please note that due to issues with CIW website the figures used for this period for the Vale of Glamorgan and Rhondda Cynon Taff are approximations based on the 2018 figure.

Section 2: 2017 Findings Recap

2a: Reasons for de-registering

The 2017 report found that the main reasons for de-registering were due to changes in personal circumstances, in the main due to retirement or a change to their family (for example children starting school or having a new baby). This was then coupled in some cases with a new employment or training opportunity that better met the needs of their changed family circumstances. This is an area that is hard to control and has been the pattern for many years in the 'life cycle' of someone working as a childminder where they childmind while it suits their family circumstances and move on when their own children are older.

There were also a significant number that stated the reasons being paperwork, reporting mechanisms or regulation changes, or that the service was unsustainable financially. These areas cause concern for the future impact this could have on the sector and needs to be addressed by looking more closely at what support can be provided.

As expected the responses between the reasons were closely linked and interwoven with one reason impacting on another. For example many who stated that the service was unsustainable also stated that a new employment or training opportunity was one of the reasons for de-registering. It is hard to identify the main reason in many cases due to the nature of personal situations however it can be clearly seen that all the reasons given above have had a significant impact on the number of de-registrations.

2b. What are those who de-registered doing now?

In 2017 a significant number of responses showed that individuals had moved on to other employment opportunities (55%) with 30% of these being in other childcare or school settings. This potentially shows the displacement of childminders to the wider childcare/education sector.

2c: Could anything have been done to keep those who de-registered in the childminding sector?

The vast majority (70%) in 2017 stated that nothing could have been done to have kept them childminding. Of those who said that something could have been done the examples given were around:

- increased support or information provided locally or nationally
- less paperwork would have made them more likely to continue
- opportunity to become a funded education provider may have made a difference
- financial support in the early days would have been beneficial.

2d: Would those who de-registered promote childminding as a career/work choice to others?

It was found that the majority of respondents were positive about promoting childminding as a career or work choice to others (67%). A large number of these were extremely positive in their response.

Of those who were unsure it was mainly around wanting to ensure the person understood the childminding role, responsibilities and what it entailed before they committed to it.

Those who would not recommend were mainly concerned about how expectations and the profession has changed and the 'red tape' involved.

Although further detailed work has not been carried out on the reasons for de-registration, PACEY Cymru believe that this evidence is still valid and consistent with the reasons for de-registration currently from informal discussions internally and with members. This is specifically relevant around the paperwork and reporting mechanisms where the statistics for the time following the move to online services and reporting to CIW shows a higher number of de-registrations.³

Section 3: 2018 Conclusion and recommendations update

It can be seen from the findings above that even in those who have de-registered there is a great deal of positivity about childminding as a career or work choice.

The reasons for de-registration are complex and interwoven and it is hard to unpick clear actions that would make a significant difference to the sector. However, there do appear to be some key themes which could be considered to support registered childminders in the future in line with business sustainability, paperwork and regulation changes.

In line with this and linking to the need to ensure sustainability of quality childcare to support development and delivery of the childcare offer in Wales, PACEY Cymru made the following recommendations in 2017 and have provided an update on how these have been taken forward below and evidence the progress made. Work on these is also ongoing.

PACEY Cymru recommendations

1. To review current member resources and develop further resources, based on gaps identified by this piece of work, to support childminders in relation to business sustainability and appropriate development plans and records for children of all ages based on national guidance. Including sharing of resources produced by others and working in partnership where needed (for example with Social Care Wales).

³ CIW online Self-Assessment of Service (SASS1) took place in summer 2016. The statistics in Table A on page 1 show the de-registrations for the two quarters following this.

Since publication of the 2017 report PACEY Cymru have:

- Published a revised and updated Policies and Procedures guide for childminders in Wales, including a range of new policies which have been added to the guide. PACEY Cymru have also reviewed these in preparation for GDPR in May 2018.
 - Reviewed and developed accredited and non-accredited training. This has included an update of both face to face and online CYPOP5 courses and development of digital literacy and confidence training and advice surgeries, pre-registration workshops and workshops supporting continuous professional development (for example behaviour, transitions and Foundation Phase Profile workshops)
2. Further develop joint work with Cwlwm and Digital Communications Wales to support digital inclusion and marketing which in turn supports business sustainability and issues with paperwork, recording and reporting to CIW.

Since publication of the 2017 report PACEY Cymru have:

- Developed digital literacy and confidence training and promoted to Local Authorities across Wales
 - Produced ICT policies and procedures guidance for members
 - Continued to utilise a loan of the Digital Kit from Digital Communities Wales to support training, information sharing and access
3. To implement revised support plan and pilot for increased contact, through booked slot for telephone support, to all newly registered childminders in Wales within 3 months of registration. This will support with identifying issues and offering information and guidance on resources, further support (including PACEY Local- see recommendation 5) and CPD opportunities to support business sustainability and decrease isolation.

Since publication of the 2017 report PACEY Cymru have:

- Implemented a system to provide telephone support to newly registered childminders which has been strongly received.
 - Introduced a free introduction webinar for those who are newly registered childminders to provide support and guidance on key issues and reduce isolation.
 - Produced a Newly Registered Childminder Factsheet
4. Support key members to further develop and facilitate PACEY Local peer-to-peer support networks across Wales to reduce isolation of childminders and offer further platforms for discussions of key issues and updates. Also scope development of a 'buddying' scheme between newly registered and experienced childminders that could link to the PACEY Local networks.

