



15th May 2020

Dear Provider,

My Department and I are continuing early planning for phased reopening of early learning and care and school-age facilities in line with the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business.

I have established an Advisory Group to support this work. Six sectoral representatives were nominated by the Professionalisation Sub Group of the Early Years Forum. These include representatives from Association of Childhood Professionals (ACP), National Childhood Network (NCN), National Forum for Community Childcare Services, Seas Suas, Early Childhood Ireland (ECI) and Plé.

SIPTU is also a member of the group in accordance with the requirement of the Return to Work Safely Protocol issued by Government on 9th May to consult with Trade Unions. Childminders are represented by Childminding Ireland.

The agreed Terms of Reference of the Advisory Group are attached.

I was delighted to chair the second meeting of the Group this afternoon. Open and constructive discussions took place with a commitment by all to work progressively and collaboratively to address the many identified and significant challenges.

A detailed work plan for the Advisory Group is currently being drafted and will be presented at the next meeting of the Group early next week.

My Department and I will continue to work with sector representatives in developing guidelines to support providers, their staff, parents and children for their return to familiar, albeit different, environments.

As the first step to prepare to re-open your service I would encourage you to review the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#), but to be aware that assistance will be made available to you in the coming weeks to meet its requirements.



Various childcare specific guidance cleared by Public Health experts will be issued to you, by my Department, over the coming weeks which will supplement this document.

Next week my Department will communicate resources that are available to support you with your return to work preparations.

I would greatly appreciate if you would share this correspondence with your employees.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Katherine Zappone
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.