Since publication of the 2017 report PACEY Cymru have:

- Developed a new model for Fforwm PACEY Cymru Forum to replace the regional PACEY Local model following feedback and internal development. This will be launched in June 2018.
- Agreed on the development of a guidance pack for childminding groups to be published in 18-19

- Begun piloting a Childminder Champion project across England and Wales to support mentoring and support online
5. To further partnership working with Job Centre Plus and other identified partners to ensure childminding is seen as a positive career choice.

Since publication of the 2017 report PACEY Cymru have:

- Worked with DWP and JCP to produce a guide on Childcare Choices for internal and external sharing by JCP on childcare role options
- Put plans in place to support DWP Early Years Campaign in May 18 with National Manager for Wales providing Spotlight Call for JCP staff and promotion through social media.

CIW recommendations

1. CIW to continue with the current clear communications to registered childminders and other childcare providers on any changes- involving the umbrella childcare organisations in the wording of these communications to ensure that these are clear and concise to the sector they are reaching. This will ensure consistency of information and support those who hear conflicting information from peers and others.

Since publication of the 2017 report PACEY Cymru have:

- Worked closely with CIW on the roll out of SASS 2 with improved response rate from summer 2016 in summer 2017.
 - Worked with CIW to ensure clear and consistent information around the process for DBS applications for childminders and childminding assistants given changes that came in on the 1st April.
2. CIW to continue to engage with the sector through joint engagement events to involve providers in developments relating to regulation, registration and inspection ensuring these are held at times that suit the needs of providers (for example evenings and weekends).

Since publication of the 2017 report PACEY Cymru have:

- Engaged with CIW at a national level and cascaded information to providers through digital content. This includes through the CIW National Advisory Board and strategic working groups.

Welsh Government recommendations

1. To support business sustainability of childminders by ensuring opportunities to deliver funded programmes, including the new childcare offer, are accessible to childminders.

Since publication of the report PACEY Cymru have:

- Represented the sector at a national, regional and local level to ensure access to funding for childminding settings which is evident from the inclusive guidance that has been published.

2. Lobbied for change around the 'Related Children' issue affecting childminders, and continue to do so. A final decision on this is due in 18-19.
3. In partnership with PACEY Cymru and Social Care Wales ensure career and qualification pathways are fit for purpose for registered childminders and that there is consideration and appropriate focus given to registered childminders in the Childcare and early years 10 year workforce plan. This includes supporting the continued professionalisation of the childminding role.

Since publication of the 2017 report PACEY Cymru have:

- Been heavily involved in the development of content for the qualifications to ensure it is fit for purpose for the sector and have challenged where needed which has led to change.
 - Worked as one of the key partners within a working group led by Social Care Wales to develop a new All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare and have ensured content is accessible for childminders as well as the wider sector.
 - Begun working with Coleg Gwent on a pilot to support the new Careers College status of the college to support professionalism and career choice within the sector during 18-19.
4. To develop further tools and resources and guidance on child development planning and recording with support from the wider sector so that a consistent approach is taken. This will reduce confusion felt by providers around this. The Foundation Phase Profile could be used as a base for this and 'bolt-ons' developed to support all children under the age of 12 in regulated childcare settings.

Since publication of the 2017 report PACEY Cymru have:

- Supported the launch of the Foundation Phase Excellence Network in early 2018.
- Supported piloting work for the Welsh Government Hwb website and accessibility and use by childminders.
- Developed training and supporting resources on the Foundation Phase Profile.

The other recommendations were put forward to other key partners and work is ongoing around these.

CIW recommendations (ongoing)

1. CIW to consider splitting content of e-newsletters between social care and childcare and play to ensure accessible information and guidance specifically to the individual sector following feedback received.

Welsh Government recommendations (ongoing)

1. To ensure that programmes of funded training and qualifications are accessible and appropriate to the needs of pre-registration, newly registered and more experienced childminders to support career progression and quality improvement.
2. In partnership with CIW and the wider sector to review the definition of a registered childminder. This includes consideration of a:

- clear position in relation to the maximum number of childminding assistants that can be employed in a childminding setting,
- clear, written requirement for employing an assistant and the definition of what is meant by 'working under supervision'
- clear position on how many registered childminders can work together from one setting under the definition of childminding.

These points can cause confusion and a clearer position would support business sustainability and consistent messaging as well as potentially providing development opportunities for some settings.

3. To consult with the sector on development of a national quality improvement framework, linking clearly to CIW's Quality of Care Review/Self-Assessment of Service, ratings and Inspection Framework that supports consistency and quality improvement across the sector and so in turn supports business sustainability.

Local Authority recommendations (ongoing)

Work has continued with individual Local Authorities in Wales and will continue into 18-19, on the recommendations below. Engagement with Local Authorities has improved since 2017 with PACEY Cymru now engaged, in varying forms, with all 22 Local Authorities in Wales. The level of this engagement and progress has varied and PACEY Cymru would be happy to discuss progress and provide evidence of engagement and work in individual Local Authorities on request.

1. To consider the implications on the wider childcare sector of strategic level decisions made in the Local Authority- for example commissioning of services (including early years education) that may displace existing childcare places or disadvantage some forms of childcare providers from opportunities. This would support sustainability of childminding provision.
2. To ensure consideration of the importance of parental choice in funding childcare and early years places especially in line with the development of the childcare offer to support sustainability of childminding provision.
3. To commit to working with PACEY Cymru to take a closer look into addressing the bias towards school/large group settings for funded early years provision. In doing so potentially create new opportunities for childminders that support sustainability flexibility, accessibility and diversity of childcare provision.
4. To acknowledge the business support and training needs of existing childminders in all areas not just deprived areas of a Local Authority to support the sustainability of childminding provision.
5. To look potentially at different models to support recruitment of childminders based on good practice from other areas where there have been high levels of success and engage PACEY Cymru in this work.